

Sermon: **“Fearless in the Valley of Death” (Psalm 23:4)**

Date: **April 12, 2020**

We continue our study in Psalm 23 as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This week, we come to Psalm 23:4. This is a fitting verse for both Easter weekend as well as the present situation in which we find ourselves. Psalm 23:4 says this, *“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.”* At this point in the psalm, as the Shepherd continues to lead his sheep, we come to the most dangerous leg of the journey. We are traversing the valley of the shadow of death. There are unknown dangers and threats along the way in this dark valley. And we’re even confronted by death itself. Yet, we must continue to fix our eyes on the Good Shepherd. We follow his lead. He is with us every step of the way. He comforts us with his rod and his staff. Thus, we fear no evil. When the world panics and frets, we remain courageous and fearless. Because the Shepherd is with us. And he’s already conquered this valley. He’s been through it before. And remember: he rose in victory over it.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

### **Individual Bible Study**

1. Please read Psalm 23 and ensure that you’ve listened to Sunday’s sermon.
  - a. Describe the valleys in the hill country of Judah and explain how this background knowledge further illustrates “the valley of the shadow of death.”
  - b. How is verse 4 like an autobiographical statement of King David’s life?
  - c. Explain the meaning of the word “shadow” in the phrase “the shadow of death.”
  - d. What does David do when he’s confronted by the shadow of death? What does this say to us about how we ought to approach this dark valley?
  - e. While walking through the valley of the shadow of death, what is the Christian’s response? Why is the Christian able to respond in this way?
  - f. Verses 1-3 refer to God in the third person (“he”). Verse 4 refers to him in the second person (“you”). Why is this significant?

g. What does a shepherd use his “rod” for? What does a shepherd use his “staff” for?

h. How does our Shepherd’s rod and his staff bring us comfort in the valley?

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. In what ways does the phrase “the valley of the shadow of death” relate to our current situation?
3. Why is it that a child of God need not fear the valley of the shadow of death? What would you say to a Christian who is struggling with fear because of all that is going on around us?
4. In the sermon, we were asked to consider this question: *“At what point do Christians say that the public worship of Christ is more important to us than avoiding a virus?”* What do you think? Be sure to use Scripture to back up your answer.
5. How can we as Christians practically help and care for one another in this midst of this pandemic? How can we wisely be the hands and feet of Jesus to the world around us in the midst this pandemic?
6. How does the gospel – our Shepherd’s victory over death itself – give us hope when we traverse the valley of the shadow of death?

### **Church-Wide Prayer Requests**

- Pray that the Lord would hasten the day when we can gather again for public worship (Hebrews 10:25)
- Pray for the Lord helps us to rejoice in our sufferings and to grow in our sanctification through this trial (Romans 5:3-5).