

Psalm 23 - Rod and Staff

A rod is two feet long. It looks like a club. It has a number uses like those listed below:

- It was used by the shepherd to defend himself and his sheep.
- It could be thrown at animals that attacked.
- It could also be thrown ahead of a wandering sheep to startle it back from the brink of danger.
- It was used to have sheep pass under to make sure each sheep has gone into the sheepfold at night.
- It could be used to separate the shepherd's sheep from those that belong to other shepherds.

The staff is a long straight walking stick. It, too, has a number of uses listed below:

- It served the shepherd as he walked.
- It was used to guide the sheep.
- It was used to pull down leafy branches for the sheep.
- It was used to draw the sheep back together.
- At times a shepherd even laid his staff gently on the side of a sheep to keep in touch with the animal, like walking hand-in-hand with a friend.

God's Word is my rod and staff. That Word:

- Shows me my sin and leads me to confess them.
- Tells me that my sins are covered by the ultimate shepherd, Jesus.
- Keeps me in the straight and narrow path.
- Guides me in my daily living.

Luther: "You see, then, that the prophet is not speaking here of any human help, protection, and comfort. He does not draw a sword. Everything is done here in a hidden and mysterious manner through the Word, so that no one becomes aware of any protection and comfort but the believers alone."

Prayer:

Dear Lord, so often I am tempted to go astray. Guide me when temptations come and give me strength to resist them. Use Your Word as a guide for my daily path. Amen.