



Sermon Notes: “Even Through the Valley”

Psalm 23:4

5.24.26

The Shepherd Guides:

- The Shepherd doesn't promise you'll avoid the valley. He promises you won't walk through it alone.
- A relationship with the Shepherd is built at a walking pace.

The Shepherd Shelters:

- The valley is where you stop talking about the Shepherd and start talking to Him.
- The Shepherd is fully equipped for everything the valley will throw at you.

So What?

Move from sprinting through the valley alone → to walking through it with the Shepherd.

Formational Question:

What valley are you walking through right now that you've been trying to navigate alone? And what would it look like — this week — to acknowledge the Shepherd's presence in it?

For Study, Reflection, Discussion During the Week:

Life Group ICEBREAKER: Think about a valley season you've come out the other side of. Looking back now, what do you see that you couldn't see while you were in it?

REVIEW:

Review the sermon notes from Sunday. Was there a particular point that stuck with you? What was it and why did it resonate with you?

READ: Psalm 23:4a — "Even when I walk through the darkest valley"

- The sermon pointed out that the word "walk" — halak in Hebrew — is the most ordinary verb of motion in the Old Testament. It just means keep going, one foot in front of the other. Our instinct in a valley is usually to sprint through it with our heads down. But the sermon said the slowness is not the punishment — it's the gift. Where have you experienced that? Has there been a valley where the slowness ended up being the very thing that deepened your relationship with God?
 - The sermon used the image of walking with a friend — you talk, you listen, you move at a pace you can do together. Sprinting doesn't allow for that. How does that reframe the way you think about a slow or painful season you're in right now? What would it look like to stop trying to outrun it and instead walk through it at a pace where you can actually hear the Shepherd?
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READ: Psalm 23:4b — "...for YOU are close beside me"

- The sermon highlighted one of the most striking details in the entire psalm — David shifts from "HE" to "YOU" right at the moment the valley appears. Talking about the Shepherd becomes talking to the Shepherd. Have you experienced that shift in your own life — where a hard season moved you from knowing about God to actually talking with Him? What did that look like?
 - The sermon shared the image of two donuts at a desk — one for the pastor, one for Jesus — just talking honestly without a script or performance. How formal or informal is your conversational relationship with God right now? Is there a gap between the polished version of prayer you feel like you're supposed to do and the honest conversation He's actually inviting you into? What would it look like this week to close that gap?
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DEPLOY:

- Acknowledge the Valley Out Loud. The sermon's formation question was: What valley are you walking through right now that you've been trying to navigate alone? This week, name it — out loud to God, and to at least one person in this group. Not a polished version. Not a cleaned-up summary. Just the honest truth of where you are. The Shepherd already knows. He's just waiting for you to stop sprinting and look up.
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Don't Forget:

- Consider volunteering at VBS this year, June 8th - 12th talk to Shaun for more information
 - VBS Decorating Party – Saturday June 6th from 9am-12pm. Lunch will be provided!
 - Graduation Sunday is next week May 24th!
 - Cove Camp 2026 – Register using the QR code in the bulletin or go to our church website.
 - Meal Train - Consider volunteering to bring a meal to one of our church members in need. Find more information in the bulletin or on the church website.
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Prayer:

*Jesus, You know every valley in this room. You know the ones people have named out loud and the ones they haven't told a soul. You know the ones that have been going on for years, and the ones that started this week. And You know them not just from the outside — You walked the deepest valley of all, alone, so that we would never have to walk ours without You. Thank You for that. We confess that we've been sprinting. Trying to outrun the slowness, white-knuckling it in silence, performing like we're fine, isolating when we need the flock the most. Slow us down. Walk beside us. Turn our talking about You into talking to You — honestly, without a script, without cleaning it up first. Protect us from what's coming at us. And rescue us from what's already going on inside us — the fear, the despair, the pull to wander. We believe Your rod fights for us and Your staff won't let us go. And we trust that a Shepherd who walked the valley Himself knows the way through. Lead us. We'll walk at Your pace.
In Jesus' name, Amen*