

SHADOWS OF EVIL ... WITHOUT FEAR

Part 5 of Psalm 23

Psalm 23:4 **SLIDE**

*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.*

NB: Rabbis tell us that originally this verse did NOT talk about the '*the valley of the shadow of death*'; and we see this in the Hebrew --

tsalmth = (Ellicot) - 'shadow, darkness' ... (Cambridge) – 'deep gloom'...

Death is not mentioned but was added later as a Jewish saying.

It is more 'the valley of shadows'.

We see in this verse the first negative scenario – The Valley of Shadows.

Up until this verse, everything has been wonderfully positive.

We've had the blessing of a new day ... we've found spiritual rest in beautiful fresh pastures ... He's ministered to us beside waters of quietness ... and we've started to discover and enjoy His righteousness within us ...

But now we come to the first negative circumstance. We come to ...

'THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS'

NB: IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE ...

**BECAUSE I FOLLOW THE SHEPHERD & HAVE THE BLESSINGS OF THE SAVIOUR
I AM NOT EXEMPT FROM SHADOW-VALLEYS & FROM DARK DEPRESSIONS ...**

In fact ... it's because we've followed the Shepherd that some of us have come to the Valley of Shadows and not because we walked away from Him.

NB: ITS ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT HE BRINGS US TO THE VALLEY

AFTER ESTABLISHING US IN HIS REST – the finished work of the cross ...

His restoration of our soul ... the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit ... and His righteousness which is imputed to us, imparted into us and now experienced by us ... But just when we thought it couldn't get any better ...

He says 'Now that you have some stability in Me ... now that you are established in Me ... come! There's something I want to show you...'

And there it is THE DEEP, DARK VALLEY OF THE SHADOWS ... looming in front of us as far as the eye can see ...

You say, 'Lord this looks familiar ... what is this valley of shadows?'

He says, *'This is the World System of sin and death out of which I rescued you'*.

THIS IS THE WORLD OVERSHADOWED BY SATANIC GLOOM & FEAR OF EVIL.

THIS IS THE WORLD WE ONCE KNEW AS OUR HOME IN ADAM.

WE WERE BORN IN THESE SHADOWS ... WE USED TO LIVE IN THESE SHADOWS ... WE KNEW NOTHING ELSE *BUT THESE SHADOWS* ...

They engulfed us, drove us by their lusts and oppressed us with their evil powers.

Ephesians 2:2-3

You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

SLIDE HERE NOW, I BEGIN TO SEE IT FROM THE SHEPHERD'S PERSPECTIVE ... I REALISE I AM NOT THERE AT ALL ...

Standing with Him on a mountain top looking at the valley below from which He rescued me ... I SEE I'M NO LONGER SUBJECT TO ITS EVIL ...

I feel safe and secure nestled under the Shepherd's arm.

From here the world looks so different! No longer intimidating. From here ...

I START TO SEE THE HUGE CONTRAST TO THE LIFE I NOW HAVE IN CHRIST.

I have been born again and feel **CLEAN & FRESH** ... **I've been brought** into a **BRIGHT** New Day ... I've discovered beautiful, **HEALTHY** green pastures of nourishment, **FRESH** with the revelation of new **UNSPOILED** life, good for your soul ... I've experienced **THE PURE** waters of quietness that I never knew before ... I've started to enjoy HIS **PEACEFUL** paths of righteousness ...

IT FEELS SO GOOD TO NOT BE A PART OF THE WORLD I CAME FROM

WHEN SUDDENLY HE TURNS & SAYS ...

'Come on dear one', and He starts heading down the mountain into the shadows ...

'What!' we cry, 'Why are we going back there?'

'Because you are different now and this is the way to even greater blessing!'

'BESIDES ... THESE ARE ONLY SHADOWS AND ...

- **SHADOWS FOR YOU, HAVE NO SUBSTANCE**

'I HAVE REMOVED YOU FROM THE SUBSTANCE OF EVIL ... AND I WILL KEEP YOU SAFE FROM ALL EVIL.

'YOU WILL ONLY WALK THROUGH SHADOWS OF EVIL, NOT THE EVIL ITSELF ...

'Evil can never touch you again.

*'You may still see and feel these shadows of evil, **BUT DO NOT FEAR.** WHAT YOU FEEL & SEE IS NOT REAL & CANNOT HURT YOU.'*

SO OFF WE GO FEELING QUITE CONFIDENT UNTIL WE START TO LOOK AROUND AT THE SHADOWS ... (REMEMBER PETER WALKING ON THE WATER)

PROBLEM IS: Shadows without substance still look scary and feel damp and depressing. They are full of echoes of the past. They remind us of our past issues ... and they create feelings of fear ... the darkness of depression ... But now in Christ it is not real. There is no substance to shadows, only feelings and memories.

