Sunday Companion

Week 5 — The Shepherd Stays

Psalm 23:4

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Sometimes the right path goes through a dark valley. Psalm 23 does not promise that following the Shepherd will keep us from every painful, frightening, or uncertain season. Yet David is not settling in the valley. He is walking through it, and he is not walking through it alone.

The Dark Valley
Isaiah 43:2 says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." Notice the word *when*. A dark valley does not necessarily mean you are on the wrong path. Sometimes you are in the valley because you are still following the Shepherd.

The Courage We Have
David does not pretend there is nothing frightening in the valley. He declares, "I will fear no evil." His confidence comes from the presence of the Shepherd: "Fear not, for I am with you" (Isaiah 41:10).

The Shepherd's Presence
Earlier David says, "He makes me… He leads me… He restores me." But in the valley he says, "You are with me." Sometimes we know the Shepherd best not because He kept us out of the valley, but because we discovered He stayed with us in it.

The Evidence of His Presence
"Your rod and your staff, they comfort me." The rod reminds us of His protection and strength. The staff reminds us of His guidance and ability to reach us. Together they remind us: **The Shepherd is still here.**

For This Week

When you find yourself in a dark valley, remember: the valley is real, but it is not the destination. You may not know what is around the next turn, but you do know who is walking with you.

The Shepherd stays.

Prayer

Shepherd, when the path becomes dark and I cannot see what lies ahead, remind me that I am not alone. Give me courage to keep walking, help me recognize the evidence of Your care, and teach me to trust Your presence even when I cannot see the way clearly. Amen.