



SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

July 4, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

WHEN YOU'RE LONELY

You are with me.

Psalm 23:4

READ Psalm 23

At 7 p.m., Hui-Liang was in his kitchen, eating rice and leftover fish balls. The Chua family in the apartment next door was having dinner too, and their laughter and conversation cut through the silence of Hui-Liang's unit, where he had lived alone since his wife died. He'd learned to live with loneliness; over the years, its stabbing pain had become a dull ache. But tonight, the sight of the one bowl and pair of chopsticks on his table pierced him deeply.

Before he went to bed that night, Hui-Liang read Psalm 23, his favorite psalm. The words that mattered most to him are only four syllables: "You are with me" (v. 4). More than the shepherd's practical acts of care toward the sheep, it was his steadfast presence and loving gaze over every detail of the life of the sheep (vv. 2–5) that gave Hui-Liang peace.

Just knowing that someone is there, that someone is with us, brings great comfort in those lonely moments. God promises His children that His love will always be with us (Psalm 103:17), and that He'll never leave us (Hebrews 13:5). When we feel alone and unseen—whether in a quiet kitchen, on the bus going home from work, or even in a crowded supermarket—we can know that the Shepherd's gaze is always on us. We can say, "You are with me."

By **Karen Huang**

PRAY & REFLECT

Loving God, thank You for always being with me. Amen

When do you usually feel lonely? How does Psalm 23 encourage you?

For further study, read [The Lord Is My Shepherd: Rest and Renewal](#) from Psalm 23.

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

A key metaphor in this much-loved psalm is that of God's "rod" and "staff" (23:4). The Hebrew word for "rod" is *shevet*, and as used here refers to a shepherd's staff. But it can also mean the rod of a leader or a military weapon. As such, *shevet* connotes God's discipline, correction, and leadership. We might think of such an image as negative - something to be avoided - but David sees it as a source of comfort. "The Lord disciplines the one he loves," said the writer of Hebrews (12:6). God's discipline is a sign that we're His children. David was often pursued by his enemies, yet in this psalm he notes how he can eat in safety "in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5). Rather than being pursued by his enemies, it was God's "goodness and love" that followed him (v. 6). – By **Tim Gustafson**

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