SLIDE SOME BELIEVERS COME TO THIS PLACE, SEE SHADOWS & FREAK OUT ... They panic. They start to fear, and fear engulfs them and leads them away from the Shepherd, deep into the darkness. Sometimes we can get the slightest feeling of a past issue and cry out ... on no its back ... the devils back ... the depressions back ... my cancer's back!

*I'VE HAD CANCER. I know what I went through and think if I ever got it again it would be the end. Then sometimes I'll feel a symptom and my mind starts to panic. My body tenses up. I start to feel like I'm going to die. **BUT THESE ARE ONLY FEELINGS WITH FEAR ATTACHED & NOT THE REAL THING.***

SLIDE SHADOWS DO NOT SHOW THE TRUTH & CAN DECEIVE US

SO DAVID SAID ... I WILL FEAR NO EVIL

Psalms 23:4 **SLIDE**

*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.*

SO HOW DO WE LIVE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF EVIL?

FREE FROM THAT OPPRESSION THAT DRIVES US TO SURVIVE ... TO FIGHT ... THAT BREEDS TENSION & ANXIETY ... WHAT WE WERE BORN INTO IT ...

THE DOOM & GLOOM OF DREAD OF IMPENDING FAILURE

I'VE LISTED 3 WAYS TO LIVE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF EVIL

**1. SLIDE WE LIVE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF EVIL WHEN
WHEN WE KNOW OUR OLD GOAT NATURE IS DEAD**

JUST AS THE SHEPHERD ONLY RELATES TO ... SPEAKS TO ... AND LEADS THE
NEW SHEEP NATURE

SO SATAN WITH ALL HIS EVIL POWER CAN ONLY AFFECT & INFECT THE OLD
GOAT NATURE ...

SATAN CAN ONLY AFFECT & INFECT FALLEN MAN

SO WHEN OUR OLD GOAT NATURE IS DEAD ... THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO
AFFECT OR INFECT

Romans 6:6 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might
be rendered powerless ...

➤ WE NEED TO KNOW WHO WE'RE NOT

YOU ARE NOT THE SAME OLD GOAT YOU USED TO BE

- We know we don't belong in these shadow lands.
- We are only passing through and all its evil cannot infect us.
- YOU CANNOT INFECT A DEAD MAN / WOMAN

THAT MAN OR WOMAN THAT USED TO LIVE IN THE SHADOWS &
THAT WAS ALWAYS INFECTED BY EVIL **HAS DIED**

Romans 6:11

Reckon yourselves ... dead to sin (and) alive to God ...

**2. SLIDE WE LIVE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF EVIL WHEN
WE KNOW OUR NEW SHEEP NATURE CANNOT BE INFECTED**

THIS WORLD IS NOT YOUR HOME ... YOUR NEW NATURE BELONGS TO THE
KINGDOM ABOVE – YOU ARE BORN FROM ABOVE ... SEATED ABOVE ...

Jesus says, 'You are not of the world, just as I am not of the World' (John
17:16)

➤ WE NEED TO KNOW WHO WE ARE

**YOUR NEW LIVING SHEEP NATURE IS PRESERVED & CANNOT BE
INFECTED BY EVIL**

1 Peter 1:23 Berean Literal Bible **SLIDE**

*Having been **born again**, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [seed],
by the living and abiding word of God.*

You cannot be infected by evil anymore!!! You have 100% immunity.
You are immune because you have a spiritual antibody against the virus of
evil ...

YOUR NEW NATURE IS THE ANTI-BODY AGAINST THE VIRUS OF EVIL
YOUR NEW LIFE IS IMMUNE TO ALL EVIL ...

NB: I'm not saying symptoms aren't real. **I'M SAYING THEY ARE NO LONGER
FILLED WITH EVIL.** IF ANYTHING NOW AFFECTS THE BELIEVER, IT IS COVERED
BY THE SHEPHERD & WE ARE IN HIS HANDS. **IT CANNOT BE AN EVIL THING.**
EVIL CAN'T TOUCH US NO MATTER WHAT THE SYMPTOMS ... SO WE DO NOT FEAR.

1 Peter 1:5

*(WE) ARE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD through faith for [FULL] salvation
ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Jude 1:24

*Now to **Him who is able to keep you [guard you] from stumbling [keep you
unfallen], and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory [before
His face – right in front of Him] with exceeding joy [wild joy, ecstatic delight].***

2 Corinthians 5:17

*... If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away;
behold, all things have become new.*

3. **SLIDE WE LIVE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF EVIL WHEN
WE KNOW OUR HEAVENLY SHEPHERD IS WITH US**

Psalms 23:4 **SLIDE**

*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.*

➤ WE NEED TO KNOW WHO HE IS

WHO IS THIS SHEPHERD WHO IS WITH US?

Yes ... He's the kind and caring comforting shepherd we have known ...

Yes ... He's the one who guides and leads us to fresh pasture ...

