



Psalms of Forgiveness

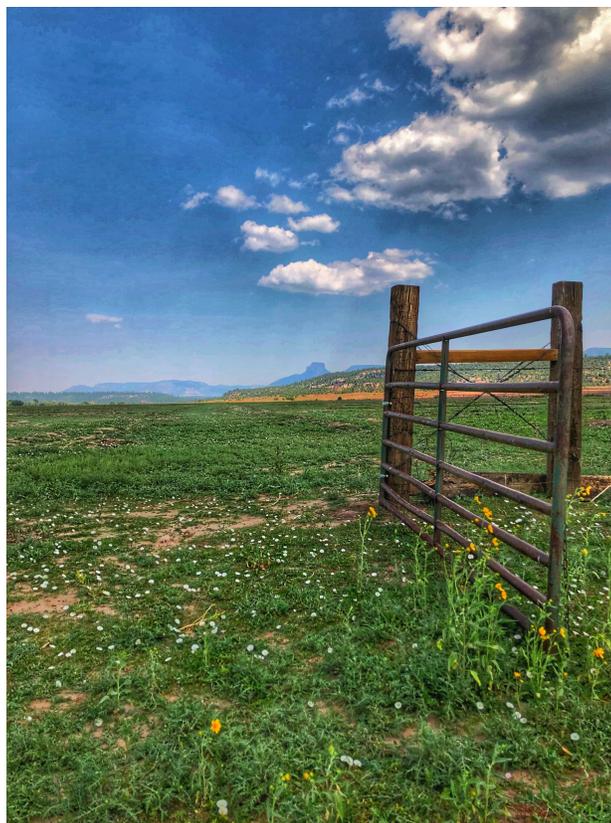
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Walking in God's Forgiveness

“God makes me lie down in green pastures and beside still waters.”



Psalm 23 is perhaps the most recognized chapter in the Judeo-Christian-Muslim faiths. Even people who have no understanding of the faiths tend to know and find comfort in this Davidic poem. As we read it at memorial services and reflect on it in our nature walks, we tend sometimes to remove the power of what is being said in this distinctly challenging passage. Living, walking, resting in God's forgiveness and grace takes courage, honesty, and intentionality. As we read through the Psalm today and in our daily reflections, let's work on allowing the grace and forgiveness of God to calm our spirits, ease our minds, and heal our hearts.

Opening Prayer: (Unison) by Arabah Joy

Oh, Lord... Forgive my bustling and striving and stressing. Forgive me for neglecting to follow You into green pastures and beside still waters. Lead me, Lord, and help me to follow You. Help me to find rest in You and with You, full and replenishing rest for my mind, my soul, my body and my spirit. Thank You for the weekly Sabbath You have given for my rest and Your glory – help me to honor and keep it and draw me ever closer to You, my loving Leader. Thank You that no matter how crazy life is, I can be still in Your calm, inviting presence, and simply rest. Thank You, Lord, for Your goodness and grace, for Your protection and guidance. In Jesus’s name. Amen.

Read Psalm 23 below:

¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

**² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;**

³ he restores my soul.

**He leads me in right paths
for his name’s sake.**

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

[The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Ps 23:1–6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Opening Questions:

- 1) Where do you most enjoy spending time? What about that place makes you desire to be there?

- 2) Where do you like to go to experience true and meaningful rest?

- 3) How do you prepare for rest?

- 4) When you go through stressful or difficult times, how do you remind yourself that God is with you? Did you remember in the midst of it or afterwards?

- 5) Have you ever felt as if God was chastening you? How did it feel? What was the result?

- 6) What do you think it means to have God “set a table” and why “in the presence of my enemies”?

- 7) We know, theologically, that God’s goodness and mercy are omni-present. How would mercy and goodness follow someone? How does this change our perspective on this verse?

- 8) The Psalmist’s ultimate blessing—to “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” How might this help us feel toward God and our current life circumstances?

Closing Prayer: (Unison) by Arabah Joy

Oh, precious Lord... how loving, how kind, how good and how trustworthy a shepherd You truly are. Thank You that Your love and care for me is eternal and unconditional, and that one day, I will see You face to face – my Good Shepherd! Thank You that You will guide and help me here on earth, and pursue me with goodness and mercy every day of my life. And thank You, Lord, that then, You'll lead me home for good, with no more dark valleys or wayward wandering, but an unending life of peace and joy in pastures more lovely than any I could dream or think or imagine! May Your name be glorified and praised, in everything I am and do. In Jesus's Name I ask and pray, Amen.