

“Thou Art With Me”
Psalm 23:4, page 548

Introduction:

1. Many times an Old Testament shepherd would be alone for weeks at a time.
 - A. Lead the sheep to find pasture and water.
 - B. Face the dangers of wild animals and bands of outlaws in remote areas.
2. David knew what being alone was all about, and yet he states that his good shepherd, “*The Lord,*” was always with him.
3. Have you ever been in a crowded restaurant and felt alone?
4. There are times that being alone is a good thing, but loneliness is not a good thing to experience in this life.
5. The promise of *Psalm 23:4* is that our good shepherd is always with us.

I. He is with us in the “*valley of the shadow of death.*”

- A. Arnie and Lois Rich were in Israel in June 2006.
 1. Visited many areas that are described in the Bible.
 2. Have insights into the “*valley of the shadow of death.*”
- B. We may never walk the “*valley of the shadow of death.*”
- C. We likely will walk into some very dangerous valleys in our life times.
 1. Satch and Carol traveled a dark valley last week. The good shepherd walked with them.
 2. Several of you have experienced dangerous valleys; they may stretch before you. The good shepherd is walking with you.
- D. Always remember: “*He is with me....*”

II. Our good shepherd brings his “*rod*” to protect us.

- A. The rod was a stout club used to beat off the wild animals that were endeavoring to destroy the sheep.
- B. Our good shepherd does not carry a stout club to beat off our enemies.
- C. Our good shepherd uses different items to defeat our enemies.
 1. Bible to instruct and warn us.
 2. The Holy Spirit who is faithful in correcting and counseling us.
 3. Christian friends who pray for us, encourage us, and sometimes counsel us.
 4. Messages and Bible studies that instruct us in the path of righteousness.
 5. The Holy Spirit who battles the spiritual enemies that attempt to destroy us.
- D. Our good shepherd grants us mercy, grace, love, and forgiveness to make us strong.

III. Our good shepherd brings his 'staff' to guide us.

- A. The staff is not a stout club, but rather a guiding instrument.
- B. A shepherd crook was used to discipline, rescue, and guide the sheep.
- C. I believe in our spiritual battles with Satan that our good shepherd uses many of the same things to guide us as He uses to defeat our enemies.
 - 1. Words of encouragement from a Christian friend.
 - 2. A helping hand during the times of trouble.
 - 3. Forgiveness given to us from a brother we have offended.
 - 4. The warm worship service of a united church family.
 - 5. The pull of the Holy Spirit when we tend to stray from the path of righteousness.
 - 6. A closed door that alters our lives.
 - 7. The counsel of a friend.
- D. Learn to accept and not be afraid of the leadership of our good shepherd.

Conclusion:

- 1. Until we can apply the lessons of *Psalm 23* to our daily living, they are meaningless.
- 2. Look for ways to implement the teachings of the Bible in your relationship to God and other people.