Yes ... He's the one who guards us and protects us ...

BUT HERE IN THE VALLEY WE NEED TO SEE HIM AS MORE ...

THIS SHEPHERD IS OUR HEAVENLY SHEPHERD.

HE IS THE RISEN CHRIST ... THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST ...

HE HAS ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN & ON EARTH ...

HE IS ON THE THRONE OF ALL AUTHORITY ...

Revelation 7:17

... The Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

➤ WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE

WE HAVE BEEN SECURELY POSITIONED WITH HIM IN GOD

WE ARE INVINCIBLE ... POSITIONED IN CHRIST IN GOD

Colossians 3:1-3

... Hidden with Christ [who is hidden] in God ...

Psalm 91:9-10 **SLIDE**

*Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place ... ¹⁰**No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling.***

WHEN DID YOU MAKE THE LORD YOUR DWELLING?

WHEN YOU FIRST BELIEVED. YOU ENTRUSTED YOUR SPIRIT TO HIM & HE HID YOU WITH CHRIST IN GOD. YOU ARE SAFE & SECURE.

Literally - *For You, O Lord, are my Refuge; You have made the Most High Your Dwelling place*

In this verse David is revealing the truth of Colossians 3:3.

The Lord Yahweh – God the Father – we have made our dwelling place who is also Christ's refuge ... so we are WITH CHRIST, HIDDEN IN GOD.

HERE, WHEN WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE WITH HIM, WE CAN NEVER FEAR EVIL ...

WE ARE LITERALLY UNTOUCHABLE IN THIS SEPERATED, PROTECTED & PRESERVED DWELLING PLACE ...

I KNOW & AM PERSUADED OF GOD THAT HE IS ABLE ... TO KEEP THAT WHICH IS COMITTED TO HIM AGAINST THAT DAY ... (2 Timothy 1:12)

SUPPLIMENTARY

There are two ways we can interpret Psalm 23, indeed most Old Testament scripture. There is (1) seeing it in the light of our present-day experience and ongoing need; Or (2) seeing it in the light of the Good News of the finished work of Christ upon the Cross; in the light of everything He has already provided for us.

For instance, we can read verse 2 of Psalm 23 *'He makes me to lie down in green pastures'* (1) in the light of our present day experience and our need of rest, where the Shepherd comes and ministers rest to us with His presence of peace and comfort.

Here He says to us, 'Hey It's OK. I am here. I love you and I will never let you go. Just trust in me'. And He soothes our soul and we lie down in rest.

The trouble with this is that we need Him to tell us the same thing again and again. But there is another way – a more mature way for us to see this Psalm.

This is (2) where the Shepherd brings us into the revelation of 'The Finished Work of The Cross', where we begin to understand that 'Rest' has already been provided for us as a result of Christ's 'Finished Work'.

Here, it's as if He says, 'Look ... all is well ... You no longer have to struggle against sin ... as I have taken all your sin - past, present and future - upon the Cross and paid the price for it. You can stop trying to defeat the devil because I have defeated all satanic powers on the Cross. You can stop trying to be acceptable to God as I have made you 100% acceptable to the Father and He has declared you 100% righteous ... You no longer need to strive for favour as all favour has been given to you. You can stop seeking blessing as you have been blessed with all My blessings ... My glory is your glory ... You are now an heir of the Father and a joint-heir with Me ... All that I have is yours ... as a result of 'The Finished work of The Cross.'

REALISING THIS YOU CAN LET GO & LIE DOWN

THIS IS THE FRESH MORNING GREEN PASTURES IN WHICH THE SHEPHERD, BY REVELATION, CAUSES US TO LIE DOWN.

It's like He says, 'There is nothing left for you to accomplish now ... Just rest in it all ... and enjoy ...'

(1) says, '**I do love you**'. (2) says, '**I have loved you**'

(Most New Testament references to God or Jesus 'loving us' is past tense (e.g. *Ephesians 5:2 which tells us Christ loved us and gave Himself for us*), not because He doesn't love us now but because His love for us has already been poured out for us upon the cross.)

(1) speaks inspiration and comfort to us, (2) speaks revelation and truth.

THE LATTER (interpretation 2) IS THE BASIS FROM WHICH WE NOW APPROACH THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS.

*It doesn't say, 'Though I walk through the valley of shadows I will fear no evil **BECAUSE JESUS HAS BLOWN AWAY ALL THE SHADOWS AND KILLED ALL EVIL**'.*

It says, 'You are with me' In The Midst of it all ...

I AM HERE TO LEARN WHO I AM IN CHRIST & WHO I'M NOT IN THE WORLD.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR DOESN'T HAPPEN BECAUSE HE TAKES AWAY SHADOWS ... IT HAPPENS BECAUSE HE ENTERS INTO THEM WITH US & TEACHES US WHO WE'RE NOT ... WHO WE ARE ... AND WHO HE IS.