

As follows in Jesus' name:

The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
 He leads me beside the still waters.
 He restores my soul;
 He leads me in the paths of righteousness
 For His Name's sake.
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow
 of death, I will fear no evil;
 For You are with me;
 Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me in the presence
 of my enemies;
 You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life;
 And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.^(NKJV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear fellow redeemed, especially you Ed and Nancy and Marcy,
 As one who loved animals, so much so that he desired to be Vet Tech,
 would you suppose that Scott would appreciate being called a lamb of God?

This Psalm is often used for funerals. If not preached on, it is read... and for good reason.
 It has a calming feel. It puts the mind and heart at ease.
 ... As much as we like to be in control, being in control carries a lot of stress and pressure.
 So, recognizing the Lord as your Shepherd and acknowledging that He is in control,
and that He uses that control for the good of your soul and eternal life,
can put you at peace.

But the idea of having control is hard to give up, isn't it?
 In the vigor of life, Scott felt like he could control a lot of things (like we all do).
 He was accomplished in many areas.
 He held leadership roles in his youth.
 He showed discipline in the pool on the swim team.
 While in the Navy...well, I am sure he learned a thing or two about discipline and self-control there.
 At various places of employment, he achieved awards for his care and service to customers.
 These obviously show a certain amount of discipline and self-control.

But today, we are here gathered for Scott's memorial service.
 This very fact shows each of us how much control we really have in this life.
 When it comes to life... and death... we are in the hands of our Good Shepherd.

Back in 2016, Scott got this reality check when he was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease.

He took medications to keep flare ups at bay, but there was no real controlling them.

Then life became even harder. He was living at home again, helping out Mom and Dad, but, just as much, getting help from them.

That wasn't the life he had pictured for himself... but some of these things were out of his control.

...

Where were those **green pastures** and **quiet waters** of our psalm? (pause)

As much as Scott had been active in his church in his youth,

he had not been as active in church life as an adult.

It's hard to hear your Shepherd voice, speaking to you and directing you when you aren't listening to Him regularly and often.

Prior to his first stroke, Scott would text me for brief chats. He was lonely and suffering.

He may, or may not, have recognized it this way,

but he was a wondering sheep being sought by his Shepherd and Savior.

Then in 2022, Scott had the first of numerous massive strokes.

I remember visiting him. It didn't look like Scott would survive.

I even conducted the Rite of the Commendation of the Dying for him at that time.

And then, by God's grace, he made significant recoveries over the next couple of days/weeks.

At my next visit, I remember him trying to write, even before he could speak again,

trying to control his hands to make the letters and the words that he could not get his mouth to speak.

With Scott now able to respond, we had a brief devotion.

When I asked him our usual questions of confession,

"Do you confess that you have sinned against God and do you repent of your sins?" (Rite II, page 61)

Though very difficult for him to control much of his body at that time,

He gave a clear sign of agreement.

And just as importantly, when asked, *"Do you believe that Jesus Christ*

has redeemed you from all your sins and do you desire forgiveness in His name?" (Rite II, page 61)

Again he clearly indicated that he did.

And so he heard, once again, the Lord's declaration that his sins were forgiven

on account of Jesus' crucifixion and death.

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Over the next few weeks, months, and years, Scott gained more control of his body.

He got his speech back. Then he could get up and walk.

And during his time at the care center and then at home again, we would have devotions together.

He would again hear his Shepherd speak to him, words of comfort and peace and consolation.

The Lord was using Scott's trip down **the valley of the shadow of death**, to **restore his soul**.

Scott would again and again hear of Jesus' dying love for him and hear of God's mercy & forgiveness.

And, as is my custom, I would leave him with the Salutation: **"The Lord be with you."**

It's the Church's way of reminding God's sheep that they are never alone,

the Lord is always with them.

Even in the **presence of your enemies**, **you do not need to fear, for the Lord is with you.**

It's the promise that God made to you and to Scott in Holy Baptism.

There, in that water, the Father made Scott, not only His little lamb, but His own child.^{Galatians 3:26}
There, in that water, Jesus washed away Scott's sins^{Acts 22:16} and saved him.^{1 Peter 3:21}
There, in that water, the Holy Spirit made Scott an heir to God's eternal kingdom,
to reign with his Savior and brother Jesus Christ.

It is indeed a blessed thing to acknowledge that the Lord is in control and that He is your Good Shepherd,
the One who laid down His life for the sheep, so that He might take it up again;
the One who has overcome all your enemies, even death, so that you might live without fear;
the One who, through your baptism into Him, has promised to be with you until the end of the age;
He is the One who, not only **follows**, but pursues you with **His goodness and mercy**,
all the days of your life,
so that you might **dwell** with Him **in the house of the LORD forever**.

For the **Lord's name sake then**, Jesus **pursued** Scott with His **goodness and mercy**,
calling to him in order to comfort him in his times of distress.
The last few years had not been easy for Scott. It's been hard on the family too, hasn't it?
And yet, this whole time, the Lord has been in control.
He has been directing the events in Scott's life, from his young years in the Church,
all the way through to his last years with the Church again.
And now Scott is at peace from all his troubles.
He rests in his Shepherd's arms, never to stray, never to struggle, never to suffer anymore.
Thanks be to God.

In Jesus' name. **Amen**.

Soli Deo Gloria