

Family Comfort  
Psalm 23:4

Introduction:

One thing is for sure, all of us have times in our life in which we need family comfort. We especially need it when we face the terrible enemy of death. Death is the most debilitating emotion known to our human race. Fear of death is simply a part of the fabric of living. God equipped us with a sense of fear to enable us to prepare for death.

Matthew 10:28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

Pastor Tim:

"I think there is a certain part of death that we all fear. It's the fear of the unknown. The facts are, you only get one shot at life and death and you never know what it's like until you go through it."

I. We Are Comforted with the Shepherd's Power

Psalm 23:4a *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil...*

Verse 4 "through" the valley

The Hebrew word for "through" is better translated "when".

Phillip Keller:

"David is referring to that time of the year when the shepherd would lead the sheep from lowland to highland. The reason he would do that is this; as the snow would begin to melt off of the mountaintops, it would give fresh water and fresh grass where the sheep could eat and drink. So the shepherd would lead the sheep from the lowlands which were now barren and parched by the summer's sun, and take them up to where it was cooler and better. The shepherd would guide the sheep through the valley and up the mountaintop where they could drink fresh water and eat green grass. The reason the shepherd always took the sheep through the valley was this: the valley was the only route to higher ground. Every mountain has its valleys and if you think about it, the best route, and oftentimes the only route to the top of the mountain, is through the valley."

Great thought:

Our trips through the valleys are always temporary. The climb from the lowlands to the highlands may take hours, it might take days, it might take weeks; but it always ends. He didn't say that he went into the valley, or over the valley, or down to the valley, or up to the valley, but rather he went "through" the valley.

Pastor Tim:

"It is very important for every child of God to remember that we do not run through our valley, nor do we not run away from the valley, neither do we run around the valley. Our valley is not a dead end street, and it is not a cul-de-sac. A valley is a tunnel with open ends on it and it has an entrance and an exit. We all live in the valley of the shadow of death from the time we arrive on this planet until we leave this planet. But, please do not miss the name of this valley. This valley is not named the 'valley of death' it is named the 'valley of the *shadow* of death.' A shadow is an image without substance. As a child of God we do not face death, we face only death's shadow.

## II. We Are Comforted with the Shepherd's Presence

Psalm 23:4b *for you are with me...*

Pastor Tim:

"Sheep are always better off in the valley with the shepherd, than on the mountaintop without the shepherd."

Isaiah 43:2 *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.*

Psalm 116:15 *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.*

Pastor Tim:

"The only answer for family comfort and emotional pain is to focus on the presence of God. There are times in our lives when our shadows and valleys are bad enough that no one can help you and the only help you have is the overwhelming presence of God."

Hebrews 13:5 *I will never leave you or forsake you.*

Psalm 34:4-5a *I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.* <sup>5</sup> *They looked to Him and were radiant...*

The Message:

*GOD met me more than halfway; he freed me from my anxious fears.* <sup>5</sup> *Look at him; give him your warmest smile. Never hide your feelings from him.*

## III. We Are Comforted with the Shepherd's Protection

Psalm 23:4c *for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Great truth:

If you walk with God through life, God will walk with you through death.