

How My Good Shepherd Guides Me Through A Valley of Deep Darkness, Pt. 2
Series: God Is Good All the Time God Is Good
Psalm 23:4c; Sermon Outline
November 22, 2020
Kelly Stanley

1. We learned that when we are walking through a valley of deep darkness, if I will bring to Jesus my Good Shepherd my pain, He will shower me with His compassion. Read Matthew 9:18-38 from your Bible first. In verse 36, it says this about Jesus: *"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (NLT).*
 - a. Jesus was moved with compassion. The Greek New Testament word is [σπλαγχνίζομαι, *splagchnizomai*]. It literally means *"moving from one's bowels, to be stirred in one's gut."* In Greek, this word is the strongest word for pity and it expresses being moved such wrenching pity that you intervene to help. When you been moved this strongly to intervene to help?
 - b. In Matthew 9:18-33, Jesus' compassion people moved Him to heal each person He encountered. Yet, there is nothing in Scripture that any of them were godly people or showed gratitude. This coming Thursday is Thanksgiving. Between now and then, make a list of everything — everything you are thankful for in life. When you are finished, then thank God and then go express your thanksgiving to anyone in your list who had something to do with what is in your list.
2. We learned that if I choose to follow Jesus, He will lead me through my dark valley as my Light. Right now, as your Light, where do you need Jesus to be leading you, guiding you, intervening and helping you?
3. In Matthew 9:18-33, Jesus performed miracles on each person who approached Him. He raised to life a little girl/daughter who had died. He healed a woman who was hemorrhaging. He restored sight to two blind men. Jesus cast demons out of man who was demon-possessed. If you ask Jesus to do only one miracle for you, what is the miracle you want and why?
4. When I Walk Through A Valley of Deep Darkness and pain, we learned that If I choose to take a different path, Jesus will attempt to bring me back through discipline. Discipline is not punishment. Punishment is when you pay a penalty for the past and it is usually done in anger. Discipline is training and correction for the future and it's always done in love.
 - a. The Bible says in *Hebrews 12:11*, *"No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way"* (NLT). Look back over your life, when and where do you see that discipline as defined above, though no enjoyable at the time, brought about right living in your life?
 - b. The Bible says in *Job 5:17*, *"Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty"* (NIV). "Blessed?" Really? Most people would not consider discipline and correction a blessing, at least not at first. Looking back over your life, can you see how the Lord's discipline has blessed you and if so, how?
 - c. Read Psalm 119:71 and Psalm 119:67-68 from your sermon notes under point #3. David thanks God for an affliction God gave David for wandering off from God. David saw this as God being good to him. We saw that sometimes God has to put a limp in us to keep us from wandering off. List the "limps" God caused in your life to keep you from wandering off and what good did these do for you?
5. We learned that when we wander away from Jesus, He comes to rescue and recover us.
 - a. What do you think Jesus' reaction is when you fall, or fail, or flub up, or embarrass yourself, or sin or do something mean or nasty?
 - b. Read Matthew 12:11-12 from your sermon notes under point #4. What pits have you fallen into in life and how did Jesus help you get out of them?
 - c. When you see someone failing, falling, flubbing up, getting into pits, do you intervene and help them? Or, are you legalistic — "They have made their bed, now they have to lie in it"?
 - d. Do you think there is ever a time you should just let someone who is in a pit — they fail, they fall, the flub-up, they embarrass themselves and possibly you, stay there? If so, how different do you think your life would be if God had the same attitude towards you?
6. Read Matthew 12:11-12, Matthew 5:16, and Mark 2:27 from your sermon notes under point #4. Which view would you say is yours? > *"I think God is going to restore me and rescue me when I continually fail, fall, flub-up and that is why I run to Him every time."* Or, *"I don't think God is going to restore me and rescue me when I continually fail, fall, and flub-up. There has to be a limit to grace, mercy and forgiveness. I think has to come a time when God just needs to give me a long and scolding sermon, condemning me."* Why?

