

# FIRST (SCOTS) SERMONS

## “HE LEADETH ME”

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 23

*This sermon was preached by Charlie Gresham on Sunday, February 8, 2026  
at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina.*

### Psalm 23

#### The Divine Shepherd

*A Psalm of David.*

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.*

#### He Leadeth Me

Leader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

When I was 6 years old, I didn't have to go to children's church anymore. I was able to stay after the Time for Children for the big church. And after big church, I walked up to the third floor and walked into the music class for the first time with Mrs. Watson. On that Sunday, after the Old and New Testaments song, we read the 23rd Psalm. Almost every Sunday, we began with the Old and New Testaments, followed by the 23rd Psalm, the King James Version, of course.

This psalm is far more important than the beginning of Sunday School, however. It resonates with many different people and is often read at funerals, with a particular emphasis being placed on the lines, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Some years ago, my mother had an emergency appendectomy. While this is a normal event that happens to a lot of people, to ten-year-old me, I was unfamiliar with the term “emergency appendectomy.” My mother went to the hospital that afternoon and didn’t return until late that night, where she lay in bed. To me, she could have just gotten a bad case of the flu or had cancer tissue removed like my friend’s mother earlier in the year. However, God comforted me and brought me through the experience with less stress and more care for her.

The familiar words of God leading us in the darkest valleys of our lives sometimes lead us to overlook the line before it: “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Although it is often just assumed to be a preface to the line after it, it has a completely different meaning. I understand that many people have had much more traumatic experiences, but this still drives home the message: while the world offers many paths, God promises to lead us on the right path.

Unfortunately, we sometimes choose to take the wrong path. Consider what happens when you take the wrong path or get lost. How do you feel? When I have, I feel embarrassed for going the wrong way, and sometimes for taking people with me, as if I have let them down. I also sometimes worry: if I am completely lost, if I cannot find my way back, and how long it will be before I am on the right path, literally or metaphorically.

This happens to everybody at some point in their lives, not just with paths—literal and metaphorical—but also with temptation, loss, and other similar things. Psalm 23 offers assurance that God will lead you on paths of righteousness for his name’s sake, not just because he has to. He has delivered everyone else, so why would he break his streak on you?

God’s deliverance has often gone unnoticed, but it happens in your day-to-day life. It could be something as simple as a parent saying a prayer for their child as they go to school. At First (Scots), it could be a youth who is growing a relationship with God through the confirmation process, fellowship through the Wednesday Night Supper, or a Habitat for Humanity build day.

God will deliver you, even though you may be in the valley of the shadow of death. God will prepare a table for us in the presence of our enemies. He will anoint our heads with oil, and our cups overflow. Surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.