

SERMON NOTES

Title: The Valley of Death's Shadow

Text: Psalm 23:4

Topic: God's Comforting Presence

Teacher: Dr. Barry D. Lovett

Time: 6/6/21

File Under: Christian Living



*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; Psalm 23:4a*

Would you rather be hit by a truck or the shadow of the truck? - Donald Barnhouse

Death has the **darkest** shadow of all.

We tend to think that Psalm 23 is about death, but it's **not only** about death.

The literal Hebrew means, "*the valley of **deepest darkness.***"

Life has **many other** valleys thorough which we must walk: broken relationships, sickness, divorce, bankruptcy, betrayal, unemployment, addiction, depression.

Some valleys that are so difficult that even though **many years have passed** it's still hard to fight back the emotions when you think about it.

Even though we walk the deepest darkest valleys, we need not fear evil because **He is with us.**

We tend not to **connect** the earlier lines that say, *He leads us in paths of righteousness.*

The deep and dark valleys of life are not necessarily there because we have done **something wrong.**

The valleys are never our **destination.** We walk through the valley, not to it.

Our experience in the valley is often one of **fear.**

Reasons fear strikes: past **experiences, ignorance, evil,** and the reality that bad things happen to good people.

We can **assume full responsibility** for every problem in life, or we can **trust** the Shepherd.

If there is ever a time the Shepherd is **closest** to us, it is in the deepest and the darkest of valleys.

Notice the **intimacy** of the words chosen: "Even though **I** walk...The Lord is **my** shepherd...Surely goodness and mercy shall follow **me**..."

Lay your fears at the foot of the cross and say, Dear Jesus, "*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because you are with me?*"

DIGGING DEEPER: [From Psalm 23] David now departs from the "rock" and "stronghold" images of God. From what part of his life does this psalm come (see I Samuel 16:10-12)? What second image is used (vs' 5-6)? What are the possible meanings of "anointment" (I Sam. 16:13; Luke 7:46)?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION: Read Psalm 23 in the negative (The Lord is not my shepherd...). Which verse is most disturbing? What dark valley are you walking through now? Has God rescued you or protected you with His rod and staff? What green pastures and still waters has He brought your way? What would you like your cup to overflow with?