



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### June 11, 2023

## Love restores my soul

Recap of Sermon from 6/11/23 by Robb McCoy  
Scripture: Psalm 23:2-3a

Last year in early October I was feeling worn out. After six months of working out hard six times a week, my body was starting to wear down. I had made a major shift toward fitness and health in March, but I was worn thin emotionally and physically. I pulled a muscle in my abdomen by doing too many sit-ups. I knew I needed a break to get healthy. I was also afraid to take a break. I was afraid that if I stopped going to the gym every day, I wouldn't start back up. I was afraid that I stopped, I would begin another downward spiral. I was afraid to take a break. I was afraid not to take a break. I was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

I went to the doctor to check on my abdomen. I was afraid it was a hernia. At the same time, I had a little bit of a cold. The doctor's diagnosis was mixed. I didn't have a hernia, but I did have COVID. He got me the antiviral medicine, and told me to rest. My case was mild. I basically slept for about 36 hours when I got home. A week later I was recovered, my abdomen felt better, and I started working out again, and on Halloween I ran a 5K with a time that far surpassed my goal.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures. He restores my soul," reads one translation of the twenty-third Psalm. "He makes me lie down," indeed. I do not believe that God gave me COVID so that I would rest, but I do think that sometimes we need to be made to lie down. Sometimes our bodies just say, "enough." Sometimes it comes in the form of an injury, a sickness, or depression.

What if we pivoted our thinking about depression from a thing we must overcome and avoid and considered it instead a time when the good shepherd "makes



us lie down." Surely this isn't the case always. Serious depressive disorders are not of God. Mental illness is serious, and I do not mean this to be a diagnosis or a sweeping generalization about depression. I simply offer a small change of perspective that may help. I was made to lie down, and I was better for it.

The Good Shepherd "restores my soul" by providing the essentials of life (green pastures and still water). Much-needed Sabbath rest can also restore my soul. Robert Alter, a renowned Hebrew scholar, translates this line "My life He brings back." Soul in Hebrew thinking is not something we have. It is something we are. Soul refers to the whole being of a person. It can be translated literally as "throat," but also can be "life, breath, pleasure (sexual), appetite, body, or creature." God restores my life. Sabbath restores my life. Love restores my life.

Jesus, when he described himself as the "Good Shepherd" in John 10, told his disciples that he came so that we may have life, and have it abundantly. The Good Shepherd loves us so that we may have life abundant. The Good Shepherd leads us not just in length of life, or in life after death, but in depth, wonder, meaning, and pleasure in life. Psalm 23 reminds us that God's love brings back life, even if sometimes God makes it happen.

**Next Week: Psalm 23:3b**  
**Love is the Right Path.**