**Jesus Will Always Be With Us**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Psalm 23:1-6**

**Sunday Morning**

**April 7, 2024**

**Psalm 23: 1-6**

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, 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.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Saints, all of us go through valley experiences. Every moment of life won’t be a “mountaintop experience” filled with happiness, abundance, and meaningful connections with God and others. Yet when difficulties come, we tend to wonder why God has allowed us to suffer.

We may even feel abandoned by Him. But Scripture tells us otherwise. Psalm 23 describes the Lord caring for us as tenderly and faithfully as a shepherd cares for his flock.

This beloved passage of God’s Word is a reminder that He is always present—loving, protecting, and guiding us.

Verse 4 says, **“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”**

Saints, God is with us at all times and has a purpose for every adversity He allows. The biblical principle here is We learn more in our valley experiences than on our mountaintops.

**Valley Experiences Are Inevitable**

Saints, in the Valley we will experience pain, suffering, loneliness,

Anxiety, stress, anger, being forsaken, grief, mourning, heartache being slandered, being falsely accused, filled with distress and the list can go on.

**Psalm 34:17-18**

17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

**Psalm 73:25-26**

25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. 26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Saints, we all need a word of encouragement when we are in the valley of life!

**Deuteronomy 31:6**

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

Saints one of the toughest places to be is when you are falsely accused and persecuted for righteousness sake.

**Psalm 34:19-22**

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. 20 He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. 22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Saints, all of us will go through difficult circumstances at one point or another. These happen for a variety of reasons. Often, our natural response is to begin blaming the devil. But God, the Good Shepherd, will take us through low places to prepare us for ascending the heights.

Saints, we may experience pain and suffering because of the actions of others. And of course, sometimes we bring suffering upon ourselves by wandering from God’s best for our lives.

Saints, anytime we step away from the Lord, enticed by the world’s lies, we are headed for a season of hardship. The good news is that every valley is a passageway rather than a destination.

**God Controls the Depth and The Length of a Valley Experience**

Saints, what I’ve learned is that the deeper the valley, the greater the work the Father is able to do through it. The most significant seasons of spiritual growth in your life have probably corresponded with the hardest circumstances you have experienced.

**2 Corinthians 6:4-10**

4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Saints, it can be difficult to keep that in mind in the midst of suffering. When we are in pain, it often seems as though there is no end in sight. But Scripture is clear that God determines the duration of our trials and how intense they will be.

Saints, listen to me very clearly, if it takes only a little suffering to bring about deeper surrender to God, the valley experience might be shorter and less painful than if you complain, blame Him, and resist His work in your life.

Often, the purpose of a seemingly hopeless situation is to draw us into more intimacy with the Lord. Thankfully, you and I have the Good Shepherd living within, guiding, comforting, strengthening, and protecting us.

**Psalm 37:23-24**

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.

Saints, we always have hope when our eyes are fixed on Him. He won’t let the darkness last forever.

**Sometimes People Respond Negatively in A Valley**

Saints, we will handle adversity poorly if . . .

**We do not have a solid belief system**

If you and I do not understand God’s character, we will panic in the face of difficulty.

**Ephesians 3:17-19**

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

**We don’t understand the ways of the Lord**

Saints, Scripture contains many examples of saints who suffered despite their faithfulness to God. This is where we need to cry out to God for His Mind and for His Wisdom!

**Psalm 25:4-7**

4 Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. 5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation;On You I wait all the day. 6 Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.

Most of the time Saints our faith is based on emotion rather than the Word of God. Some people follow the Lord as long as everything goes their way, but when difficulty comes, they lose their trust in Him.

**We Don’t Know His Promises**

The reassurances found in God’s Word can help carry us through trials. We learn more in a valley experience than we do on the mountaintop. When things are going well in our lives, it’s almost impossible to fully learn how to trust in God. We are far more likely to discover how to rely on Him in hard times.

**Psalm 119:1-12**

1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! 3 They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways. 4 You have commanded us To keep Your precepts diligently. 5 Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes! 6 Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments.

7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. 8 I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly! 9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. 10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! 12 Blessed are You, O LORD!

Teach me Your statutes!

**There Is A Correct Way to Respond To Life’s Valleys**

**Surrender to God**

Saints, give Him control over every area of your life so that He can have His way.

**Romans 8:13-16**

13 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

**Believe That the Lord Will Use This Experience for Good**

**Romans 8:28**

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”

Saints, God has the best in mind for us.

**Rest in His Wisdom, Love, And Power**

Saints, lay your life before God, and trust that He will see you through whatever you are facing.

**Ephesians 6:10**

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”

**Thank Him For Bringing You Through The Valley**

Saints, you and I will learn invaluable lessons in life’s darkest seasons. When He allows His children to go through difficulty, He always has a purpose in mind.

**Colossians 1:10-14**

10 that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

**In Closing:**

No one can completely escape all suffering in life. But as believers in an all-powerful, loving God, we can face difficulties with confidence. Those experiences can be tools in His hands to mature us spiritually and draw us into greater dependence on Him.

If you are in a valley right now, I pray that you will remember God is your faithful Shepherd. He will guide you through heartache and show you how to overcome in His strength. Look to Him for peace and hope despite your circumstances. If you are willing to walk with Him through the valley, you will experience God’s highest blessing on the next mountaintop. Amen!

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**Video>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**