

# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 23

[Worship]

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.

### Consider:

[Words]

The context for John's gospel is the tense opposition to Jesus and his followers from synagogue leaders. Schism within the early church over Jesus' humanity colors the first Johannine epistle. Neither can squelch the hands-on immediacy of Jesus' love: The later healing by the disciples is "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (Acts 4.10).

Though 1 John 3 is born in the turbulent culture of early church upheavals, its haunting question convicts the wealthy nations of the world (both local, nationally within the US, and globally) of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's

goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (1 John 3.17).

This Psalm 23 Shepherd leads the anxious to stillness, restores their souls, and will ultimately prepare a table for them in the presence of their enemies (5).

Providential help comes in those actions that imitate Jesus' shepherding love.

*Where might that lead us today, in our pilgrimage of becoming the Church Jesus commissions to area(s) of influence?*



[Scripture]

## John 10.11-18

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."