The 23rd Psalm



 *April 6*

**RESOURCES:** Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*.

 [The Lord’s My Shepherd (Crimond)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syJFsLZmO8o)

 [The 23rd Psalm (Townsend)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXPPzuCJMCs)

**CONTEXT:** The 23rd Psalm is about the Lord’s providential care in the believer’s life. This is why it is so beloved. We all need the care that only He can offer as King and Shepherd. Today we turn to look at v. 4 to learn some surprising and encouraging things about the “the valley of the shadow.”

***Challenge:*** Might you memorize the 23rd Psalm?

**FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP** (Prayer, Luke 18:1–8)

* What is prayer? How is prayer a means of grace?
* Why are we to persistently pray in faith?
* Describe the Parable of the Persistent Widow.
* V. 7- How is this parable an example of an“if than”? (v. 7)
* V. 8- When the Lord returns, will He find us in prayer?

**READ:** Psalm 23 (today we’ll study v. 4)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. **Can you share a difficult time that the Lord led you through? (or share as appropriate throughout).**

Even though I walk

1. *We’ll return to these words.*

Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death (or deep darkness)

1. *This is why this Psalm is often associated with death and bereavement, yet its Shepherding context means it is about so much more. Shepherds intentionally had to lead their sheep through difficult mountain passes in order to move from one pasture to the next (or even into mountain ranges in summer). In such shadows there would be wild animals, weather, thieves or unknown crevices.*
2. From vv. 1–3, and again in v. 4, how is the picture one of the shepherd intentionally leading his sheep?

God’s Will, Trust, Presence, Protection, Care, Comfort

1. **How is it an encouragement to our faith to know that it is the Shepherd who leads us into and through life’s trials?** (c.f. Job 2:10b; Eccl 7:13; Ro 8:28; Eph 1:11)[[1]](#footnote-1)
2. How does this change the way we view trials in life and what the Lord is working through them in us? (Ja 1: 2–4)
3. How does the word ‘through’ give us hope?

I will fear no evil (something bad, unpleasant, miserable)

1. *Here we can bring “even though” back in*. **If fear is the opposite of faith (trust), and sheep have much to fear in the passes, what does this speak to the trust we can have in the Good Shepherd?**
2. How is anxiety a hallmark of sheep from other folds (c.f. Mt 6:25–34; Jn 10)? How is calm trust, and all of its benefits, a witness to the goodness of our Shepherd?

For you are with me

1. *Not only does a knowledge of the Shepherd’s sovereignty over our trials assure us and inspire trust but we have this promise too.*
2. If Mt 28:20 & Eph 3:17 are true, are we ever alone?
3. **Discuss:**Jesus doesn’t promise we won’t have difficulty but that He will be with us in difficulty.
4. **How is nearness of a Shepherd a truth to drive out fear?**

Your rod and your staff

1. *These were the tools of the shepherd’s trade. Extensions of himself. A rod was a club. It could be wielded or thrown to protect the sheep. It represented authority (the Word?). The staff was for guidance, correction and examination. It represents presence and care (the Spirit?)*

They comfort me

1. **How are Christ’s rod and staff a help to us? A comfort to us? Why should we not fear His nearness?**
2. List at least 6 of the blessings we’ve discovered in this verse.[[2]](#footnote-2)
3. *Our experience of the Shepherd is meant for more than us.* With 2 Cor 1:3–7 in mind, how does our comfort and care help others?

**NEXT TIME:** April 6th- Psalm 23:5–6

1. The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) asks two helpful questions in relation to providence and the Lord’s care. To read these rich responses click [here](http://www.heidelberg-catechism.com/lang/lords-days/10.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)