



My Protector and My Comforter

Psalm 23:4

AS WE GO THROUGH DARK TIMES, REFLECT ON...

- Some challenges are difficult but we know we have to face them to reach our goal – “*Courage*”
- Some challenges are less overwhelming when we realize who is by our side – “*Faith*”





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Psalm 23:1-4

Valley of the Shadow of Death

- Places where sheep are vulnerable and exposed = difficult times we face in life
- “True security for sheep is not found in the absence of danger but in the presence of the shepherd.”



– Ion Solomon, *The 23rd Psalm for the 21st Century*

HARD TIMES WILL NOT LAST FOREVER

“EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY...”



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Shepherds do not move their sheep *to* the dark valleys,
they move them *through* the dark valleys

- **Galatians 6:9** – “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”
- **Psalm 34:19** – “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.”
- **Psalm 30:5b** – “Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.”
- **Philippians 4:8** – “...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
- **Sister Doris...** “This too shall past”

EXPERIENCE A NEW CLOSENESS TO OUR SAVIOR

"I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR YOU ARE WITH ME..."



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Sheep were often able to **experience the presence of their Shepherd** even more during times in the valley

- **Joshua 1:9** – “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord Your God will be with you wherever you go.”
- **Matthew 28:19-20** – “Go and make disciples of all the nations... and be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
- **Philippians 3:10-11** – “I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!”
- **Casing Crowns...** “Praise You in This Storm”

THERE IS ALWAYS PURPOSE AND PROTECTION

“YOUR ROD AND STAFF PROTECT AND COMFORT ME”



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If a Shepherd leads his sheep through the valley it is not by accident, and he does not leave them defenseless

- **Psalm 27:1** – “The Lord is my light and my salvation - so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?”
- **Psalm 91:9-11** - “Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place... no evil shall be allowed to befall you... for He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all of your ways.”
- **Psalm 119:11, 105** – “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.... Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
- We ask a lot of questions, God always answers what we need to know

WHAT DARK VALLEY MIGHT YOU BE FACING?

As Your Shepherd Leads You Through, Remember...

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- Experience a New Closeness to Our Savior
- There is Always Purpose and Protection



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