

Family Devotion Hour #4

Family Devotion written by C.M. Gullerud

And if I ever go astray,
My wayward soul he turneth,
To save the lost, to guide the way,
For this he ever yearneth;
He leadeth me, my soul to bless,
In his own path of righteousness
For his name's sake and glory. L.H. 345, Verse 3

The good Shepherd who has made me to lie down in green pastures and has led me beside the still waters and has restored my soul, also now *“guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”* It is his desire that I should not stray on a wrong path, to be attacked by the ravaging wolf who lies in wait – ready to pounce upon the prey. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them. *“When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.”* John 10:4-5 The sheep are precious in his sight, for he has clearly purchased them, having laid down his life for them. He has come that they might have life and that they might

have it more abundantly. And so he does not leave me nor desert me when once he has brought me to the green pastures and to the still waters, but he abides with me and leads me in the right paths.

The Good Shepherd keeps me in the pure doctrine that I may not be led astray by false voices, false misleading spirits which coax and entice. When the devil appears to me as an angel of light and sends his messengers which have the appearance of ministers of righteousness, I will, by the Shepherd's Word and by the sounding forth of his voice, detect them and be able to unveil their deceit and hypocrisy. I will be able to see that they are not leading me in the way of God's righteousness in Christ, but are seeking to bewitch me with their fine talk about a human's righteousness and human merit.

It may sound very pious and wholesome when a boy is encouraged to report one's church attendance, one's Bible reading, one's prayers, one's giving, one's missionary work, one's knowledge of the altar, of the liturgy and the church year. But when anyone does this as a fulfillment of requirements to receive an award, then we know that this set-up is not a leading in the

paths of righteousness that the twenty-third Psalm speaks of. In the Psalm there is no thought of awards or rank or merit or anything of the sort. Instead, all is centered upon our true identity before God. We know who we are, that we are weak and helpless and may find our righteousness alone in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who has fulfilled the Law for us. We have failed so miserably that we must stand before the altar, not to receive an award of merit, but to confess our unrighteousness. We stand before the altar to be clothed with the blessed righteousness of Jesus, which alone can stand before the judgment seat of God.

Thus I am led upon the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. All good things I enjoy because God is gracious, merciful, compassionate and full of loving kindness. This is his name and this name I would hallow by pure doctrine and a godly life. It is my desire to glorify that name and to cast out all that would profane it. This is my prayer as a sheep of God's pasture. May the Holy Spirit lead me so each hour, each day, each year, throughout life's pilgrimage, until I reach that home where every path is only righteousness and peace.
Amen

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, my Good Shepherd you have given me all that I need for body and soul. You have given me peace with the heavenly Father, so that I may spend my life in joy and contentment, knowing that all is well because of your saving work. Continue to lead me to the still waters of your grace, that my soul may be restored. Grant that I may find all my good things in you; for you have fulfilled all of the Law's demand in my place. I ask this for your own name's sake. Amen