

Psalm 23:2–3

“He Leads Me!”

3<sup>rd</sup> Midweek of Easter

April 29, 2020

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

**[Introduction]** The old song goes...

“I’m following the leader, the leader, the leader.

I’m following the leader wherever he may go...”

Have you ever followed the leader? I mean, of course you have.

There are leaders all around us.

They can either lead us for good or for bad.

And there are so many things that can lead us astray,

and we need to be careful who we follow as our leader.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd,

LEADS us with ***the care, love, and gentleness of the faithful Shepherd.***

***[leads us rather than drives us]***

Our Shepherd leads.

Notice — twice it says leads.

He leads us gently, lovingly, and joyfully.

He leads both by word and by action.

He is not oppressive or demanding.

He is not one who pushes or drives into submission

but in humility He calls our names to follow him.

He never demands his way;

He just teaches us the truth.

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You know, some years ago, a group of tourists were traveling in the Holy Land.

The tour guide was speaking and said,

“You should know that many Palestinians are shepherds,

and if you are lucky, you may get to see a shepherd with his flock.

Pay attention.

You will see that a shepherd never drives his sheep

from behind;

he always leads them!”

No sooner had he finished talking

than the people began to look outside the bus and smile.

There ... There was a shepherd with a big stick behind some sheep.  
When the guide noticed what they were looking at,  
Embarrassed he said, "Something's wrong here!"  
He told the bus driver to pull over,  
and the guide got out to speak with the shepherd.  
A few moments later, the guide came back to the bus  
And now he was smiling.  
He said: "Well, he is not a shepherd.  
He is the butcher  
taking the sheep to the slaughter!"

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The devil wants to drive us to the slaughter and the prison of hell.  
But Jesus, the faithful Good Shepherd, does not drive us with a big stick;  
no, he leads us in tenderness and gentleness.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd,  
LEADS us with ***the care, love, and gentleness of the faithful Shepherd.***

*[leads us where he knows we need to go]*

He is our shepherd, and we are his lambs.

As his little lambs, we need God the Good Shepherd  
to watch out for us because we can get ourselves into trouble.

Just like sheep need to be watched and guided, so do we.

Our God, the faithful Good Shepherd,  
leads us to green pastures and still waters.

On our own, we have no idea where those things are.

Our faithful Good Shepherd knows where to take us.

He has shown us the path.

He has said, "***I am the way, and the truth, and the life.***

***No one comes to the Father except through me***" (Jn 14:6).

By the grace of God and the working of the Holy Spirit,

we follow him because he has gone before us,

and he will lead us to the living water and the green pastures.

The faithful Good Shepherd does not lead us

year by year or day by day but step by step.

He shows us the path to follow. Our Lord directs our steps.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd,

LEADS us with ***the care, love, and gentleness of the faithful Shepherd.***

*[leads us after first being led]*

“He leads me beside ... He leads me in paths ...” (Ps 23:2–3).

David uses two different Hebrew words for *lead*.

First, he uses a word that has the sense of  
gently helping along the weak, disabled, or sick.

Second, he uses a generic word that simply means to lead or guide.

This Shepherd, Jesus Christ, knows all too well about being led.

Isaiah said it this way:

***“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth”*** (53:7).

He knows about being led all too well.

He was led from the Garden of Gethsemane by the high priest’s soldiers.

He was led in the middle of the night to the mockery of a trial.

He was led the next morning to see Pilate.

He was led a little later to see King Herod.

He was led back to Pilate, and then ...

He was led carrying the heavy cross to Calvary.

And from the cross of Calvary, he was led to the burial site.

Yes, he knows what it means to be led.

All of this, Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep,  
did for you and me—his little lambs.

He could have stopped them from leading him,  
but he chose not to,  
instead choosing to fulfill God’s promise  
to deliver all of God’s little lambs  
from the eternal punishment of hell.

He permitted all of this to happen to him  
to spare your life and mine  
from the one who wants to slaughter us and  
imprison us in hell forever.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd,  
LEADS us with ***the care, love, and gentleness of the faithful Shepherd.***

*[leads us for his name's sake]*

And He does this all...

For his name's sake...

He leads us, tenderly, lovingly, and faithfully...

For his name's sake.

Now the adventure starts—God is taking us somewhere.

It would have been nice to stay in the green pastures by the still waters,

But we're moving.

There are forces out to get us that we can't control—

and that we may not even know about.

Nature is full of predators,

and humans are no different from any other animal in this regard.

We need protection!

Maybe even from one another!

So God leads us in the right paths . . . for his name's sake

—not for our name's sake, but for his.

That is why we, his little lambs, should know his voice and heed it.

And that is why while Jesus was on the earth,

he taught us in the Lord's Prayer to say:

“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil” (Mt 6:13).

Because there are many who would lead us astray.

The world, our sinful flesh, and the devil are out to lead us astray.

But Jesus, the caring, gentle, loving, and faithful Good Shepherd,

leads us by the still waters and to the green pastures of his Word.

He takes our hands and leads us to where we need to be

—with him forever.

*[Conclusion]*

He is the one who knows the way that leads to eternal life.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd,

LEADS us with ***the care, love, and gentleness of the faithful Shepherd.***

Amen.

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As followers of Christ, “Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)

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