7. We learned about five world-views under point #4:

- a. Buddhism > If Buddha walked by and he saw you down in a pit or in deep darkness, he would say to you: *"You are there because of karma. It's your karma. You get what you deserve in life in this life for something bad, or evil or ungodly in a previous life."* It is the attitude that what goes around, comes around and in this case — a pit or a valley of deep darkness. As a Christian, you hopefully do not believe in Buddhism, but have you ever found yourself thinking, stating, or believing something along the lines of karma? If so, why?
 - b. Islam > If Muhammad walked by, he would see you in the pit or overwhelmed with deep darkness and he would say to you, *"You are there because you have violated the dignity of Allah. You have broken his commandments; you have disobeyed his rules. You're there because you have violated the laws of Allah."* Though it is not karma, it is legalism. It is a strict adherence to a set of religious beliefs that will not allow compassion. Has there ever been a time in your life, you saw someone in a "pit" or "deep darkness" by their own hand, you did not show any compassion — you didn't do what was necessary to help them? Have you ever been in a "pit" or deep darkness and someone else was legalistic and showed no compassion to you? Explain.
 - c. Hinduism > If a Hindu monk walked by and saw you in a "pit" or deep darkness, he would say to you, *"The pit you believe you are in, the deep darkness you believe you are experiencing, is all an illusion. All you need to do is get to a certain state of mind and you will not only see that the both the pit and deep darkness are an illusion, but you'll be free of them."* This attitude is a denial of reality. It is the attitude that says, *"I am okay"* when you are not. When you are in a pit or deep darkness, are you honest with yourself, others and with God about it? Or when asked, *"How are you?"* or *"How are things going?"*, you respond with, *"I'm doing fine. I am okay."* Why do you think Christians have a tendency to not be honest when with themselves or with others, or even with God about admitting they are in a "pit" or in deep darkness? How honest are you with yourself, with others and with God about admitting when you are in a "pit" or deep darkness?
 - d. New Age Movement > If someone in the New Age Movement (also called, The Self-Help Movement), saw you in a "pit" or deep darkness, they would say to you, *"Just believe you can be out of the pit or deep darkness on your own. What man can conceive; he can achieve. Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. You can do it."* Has there been times in your own life, you thought, *"If it is to be, it is up to me to get out of this 'pit' or deep darkness."* There is a lie perpetrated in the New Age Movement. It is an old lie. It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, where the serpent told Adam and Eve, that if they ate from the forbidden fruit, they would be a god. In this world-view, you are a god and you have the means and ability to pull yourself out of the "pit" or deep darkness. You do not need anyone to help you, not even God. In which times and experiences have you lived this way and why? What did you learn from it?
 - e. Christianity > Jesus comes along and sees you in that "pit" or deep darkness and He says to you, *"Take My hand. I'll get you out of this pit. As your Good Shepherd and the Light of the world, I'll lead you out of this valley of deep darkness."* Read John 3:17 from your sermon notes under point #5. How quickly have you symbolically taken Jesus' hand when you were in a "pit" or deep darkness in the past? What does this say about you? What does it say about what you believe about Jesus, your Good Shepherd?
8. Read Psalm 71:20 and Proverbs 3:25-26. One of the greatest gifts God has given us, which is both a gift and a curse, is the freedom to make choices, godly ones and ungodly ones, to love Him or not love Him, to obey Him not obey Him, but with all of those choices, He does not let us be free from the consequences of them. How then does this reality still show and prove that when you wander away from Jesus, He comes to rescue and recover you?
 9. Read John 10:27-29 from your sermon notes under point #5. When we walk through a valley of deep darkness and pain, many Christians think that even though at some point in their past they gave their life to Jesus. — they were saved — that now they have done something to lose their salvation. Why do you think this happens? Has this ever happened to you and if so, when and why, and how did you handle this?
 10. Jesus makes it clear that once saved, always saved. It's not your job to keep yourself saved. It is God's job. At the same time, you cannot earn salvation, or work for salvation and get salvation on your own efforts. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 from your sermon notes under point #5. Which is easier to believe and accept? — Salvation is a free gift by the grace of God or we have to do something to earn it, or work for it? Why? Have you ever tried to earn salvation or work for salvation or tried to earn and work to assure you still were saved? Why?
 11. Read Romans 8:38-39 from your sermon notes under point #5. God promises us that there is nothing that can keep us from the love of God. Satan cannot steal your salvation. Sorrow cannot steal your salvation. Sickness cannot steal your salvation. Stupidity cannot steal your salvation. Suicide cannot steal your salvation. Sin cannot steal your salvation. Why? You're in the big hand of your Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Nothing. So, why do you think we act at times like something can? Have you ever felt this way. Why?
 12. Read 1 Peter 1:3 from your sermon notes under point #5. When you find yourself in a valley of deep darkness, what is the lesson you think God wants you personally to learn from 1 Peter 1:3?