

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL FINISH UP LOOKING AT PSALM 23 IN OUR BRIEF RESPITE FROM PHIL.

▶▶Let's jump right in.

IN VS. 4, ~ DAVID TALKS ABOUT DARK VALLEYS. ~~ LET'S BEGIN BY LOOKING AT verse 4a.

EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

▶▶Now, ~ this is not talking exclusively about death, ~ or more specifically, ~ the process of dying. ~~ As mentioned a few times, ~ moment of death is gain for the believer.

▶▶"the valley of the shadow of death" can be translated as "dark valley" or "darkest valley."

▷▷"Even though I walk through a dark valley," or "Even though I walk through the darkest valley.

↳↳It can refer to any difficult time in our lives, ~ such as afflictions, ~ trials, ~ suffering, ~ and, ~ of course, ~ the process of dying.

I'D LIKE US TO OBSERVE TWO THINGS HERE IN VERSE 4a.

▶▶1st, ~ our Shepherd does not keep us from the dark valleys.

▷▷After the feeding of the 5,000, ~ Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and go before him to the other side, ~ while he dismissed the people.

▷▷And afterwards he went up on the mountain to pray.

▷▷Meanwhile, ~ the boat with the disciples is being beaten by the waves because of high winds. ~~ Hold on now, ~ Jesus is omniscient. ~~ He knew the storm was coming.

↳↳Of course he was going to save them, ~ this is when he walked on water, ~ but that's not the point here.

▷▷The point here is that, ~ knowing all things, ~ Jesus sent the disciples into the storm.

↳↳He didn't say, ~ "a storm is brewing, ~ so let's wait until it's over and then go in the boat to the other side." ~~ No, ~ Jesus does not keep us from the dark valleys. 🚫 1/7

▷▷ But purposefully so. ~ The hymn sums the purpose up quite nicely.

↳↳ When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, ~ My grace, ~ all-sufficient, ~ shall be thy supply; ~ The flame shall not hurt thee; ~ ~ ↴↴

→→ I only design thy dross to consume, ~ and thy gold to refine.

↳↳ In his first epistle, ~ Peter, ~ writing primarily about persecution but applicable to every type of dark valley, ~ says these things are necessary.

↳↳ When we find ourselves in dark valleys, ~ always remember that God's people are never needlessly afflicted.

→→ Yahweh, ~ our good shepherd, ~ always has a purpose for allowing us to go through dark valleys.

↳↳ And since Yahweh is always good, ~ we can rest assured the purpose is always good.

→→ E.g., ~ After telling us trials are necessary, ~ Peter says why they are necessary. ~ They prove the genuineness of our faith. (1 Pet. 1)

▷▷ Along with that, ~ always keep these few things in mind as well, ~ when we find ourselves in dark valleys.

↳↳ For one thing, ~ Scripture teaches us that nothing and no one can touch us without God's permission. ~ E.g., ~ Satan had to ask permission to sift

↳↳ Also, ~ God sets boundaries on what can be done to us.

→→ E.g., ~ God allowed Satan to do some things to Job, ~ but not others. ~ Satan could not go beyond what God allowed.

↳↳ Furthermore, ~ in the hands of a sovereign and loving Shepherd, ~ the eventual outcome of whatever we're going through will be for our ultimate good.

→→ Paul states it clearly in [Rom. 8:28](#). ~ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

▶▶ The 2nd thing I would like us to observe here in [verse 4a](#) is this.

▷▷ Notice carefully what David says, ~ ["Even though I walk through a dark valley."](#) ~ ["through"](#) is the key word here. ↴↴ 2/7

▷▷IOW, ~ we do not take up permanent residence in the dark valleys we encounter in life.

▷▷But we should point out: ~~ there's no mention of how long we'll spend in the dark valleys, ~ just that we will not take up permanent residence in them. ~~ Joseph

▷▷And we should mention here as well that, ~ even though Jesus sent the disciples into the storm, ~ he had every intention on getting them to other shore, ~ no matter what happened in between.

↪↪And he did. ~~ He brought them through it safely. ~~ They didn't permanently stay on the boat in the stormy water.

▷▷And we can rest assured that Yahweh, ~ our shepherd, ~ has the same intention for us.

▷▷My, ~ when we find ourselves in dark valleys, ~ we can take comfort in knowing that it is only temporary. ~~ We are going through, ~~ We are not staying.

VERSE 4b. ~ I WILL FEAR NO EVIL. ~~ I.E., ~ EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH A dark valley, ~ i will fear no evil.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "EVIL" HERE MEANS DANGER, ~ HARM, ~ INJURY.

▶▶In brief, ~ David was not overcome by fear in any way. ~~ He was fearless even when he found himself in a dark valley.

