



Green Pastures

Devotion

Living in the desert southwest often means that “a spot of green” is in short supply. However, in a strong monsoon season, when the rains come, grass and weeds pop up in abundance. Spending time outside pulling weeds from between the rocks in a xeriscape yard can become a full-time job. Although the weeds are plentiful and sometimes painful to pull (watch out for those thorns), their roots are shallow and lack the proper soil needed for growth.

While engaging in this task, the words of Psalm 103:15-17a often come to mind: *As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him ...* The Lord’s love is everlasting and He daily provides for us, His children. Psalm 23:1-2a says, *The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.*

No matter where we live, our lives experience times of spiritual “drought;” times when we grow weary of pulling the “weeds” that the world, the devil, and our flesh put in our path. We struggle to remain the “seed that fell on good soil” (Luke 8:8) and to produce fruit. It is so tempting to be like the seeds that spring up after the monsoons, briefly flourishing, but withering away when the hot, hard times come.

When the hot, hard times come, God helps us to cling to the words of the psalmist in Psalm 52:8: *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.* Unlike discarded weeds, each and every one of us has been handpicked by God to be His child. We are **loved**, **redeemed**, and **forgiven** as baptized followers of Christ. We are His priceless treasures and dearly loved children who trust and believe: *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall **not** want. He makes me lie down in **green** pastures* [emphases added]. That “spot of green,” the safe pasture, is there for us in our daily walk with the Shepherd. The Holy Spirit leads us to find God’s spot of green in our study of Scripture, in Holy Communion, and in prayer. The Holy Spirit helps us to share the spot of green found in the saving love of Jesus with those around us. Through God’s Word and His means of grace, we are no longer worthless, sinful weeds, to be cast into the “dumpster.” Instead, God makes us flourishing plants in His green pasture!

Prayer: Lord, remind us daily of the “green pastures” You give us. Help us to share Your grace-filled spots of green with others. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Amen.

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