**FOCUS** in 2020

July 5, 2020

Robert Jackman, *Campus Pastor*

**I Am Not Alone**

***His Presence Is Everything***



***Even though*** *I* ***walk******through*** *the* ***valley*** *of the shadow of death, I will* ***fear no evil****, for* ***you are with me****;* ***Psalm 23:4a***

As we have looked at verses 1-3 of Psalm 23, we have seen David declare that the Lord is his personal shepherd who leads him to rest in green pastures and beside still waters restoring any strength that David has lost. He also says that the Lord leads him down the paths of righteousness for the Lord’s name sake. As we get to verse 4 of this beautiful, poetic passage, David mentions walking through the…**valley of the shadow of death**

The phrase “shadow of death” comes from the Hebrew word Salmawet.

**Salmawet** – dark shadows/darkness

There is a physical valley running from Jerusalem to Jericho in the Judean desert that serves as the shortest route for shepherds to move their sheep. It is dark, has rough terrain, deep ravines, and dangers lurk. But this valley that David mentions also has metaphorical meaning for us today.

A **valley** is any place where danger seems to surround us, places where we feel vulnerable, needy, uncertain, confused, and afraid.

**When have you felt things in your life** were uncertain? Unpredictable? When have you felt out of control? Vulnerable? Oppressed? Surrounded and unsafe? Confused?

David begins verse 4 with the words **“Even though.”** It was true in David’s life, and it is true in our own ... valleys are **inevitable**. We live in a changing world, and we all know how in just a quick moment, our circumstances can change. We can go from a mountaintop experience to finding ourselves in the dark shadows of a valley.

Not only are valleys inevitable, valleys are **difficult**. David writes, “Even though **I walk**…” That is exactly what they are like. Valleys feel like more of a hard **walk** than a fun **ride**.

So when your circumstances change and you find yourself in a valley, **how do you survive**?

The way to survive in a **changing** world is to cling to an **unchanging** God.

*For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.* ***Malachi 3:6***

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* ***Hebrews 13:8***

He is the Good Shepherd who does not change.And when you find yourself in a valley, **His presence is everything!**

David knew the Lord’s presence was everything and he counted on it. He writes “Even though I walk **through …”** David knew that as his world changed, he was clinging to an unchanging Shepherd. He does not plan to make residence in the valley; he does not plan on the valley consuming him. He believes that the Good Shepherd will walk him THROUGH it. And it is true for you. When you face circumstantial change, keep clinging to God, because if He allows you **to** cometo it, thenHe will certainly see you **through** it.

When David writes “**I will fear no evil,”** he knows that evil forces are always at work trying to fill us with fear. Fear breeds uncertainty and doubt. Let’s face it ...

valleys invoke **fear**, but we pass through them in **faith**. When we choose to cling to an unchanging God, we have nothing to fear. Why is David able to be unafraid? He declares with this statement… “**For you are with me**;” And God is with you.

*“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name,* ***you are mine****. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.* ***Isaiah 43:1b-3a***

If you have a personal relationship with God, He is God of your **mountaintop** and God of your **valley**.

How do we A.C.T. in the valley?

1. **A**cknowledge that you are not alone. (*Isaiah 41:10)*
2. **C**hoose faith in your Shepherd over fear in the valley. (*Psalm 34:4*)
3. **T**alk to your Shepherd. (*Psalm 66:19*)

Valleys are inevitable and they are difficult, but valleys are **purposeful.**