

**AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #138** (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 11/26/20)

**“The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.”**

In this strange, crazy, disappointing, frustrating, and \_\_\_\_\_ (you pick the word) year, we may be tempted to focus on all we don't have—loved ones who have died, family gatherings, our plans and celebrations that were cancelled, a “normal” life, or broken dreams. It's easy to get sucked into the negativity, but each of us has a choice... to regret or covet what we don't have, or to be thankful for what we do have.

For a year, I had looked forward to hosting our family Thanksgiving at my home—because it's my grandpa's house. It's the house where we celebrated Thanksgiving during all my growing-up years and many years after when my brother and his family lived here. So, after not having our family Thanksgiving here for a few years, we'd all return “home” to grandpa's... However, because of the pandemic, that didn't happen. Instead of having a houseful, we just had three—my girls and me. Although I regret not getting to spend time with my extended family, I rejoice that my girls and I live here, that we could use my grandma's china and glasses that we used when I grew up (and I could tell my girls about it), that we could go for a walk after our meal (our family always used to go for a hike Thanksgiving afternoon), that we still have our family—even if we couldn't be with them today, and most of all, that we have Jesus who loves us and is with us—no matter what.

On this Thanksgiving Day, perhaps you, like I, had to choose to focus on what I do have instead of what I don't have. As I made that choice repeatedly throughout the day, God reminded me of Psalm 23:1 (NLT),

**“The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.”**

When Jesus is our LORD and shepherd, he is with us, takes care of me, loves us unconditionally, forgives us for all our sins, gives us new and eternal life, gives us an abiding joy that can withstand the deepest sorrow, gives us hope for this life and the life to come, guides us, and gives us everything we do have—life, family, friends, work, home, food, clothing, and all the countless other blessings God has provided!

On this Thanksgiving Day and every day, let us continue to choose to give thanks to God! Let us remember that when Jesus, the LORD, is our shepherd, we have all that we need!

**PRAYER:** For your prayer focus on the attached picture. (I don't know who painted it; but I love it.) Imagine you are the lamb in the picture, and Jesus is holding you... Rest in him... Feel his loving arms holding you... and know that realize/remember that he is all you need! As you rest in Jesus, count your blessings—and choose to give thanks!

