

LIFE IN THE SHEEP SEATS PT4: FACING HARDSHEEPS

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Intro:

- *"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."* Psalm 23:1-3
- Facing Hardsheeps: *"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."* Psalm 23:4
- The mountaintop is where we come to meet God; but the valley is where God comes to meet us.
- *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

A. "shadow of death" = 'shadowiest' of shadows (deepest darkness)

- *"He who made the (stars), and turns deep darkness into the morning"* Amos 5:8
- *"Man...searches out to the farthest limit the ore in gloom and deep darkness."* Job 28:3
- *"They piled a great heap of stones over Achan...the place has been called the Valley of Trouble ever since"* Joshua 7:26
- *"What joy for those whose strength comes from the Lord, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When they walk through the Valley of Weeping."* Psalm 84:5-6
- *"As the time approached for Him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."* Luke 9:51 *"with an iron will."* (LB)
- *"Look, The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* John 1:29

B. Out of the Shadows.

1. Valleys are Inevitable.

"In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33

2. Valleys are Inconsistent.

"Disaster follows disaster... In an instant my tents are destroyed, my shelter falls in a moment." Jeremiah 4:20

3. Valleys are Indiscriminate.

"He sends rain on the just and the unjust alike." Matthew 5:45

4. Valleys are Indistinct.

"...walk through the valley of the shadow of death,..."

- a) Shadows are always bigger than the reality. It's the fear that is enormous.
- b) Shadows cannot hurt you.

5. Valleys are Intentional.

- If we've been told that the path we are on is supposed to be bumpy, every jolt along the way simply confirms the fact that we're still on the right road. F.B.Meyer
- *"Though now for a little while you have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold."* 1 Peter 1:6-7

6. Valleys are Interim.

- *"Our troubles are short-lived and their outcome is an eternal glory which outweighs them all."* 2 Corinthians 4:17
- "How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?" Psalm 137:4
- "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power," Daniel 3:17

C. Afraid of the Shadows

D. No Shadow of Doubt.

1. Refuse to be afraid (God's Power)

- *"I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."*
- *"Be filled with His mighty, glorious strength so that you can keep going no matter what happens."* Colossians 1:11 (LB)

2. Remember that God is with you (God's Presence)

- *"Do not be afraid for I am with you."* Isaiah 41:10 *"Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Matthew 28:20
- *"When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up -- the flames will not consume you."* Isaiah 43:2
- *"He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."* Psalm 23:2-3
- *"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."* Psalm 23:4
- The ultimate becomes the intimate. Religion becomes a relationship

3. Rely on God's Protection.

- *"The good person does not escape all troubles -- they have them too. But the Lord helps them in each and every one."* Psalm 34:19

- *"The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."* John 10:10-11