

PSALM 23

THANKFUL 4 His Presence
Pastor E. Paul Allen

The LORD is my shepherd; I have what I need. 2 He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He renews my life; He leads me along the right paths for His name's sake. 4 Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD as long as I live. Psalm 23:1-6 CSB
4 **Even when I go through the darkest valley**, I fear no danger, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 CSB

1. You will have dark valleys in life.

Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for You are with me; Your rod and staff—they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 CSB

- We all walk through difficult moments in life. Don't be surprised when life gets hard. This isn't necessarily a sign of unfaithfulness.
- Read: 1 Peter 4:12, Matthew 10:24-25.
 - a. What is a dark valley that you've had to walk through? Are you currently in a dark valley?

2. The Good Shepherd is *always* with you.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. 2 Timothy 1:7
I sought the LORD, and He answered me and rescued me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4
I will never leave you or abandon you. Hebrews 13:5b

- Even when we walk through a dark valley in life, we don't have to be afraid because God is always with us.
 - a. How have you felt God's presence in your life as you walked through a dark valley?

*Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for You are with me; **Your rod and staff—they comfort me.*** Psalm 23:4

- The rod and the staff are tools used by shepherds to guide sheep. Having sheep pass under a rod was a way of counting them (Lev 27:32). Here, the rod symbolizes Yahweh's protection and care. Elsewhere, it serves as a symbol of divine discipline (Psalm 89:32, 2 Samuel 7:14).
 - b. When has the Good Shepherd used His Word to lead, protect, care for, or discipline you as you walked through a dark valley?

3. The Good Shepherd *will comfort you.*

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. ⁴He comforts us in all our affliction,^[a] so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

- There are times when you'll experience suffering and receive comfort from God so that you can then comfort others.
 - a. Has there been a time when you've been comforted by someone who's walked a similar valley to yours? How did it feel to know there was someone else who knew what you were going through?
 - b. What life experiences have you had that can help shed light to comfort others? Be encouraged that your suffering isn't wasted. You can use it to help and comfort others and to glorify God. What steps can you take towards this today?

Soul-tattoo: Remember, the Good Shepherd says, "I will never leave you nor abandon you!"