

**PSALM 23: The Dark Valley**  
**DEVOTION AND DISCUSSION NOTES**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. <sup>3</sup> He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

**Opening Discussion:**

- Read Psalm 23. How has Psalm 23 helped you find rest and restoration when your world is rocked?
- God loves to develop a story where the obstacles are great and the time is short, because the greater the trial, the greater the suspense = the greater the victory. The greater the victory, the greater glory He receives!
- How has your life proven this principle to be true? Can you think of a specific example?

**Key thought:** Your life is a story that includes walking through the dark places of life, yet finding faith in the One who walks with you.

**1) The Valley is Part of Your Story: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”**

a. Valleys are inevitable.

- Read Matt 4:1. How does this remind you that you that valleys should not catch you by surprise?
- Life principle: God will often lead us where we do not want to go, to get us to where He wants us to be.
- Read Psalm 37:23. How would you put this verse into your own words? How does it relate to the life principle above?

b. Valleys are impartial.

- You are not alone in the valley. Consider Covid-19, did God send the storm, or did He send us into the storm? What does this teach you?
- Life principle: Your low is not God’s punishment for your behavior just as your high is not God’s reward for your behavior.
- Read Matt. 5:45. How does this verse help you understand your story better?

- c. Valleys produce fruit.
  - Life principle: Mountain tops are beautiful, but valleys are fruitful.
  - Read Gal. 5:22-23. What fruit has been produced in your life as you walked through a recent valley?
- d. Valleys produce faith.
  - Life principle. It's not about what happened as went down into the valley, but about how you came up out of the valley.
  - Read 1 Peter 1:7. How do these words encourage you in your valley? Is there someone that is currently walking through a valley that you can share the truth of this verse with?

**2) The Author of Your Story is With You in the Valley: “I will fear no evil, for you are with me...”**

- a. Your Shepherd is a fearless leader.
  - Read Prov. 3:5. How does this encourage you as you walk out your story?
- b. Your Shepherd is a faithful light.
  - Read Psalm 119:105. Is there a Scripture in God's Word that has guided you in recent times?
  - Life principle: The Author of your story wrote in a Shepherd who is both a leader and a light.

**3) Even in Your Greatest Conflict, You Can Find Greater Comfort: “Your rod and your staff, they comfort me...”**

- a. The Rod = The protection of the Lord.
- b. The Staff = The direction of the Lord.
  - Read Heb. 12:6. How did the illustration of the rod and staff speak to you?
  - Life principle: The motivation of the Shepherd's discipline is always love.

**Application: 4 Keys for Walking Through Your Valley**

- Remember the valley is inevitable and necessary, but not permanent. You will emerge!
- Trust the One who not only brought you in, but will also bring you out!
- Look for the fruit in the valley. It is plentiful!
- Expect to emerge faith-filled. Stronger on the other side!