

# Walking Thru the Valley

Text-Psalm 23:4

**Introduction:** 3,000 years ago, David wrote the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. His bones have long since gone back to dust. The harp he played is gone. His staff is nowhere to be found. The sling he killed Goliath with has been lost forever. The parchment he used to write on is gone. The quill is gone. All of this has collapsed into dust. **But this Psalm remains.**

**Dr. Tom Wallace** said, *"Its message is still here. It still has challenge. It still gives comfort. There is still a ring in its bell. It's still in tune with its time. There is nothing stale, musty or moldy here."*

We still read it with great profit at the bedside of our sick and to comfort at the graveside of our dead. Millions recite it before surgery. Even more quote it at the end of the day before retiring for bed.

Psalm 23 has been called *"The Pearl of the Psalms."* It consists of 118 words, but 116 are devoted to explaining the first two – **THE LORD**.

**John Phillips** found three aspects of Psalm 23 written alongside the psalm in his mother's open Bible, by her bed, the day after she died:

1. **Happy in Life. (1-3)**
2. **Happy in Death. (4)**
3. **Happy in Eternity. (6)**

But this Psalm is about more than a neat sermon outline or the number of words or verses in it. It is more than just about green pastures, still waters, tables and cups running over.

***The Psalm is about the LORD...***

***Who walks with us through the valleys of life.***

Psalm 23 describes the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. Of all the ways He could have chosen to describe us, He could have said, **"My people are like bears, they are strong!"** He could have said, **"My people are like lions, fearless and brave!"** He could have said, **"My people are like foxes, shrewd and wise."** He could have even said, **"My people are like doves, peaceful and meek."**

Instead, He refers to His people as sheep.

***"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."*** (Isaiah 53: 6)

Sheep do not have the reputation for being smart, shrewd or superior; they have the reputation for being **stupid**. They are **dumb** and they are **defenseless**! They require a shepherd to care for them, protect them, and to provide the basic necessities of life.

It is sometimes necessary for the shepherds in Israel, in leading the flock from one pasture to another, to lead them through a dark ravine or narrow valley. In these narrow valleys are wild beasts that lurk ready to spring forth upon the sheep. Robbers hide there, ready to steal the sheep. There are the jagged rocks and sharp thorns that will bruise and tear the bodies. Poisonous serpents are in the way. The paths are rough, but there is no fear in the sheep for the shepherd is with them.

In vs. 4, we are introduced to the word **"YEA"** meaning *"moreover, furthermore..."* *"There's More!"*

It is saying, *"On top of everything you know about the Shepherd, when your walking thru the valley, here's something more to know"*

## 3 Things to Know When Walking Thru the Valley

### 1-Faith is Made **Pure** When You're Walking Thru the Valley

Faith in the Saviour, not ourselves, our efforts, our friends, our talents, our government, etc. Here are things:

#### **In Opposition to our faith... FEAR/FOES/FALSEHOODS**

##### **Ill. Spurgeon said:**

- A shadow of a dog cannot bite you.
- A shadow of a sword cannot kill you.
- A shadow of a serpent cannot bite you.
- A shadow of death cannot separate the believer from life.

#### **In Operation of our faith... PACE/RACE/GRACE**

### 2-Faith is Made **Personal** When You're Walking Thru the Valley

Change of "I" to "thou" means that he is no longer talking **ABOUT** the Shepherd, he is talking **TO** the Shepherd.

We have a **PERSONAL** Saviour, a **PERSONAL** God, a **PERSONAL** Lord.

### 3-Faith is Made Precious When You're Walking Thru the Valley

"thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." These were there from the beginning of the psalm but stand out here after going thru the valley.

#### Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

There are two different instruments.

The rod is a club, it's 2½ feet long, the head is knobby.

The staff is a crook, it's 6½ feet long

Let's look at its distinctions.

- The rod speaks of *authority*.      The staff of *aid*
- The rod for *defense*.              The staff for *direction*
- The rod is to *rule*.                 The staff for *restoration*
- The rod used for *enemies*.        The staff for *sheep*
- The rod used to *govern*.         The staff for *guidance*

Our Shepherd has these tools and uses them as He sees fit but they are not there to scare us but to "comfort" us.

They remind us that whether He has to use His rod of authority to defend us and take down our enemies, or if He uses His staff to count, care, and cure us... He will take comfort us as we walk thru the valley.

And, where does this all take us?

**Psalm 23:6** *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*

As a poor and unknown young man, Matthew Henry, the renowned Bible scholar wished to marry a girl whose father did not approve of the marriage. The father argued that, although he was a good scholar, and an excellent preacher, "they did not even know where he came from." The daughter had a ready answer. She said, "Daddy, I may not know where he came from, but I know where he is going; and, I want to go with him."