▶▶All of Yahweh's blood-bought people can be fearless even in the darkest of valleys.

▶▶But why is this so? ~~ Why can we be fearless even in the darkest of valleys? ~~ This is a pretty bold statement.

WELL, ~ IN VERSE 4c, ~ DAVID TELLS US WHY WE CAN BE FEARLESS.

WE HAVE THE PROMISE OF THE PRESENCE OF YAHWEH, ~ OUR SHEPHERD. ~~ "FOR you," ~ Yahweh, ~ "are with me."

▶▶Our shepherd is right there with us even in the darkest of valleys. ~~ When we enter a dark valley in life, ~ he does not say, ~ "see you on the other side, ~ good luck to you."

▷▷He does not keep us from the dark valleys, ~ but he goes right through with us.

▶▶In Is. 43:2a, ~ Yahweh, ~ our shepherd, ~ reinforces this truth, ~ "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." ~~ Again, ~ doesn't keep us from but goes right through with us. ↯↯ 3/7

▶▶ [Heb. 13:5b](#) drives this promise home as well, ~ "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ~
And that means even in the darkest of valleys.

▶▶ And Jesus buttresses his promise at the end of the great commission. ~ [Matt. 28:20b](#), ~
"And behold, ~ I am with you always, ~ to the end of the age."

▷▷ Not sometimes. ~ Not only in the good times. ~ No, ~ He is with us at all times.

▶▶ Loved ones, ~ this is an indisputable fact, ~ reinforced over and over in Scripture. ~
Yahweh, ~ our shepherd, ~ is always with us.

▷▷ There will be times when we are going through dark valleys that we feel as if our Lord
has abandoned us. ~ David felt that way in the opening verses of [Ps. 13](#).

↪↪ But let us never go by feelings, ~ but by the truth of Scripture. ~ And always keep
in mind what the author of Hebrews says, ~ "it is impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6)

→→ "I will be with you." ~ He's not lying. ~ "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
~ He's not lying. ~ "I am with you always." ~ He's not lying.

AND HERE IS SOMETHING THAT SHOULD ADD TO OUR FEARLESSNESS.

▶▶ My . . . , ~ because Yahweh has saved us, ~ has a personal relationship with each of us, ~
and we are his people, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he, ~ the sovereign, ~ all-powerful God of the universe, ~ is not only present with us, ~
but is also for us and will act on our behalf.

▶▶ [Ps. 56:9b](#), ~ "This I know, that God is for me." ☞☞☞ [Ps. 118:6](#), ~ "The Lord is on my side;
I will not fear. What can man do to me?" ☞☞☞ And [Rom. 8:31](#), ~ "What then shall we say to
these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

▶▶ So we have no need to fear even the darkest of valleys. ~ Our shepherd is with us and
working on our behalf right there in the valley. ~ Again, ~ Joseph is an example

**IN VERSE 4d, ~ DAVID TELLS US WHAT WILL GIVE US COMFORT IN THE MIDST OF
the dark valleys of our lives. ~ Yahweh's rod and staff.**

THE ROD WAS USED BY A SHEPHERD TO FIGHT OFF THE WILD ANIMALS. ~ AND THE
staff was used to help guide the sheep.

▶▶ So it's talking about protection and guidance. ~ This is the principle or idea that David's
words convey. ¶¶ 4/7

APPLIED TO ALL BELIEVERS, ~ PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE THROUGH LIFE, ~ AND especially through the dark valleys we encounter in life, ~ comes from God's word.

▶▶ God's word gives us protection from our spiritual enemies.

▷▷ Think about it, ~ when we are going through dark valleys, ~ 77

↳↳ that is the time the spiritual forces of evil come full force against us ~ in order to get us to follow Job's wife's advice. ~ I.e., ~ to "Curse God and die."

▶▶ And God's word guides us not only on the paths of righteousness, ~ which mentioned last time, ~ but also provides guidance through the dark valleys we occasionally find ourselves in.

▶▶ And this protection and guidance, ~ my friends, ~ should give us great comfort no matter what we're going through in this life.

▶▶ But there's a catch. ~ God's word won't give us any comfort if we don't meditate on it and hide it in our hearts. ~ By meditate I mean carefully read, ~ study, ~ and think about often.

▷▷ If we don't know Scripture enough so it's readily available to provide the comfort we need, ~ what's the logical conclusion? ~ We will not find the comfort we need. ~ Right?

↳↳ A seldom-or-never-opened, ~ dust-covered Bible benefits no one but Satan.

▶▶ The psalmist illustrates this in Ps. 119:52. ~ LEB ~ "I remember your ordinances of old, ~ O Yahweh, ~ and I take comfort."

▷▷ Obviously, ~ he had meditated on God's word and stored it in his heart and therefore was able to remember it and then, ~ as a result, ~ be comforted by it.

