



PSALM

23

urely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

(PSALM 23:6)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-4** The psalmist speaks of the Lord as a providing and protecting shepherd.
- v. 5-6** The psalmist speaks to the Lord as a providing and welcoming host.

AT A GLANCE

INWARDLY DIGEST

This is a psalm of confident trust in the many blessings of body and soul that God promises His people throughout their lives.

THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR

God is often called the shepherd of His people. This is the only passage in the Old Testament where He is addressed personally as "my shepherd."

IN A WORD

Note the many contrasts in this psalm: shepherd/enemies, lead/follow, walk/dwell, evil/goodness, death/life.

CHRIST IS HERE

The Good Shepherd, the source of every blessing and the gracious host at the table is Christ, who laid down His life for us, His sheep.



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The Good Shepherd, the source of every blessing and the gracious host at the table is Christ, who laid down His life for us, His sheep.



This is without a doubt the most well-known and beloved psalm in the book. Its moving poetry draws from numerous other passages of Scripture in which God likens Himself to the shepherd of His people (PSALM 78:52 AND 80:1; ISAIAH 40:11; JER. 31:10B; EZEK. 34:11-24; LUKE 15:4-7; JOHN 10:1-18 AND 25-30; HEB. 13:20; 1 PETER 2:25 AND 5:4; REV. 7:17). The psalm exhibits the heart's simple confidence in God alone as the giver of these promised blessings, even in the face of enemies and the threat of death. God Himself provides the sure foundation for these promises, which is shown in the way Psalm 23 begins and ends with "the Lord." The blessings given here encompass the entire life of the Christian, giving this psalm a remarkable flexibility in its use. It can be prayed in almost any situation: at the weekly gathering in the Lord's house, in extraordinary times of difficulty and in the final moments of life at one's deathbed.



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USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 1

In the Daily Office: Sundays at Midday (Prime)

At the Divine Service:

One-Year:

Psalm for Misericordias (ant: v. 6)

Three-Year:

Introit verses for Easter 4B

Psalm for Easter 4A (ant: v. 1), Easter 4C (ant: v. 4), Easter 4B and Proper 11B (ant: v. 6), and Proper 23A (ant: v. 5a)

Hymns:

LSB 625, "Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread"

LSB 711, "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"

LSB 709, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

LSB 710, "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want"

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SPIRITUAL CARE

- For the grieving.
- Before a funeral.
- During times of confusion or doubt.
- In thanksgiving for the Lord's provisions.
- In thanksgiving for the Gospel.



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PSALM PRAYER

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Be our shepherd, O Lord, and bless us with all good things, that we may be refreshed with Your overflowing cup and dwell in Your house forever; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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