



## Scripture | Psalm 23.4-6

Psalm 23 are words for the living. If you read these next verses closely, you'll notice a subtle yet strong shift in the psalm. Now, the Shepherd is seen as a friendly host. The Faithful Lord is ever present. The psalmist speaks of several locations throughout the psalm. Between where you are and God's better place may lie some difficult places. At each point along the way God is there.

## Observation

**Read Psalm 23.4-6 several times then practice some observation skills by noting the following:**

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

- Draw a blue boxes around I, me, & my in vv. 4-6.
  - Circle in purple the words 'you' & 'yours' in vv. 4-6.
  - Draw a triangle around 'through' in v. 4.
  - Draw a double underline under 'valley' in v. 4.
  - Underline in green 'I will fear no evil' in v. 4.
  - Draw a double underline under 'table' in v. 5.
  - Draw a triangle around 'before' in v. 5.
  - Draw a clock symbol around 'all the days' in v. 6.
  - Draw a double underline under 'house' in v. 6.
  - Underline in green 'I will dwell' in v. 6.
  - Circle 'LORD' in purple in v. 6.
  - Draw a line from 'valley' in v.4 to 'house' in v. 6.
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- What one word would describe the tone of the passage? (Joy, sadness, peace, etc.)
  
  - What idea stands out in these verses?



- What idea or word do you not fully understand?
- How would you summarize the meaning of the passage?

**READ Psalm 23.4 | Those who walk with their King need not fear.**

What kind of change in perspective does David signal by changing from his repeated use of “He” in vv1-3 to his repeated use of “you” in vv4-6? How is that change an important one for us as we walk with the Shepherd-King through this pandemic?

Why is the idea of walking everywhere in this Psalm even though the word “walk” is found only in v4? How is the life of a follower of Jesus all about “walking?”

How does the circumstance of walking change in v4 from the walking in vv1-3? How might the Hebrew word for deep darkness fit so well the translation “shadow of death?” (Job 38:17)

What does David declare in v4 about his walk that is so remarkable and so difficult? What reason does he give for his declaration?

How are the tools of the Shepherd-King both that of a shepherd and that of a king? (Gen 49:10, Micah 7:14) Why should those tools comfort us and take away our fear during our struggles now and in the future?

When you and I walk through deep darkness how is that death and calamity instead of life? How does our Shepherd-King take away our fear even when we have to walk through deep darkness?

**READ Psalm 23.5 | Those who walk with their King will feast on His abundance.**

How does walking with the King not only remove David’s fear but bring the presence of something else entirely? Why might David be thinking about what happened in the Exodus of God’s people from Egypt? (Ps 78:19-20)

How does remembering what God has done help in thinking about what God will do? What in your past can you remember that is an indicator of why you should walk with the King right now?

What does the imagery of the table prepared by the King even in the presence of enemies and opposition bring to your mind? If anointing the head with oil was a practice of hospitality, celebration, and feasting (Luke 7:46), what do the oil and the overflowing cup bring to your mind?

How is COVID 19 an enemy? (1 Cor 15:24-26; Rev 21:3-4) How can walking with our King enable us to feast and celebrate in the abundance He has prepared for us, even in the presence of opposition, struggle, and the enemy?

**READ Psalm 23.6 | Those who walk with their King will dwell in His goodness and mercy forever.**

What could you explain to someone going through the pandemic about God’s goodness and God’s mercy (covenant-faithfulness; Hebrew “hesed”)? If the Hebrew word for “follow” has the idea of

pursuit, like Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites to the Red Sea, what might David have in mind about the way goodness and mercy will follow Him?

Why would David have the confidence to say, "Surely" when it came to God's goodness and mercy following him? What did king David know about the King that we know even more fully that can give us confidence during the pandemic? (Ex 34:6-7; Rom 8:31-39)

What timeframe does David offer about God's goodness and mercy? How does the "location" and "duration" in his next phrase emphasize what he means?

How can we know we will dwell "in the house of the Lord forever?" (Rev 21:1-5) How does knowing we will dwell with Jesus forever help us walk with the King through time-limited difficulties?

How can you remind yourself and others this week that those who walk with their King need not fear because they will feast and dwell with Him forever?

## **Application**

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. How does the life of Jesus fulfill and exemplify the truths & promises of Psalm 23?
3. How does the hope we have in Christ allow us to think of the reality of death as a motivation to pursue Christ? How might we employ the reality of death to motivate others to pursue Christ?
4. How might times of tragedy or deathly sickness be a good opportunity to share the gospel?
5. How does this future hope give you joy and peace right now?

## **Prayer**

1. Pray for the families of victims of Covid-19 to be comforted & to know God.
2. Pray for the people of God to humble themselves & seek his face in this season.
3. Pray that no plague will come near the tents of FM families (Ps 91.10).
4. Pray for the healthy delivery of Missy & Clint Kirby's third child.
5. Pray that your group would not fear death but instead trust that Jesus has conquered sin and death on our behalf. Pray that we would view the reality of death as motivation to live more fully for the glory of Christ and the spread of the gospel. Pray for the specific situations your group mentioned.

## Afterword & Response

- **ABOUT GOD** | What does this passage specifically teach about God?

- **ABOUT MYSELF** | What does this passage teach about myself?


- **NEXT STEPS** | What does this passage lead me to do next in response?



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