↳↳ A definite lesson for us to learn.

IN VS. 5, ~ DAVID TURNS FROM THE DARK VALLEYS TO being surrounded by enemies.

YAHWEH, ~ OUR SHEPHERD, ~ PREPARES A TABLE, ~ OR A FEAST, ~ BEFORE US IN THE presence of our enemies; ~ he anoints our head with oil; ~ our cup overflows.

▶▶ Ok, ~ let's briefly unpack this to see what's going on.

▶▶ 1st, ~ the Lord prepares a table for us.

▷▷ In preparing a feast for us, ~ we are assured of his presence even when we are surrounded by enemies. ~ He must be present in order to prepare a feast for us. 77 5/7

▷▷ In preparing a table for us, ~ he does not forsake us in fear of hostile forces, ~ human or demonic. ~~ Yahweh is sovereign and all-powerful. ~~ He fears no one.

↳↳ Have you not known? ~~ Have you not heard? ~~ Isaiah asks us. ~~ The Lord is the everlasting God, ~ the Creator of the ends of the earth.

▷▷ And in preparing a feast for us, ~ we are assured of his provision of our needs even when the enemy is breathing down our necks.

↳↳ What if they seize my house? ~~ Yahweh will provide for us. ~~ What if I lose my job because of my faith? ~~ Yahweh will provide for us.

→→ What if ____? ~~ Yahweh, ~ I think we get the point.

▶▶ Secondly, ~ continuing in [verse 5](#), ~ he anoints our head with oil.

▷▷ The anointing "oil" is often related to the gift of the Holy Spirit. ~~ When Samuel took oil to anoint David king over Israel, ~ the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

▷▷ Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment of conversion.

↳↳ And John tells us excellent news, ~ 1 Jn. 4:4, ~ "he who is in [us] is greater than he who is in the world."

▷▷ And we cannot hope to be victorious in the Christian life apart from God the Holy Spirit. ~~ [Zech. 4:6b](#), ~ Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. ~~ [With him, ~ we will not be defeated.](#)

▶▶ Thirdly, ~ and finally in [verse 5](#). ~~ Our "cup overflows." ~~ "cup" = cup of blessing.

▷▷ And since we are not promised material blessings, ~ this, ~ of course, ~ refers to a spiritual cup overflowing with spiritual blessings. ~~ And our cup is definitely overflowing.

▷▷ Paul tells us in Eph. that God "[blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.](#)" ~~ Adopted, ~ Redeemed, ~ Forgiven, ~ Inheritance, ~ Grace, & on & on.

▷▷ And no matter what our enemies do, ~ they can neither steal ~ nor destroy ~ our cup.

▶▶ Loved ones, ~ all of this should give us great encouragement and courage in the presence of surrounding hostile forces, ~ human or demonic.

IN VERSE 6a, ~ DAVID TELLS US, ~ SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW believers all the days of our lives. ↯↯ 6/7

FROM THE MOMENT WE ARE BORN AGAIN TO THE MOMENT WE ENTER into our Savior's presence, ~ we are assured of being beneficiaries of Yahweh's goodness and mercy.

▶▶ Trust me, ~ this is better than having all the material wealth in the world!

▷▷ I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold, ~~ I'd rather be his than have riches untold; ~ I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands; ~~ I'd rather be led by his nail-pierced hand.

▶▶ And our Shepherd will never be in short supply of these blessings for us. ~ His goodness and mercy are vast, ~ bottomless oceans that will never run dry. ~~ He will keep pouring them upon us.

▶▶ David here is talking specifically of our human lives. ~ But we can rest assured that Yahweh's goodness and mercy will follow us throughout eternity as well.

AND HERE'S THE END RESULT OF YAHWEH BEING OUR SHEPHERD.

VERSE 6b. ~~ AND I SHALL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER.

▶▶ My . . . , ~ our great shepherd will lead us throughout our lives and then bring us safely into his heavenly kingdom.

▶▶ Loved ones, ~ for all those who have repented of their sins and have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord, ~ 77

▷▷ we will leave all the dark valleys and all of our enemies behind, ~ never to be plagued by them again, ~ and join our Shepherd in our Father's house forever.

CONCLUSION.

AND THAT, ~ MY . . . , ~ BRINGS US TO THE END OF OUR LOOK AT this wonderful Psalm.

▶▶ I hope that, ~ as a result, ~ for every believer here, ~ including myself, ~ I hope that our trust and confidence in the Lord has been strengthened, ~ 77

▷▷ that everyone has been greatly encouraged, ~ and that we are all walking away from this with a greater appreciation & sense of awe for Yahweh, ~ our Shepherd.

LET'S PRAY AND THEN CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER . . . 7/7

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