

April 16, 2024

## Recognizing the Possibilities Ahead

### [Psalm 23](#)

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.<sup>[b]</sup> He leads me in right paths<sup>[c]</sup> for his name's sake.*

They say you never forget your first: first kiss, first car, first job. This is true, at least for me. My mining career took an unplanned and unexpected turn when, in 1981, I became Division Safety Inspector. Within a month, I was investigating my first mining fatality. Part of the investigation was interviewing a miner who was within a few feet of the deceased; he was operating part of the equipment that resulted in the injury and death. This man, who was my dad's age, was still shaking the next day when we interviewed him.

At random times in the interview, he would recite pieces of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. Late in the interview, during a lull, I asked him why he was doing that, thinking he was trying to calm himself and wanting to reassure him we were not there to blame him. He said that is what Frank, the deceased, was reciting as he died and those words haunted him now.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is many times associated with death. We use it at funerals and print it on items meant to comfort those who are dealing with one of life's trials or near death. Many of us memorized it when we were young, and it sticks with us today.

Being a little different sometimes, I see the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm's language and imagery in the context of life, especially *life after Easter*. Life in a time when we celebrate and try to discern how to live in the light of Jesus' resurrection – not that different from those first disciples. I see the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm as more how a person lives in harmony and relationship with God than about how one faces death and the hereafter.

Some say we are facing uncertain times. So . . . when have we humans faced “certain times”? For one who believes in the promise of Jesus' resurrection and life, it is being “an Easter person living in a Good Friday world.” We have boundless opportunities and possibilities ahead if we only have the wit and faith to take hold of them.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm describes that world of possibilities if we allow the Lord to be our Shepherd. By God's grace, focusing on the life and possibilities of Easter in front of us tends to dull and fade those uncertainties all around us.

***Prayer:*** *Glorious God, please help me remember to sing when I'm happy and sing when I'm scared because I know you listen to me. Help me see those possibilities ahead of me and learn from the trials behind me. Help me hear the whispers of the Holy Spirit to show the best paths to take. Lord, I thank you for that. In Jesus' name, AMEN.*

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