

As we have been looking at Psalm 23 we have been encouraged that God, our divine shepherd, provides our every need, cares for our every need, and directs our every step and stop.



We now come to v4 where David as a shepherd would have led his flock up and down hills and through valleys. As he recalls those occasions he draws a parallel for Christians. It is because of these words in v4 that this psalm is often used at funerals. They are words of enormous encouragement.

For many years my sister-in-law lived in the shadow of death due to cancer. She walked by faith with her husband and children knowing the future was uncertain at best and very short at worst. As the years went by she continued to exhibit optimism that God would sustain her, and if He so desired would heal her. However, if He didn't she knew that her destiny was secure in Christ Jesus. She recognised that her body was nothing more than a tent, a covering for our soul and spirit as the apostle Peter states.

The wonderful truth for Christians is that death is only a brief shadow because it is the doorway to eternity. However, the choice one makes in this life obviously determines where the doorway of death leads.

Sadly for those who reject the gift of God's salvation, death is not only a dark cloud, but something to be feared. For many, thoughts of death conjure up complete fear and denial.

You may not be facing death right now, but some other struggle or battle. How do you deal with such a shadow, with such a valley experience?

Well firstly, we need to understand that a shadow cannot harm us. While we may be experiencing a time of shadow we need to see that shadows are not permanent. I know from

my own experience there are trials that you think will never end, but they do. One thing I have noticed about shadows is that they tend to distort or give us an unclear view of what is being shaded. Going through shadow times is not the time to make critical decisions, as often our perspective on the particular problem is distorted.

We need to understand that as we walk through the valley of trial and tribulation, we are only passing through, and not setting up camp in the valley. The reality is we learn most about God, about ourselves, and our need for a deeper walk with Him through these times. In fact, we can have our most profound witness

PRAISE the Lord for:

The continued opportunities to go to churches, men & women groups, craft groups etc to share in the area of personal evangelism

The gift of a shipping container which will be sent to the Philippines full of provisions to help commence this new project

The new Portuguese Military edition which enables us to enter 4 different countries

**CONTINUED
OVER**

through our valley experiences. Someone has said that in our Christian lives we are either entering a valley experience or emerging from one. Again, we need to understand that valley experiences can transform our worship of God, and dramatically deepen our prayer life. In all of this, we must constantly remind ourselves that God is there with us and that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Now a change of pace comes in v5. In some of the previous verses we have been on the move, but now we are sitting at the table ready to have a feast. It is a feast in the battlefield; in a place where you would least expect to get one. In fact it could be a good case for some fast food.

I guess we often wonder if God is aware of our needs or indeed is capable of meeting our needs. It is important to understand that experiencing the Lord's abundant supply is not only linked to our relationship with God, but also our obedience to God. I think there are times when we believe that God should prepare a feast for us no matter what condition our walk with God is in. So often when things are going well we manage to forget God, or at least forget that God has blessed us with the success that has come our way.

However, when we walk with God we can look forward to times of feasting which overcomes any discontent we might have whether it be physical, emotional or spiritual. Most important of all is that we feast on God's Word, so that we can grow in our Christian maturity and character. It is distinctly possible that we can go to church, Bible study, and yes, even be involved in a Christian ministry or organisation and be suffering a severe case of spiritual malnutrition.

We don't need to be carrying unnecessary burdens by not committing our struggles to God. This may be easier said than done when you get a surprise announcement like your business has just gone broke, or you have been diagnosed with a deadly disease like cancer.

However, did you notice that this feast is provided for us in the midst of our enemies, in the place where we might least expect to find such abundant provision? The wonderful thing is that such abundant blessing tends to be so much more appreciated in the presence of our enemies, because that is when we most need it.

**... God
is more
than
capable of
meeting
our needs.**

PRAYER needed for:

The continued increase in the distribution, effectiveness and impact of the paper in Australia USA prison edition. Sponsorship for each edition is vital and needed. So many requests from Chaplains who have no budget to pay for the paper but see the results from the paper
Please continue to pray for finances for the various projects we are involved in around the world

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

Challenge Direct Deposit details :

BSB: 066162 (Commbank)
Account: 00900455

AU.CHALLENGE.NEWS

Contact us by phone (08) 9453 3311
Email: info@challengenews.org