

Psalm 23:4

THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY

- I. The valley.
 - A. The figure is that of sheep going to or from high pastures, and the best way to travel was through the valleys.
 - B. The spiritual reality is that death's shadow often hangs over the heads of God's people in this present evil world.
 - 1. Death surrounds the believer: plants, animals, loved ones.
 - 2. Also there is the presence of "evil."
 - C. Thus there is much occasion for fear for our safety, whether our Shepherd will forsake us when we sin.
- II. But the sheep of God have no reason to fear when they walk through the valley.
 - A. The chief reason we need not fear the fearful shadows of the valley is because the Shepherd is "with me."
 - 1. When our eyes adjust to the shadow we see that He is with us.
 - 2. Also we see that our Good Shepherd went before us through the valley, and He did so because of His love for His sheep.
 - 3. And this Good Shepherd is now "with" us as we walk through the valley.
 - B. As valleys are the best way to climb a mountain range, so they are the best way to higher spirituality.
 - 1. We walk "through" them on our way to higher ground.
 - 2. Also we realize that in the valley we find refreshing water and temporary pasturage as we travel.
 - C. Thus "I will fear no evil."
- III. My Shepherd's presence is in His "rod and staff."
 - A. The idea of the Shepherd's rod and staff.
 - 1. His "rod" is an extension of the shepherd's arm, portraying his strength and his authority.
 - 2. His "staff" was shaped and designed for sheep.
 - B. "Thy" rod and staff indicate that these are but instruments in the hand of the Good Shepherd. A great comfort!!
 - 1. If we believed that the strike or touch of the Good Shepherd was not love, then we would be very frightened.
 - 2. But the presence of my Shepherd, also with His rod and staff, assures me of His care, of His protection, of His guidance, and of His undying love.
 - C. And then we know that we shall be brought where the light never becomes shadow but shines always brightly.