

## Sheepish (Life Lessons from Psalm 23): CONFIDENCE

Wylie United Methodist Church  
Pastor Jeff Hatcher – February 12, 2012

### Psalm 23:1-6

*1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. 4 Yea, 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. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever. (NKJV)*

Verse 4 teaches us that...

### 1. LIFE IS NO PICNIC

*"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."*

What might valleys look like to us?

- Death      - Financial crisis      - Addictions      - Suicide
- Lost job    - Cancer                              - Abuse                              - Loneliness
- Broken relationship                      - Divorce

Valleys are not a sign that God has abandoned us.  
Or that the Christian life simply doesn't work.  
Valleys are simply part of the human journey  
and the best route to the mountain top.

No! Life is no picnic, but...

### 2. GOD WALKS WITH US

*"...I will fear no evil; For You are with me;"*

1 John 4:18 *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.*

We do not have to be victimized by fear. Fear is a choice!  
The secret to having no fear, is in trusting the Shepherd.  
Get personal with Jesus, the Good Shepherd.  
God Molds us. Matures us. Prepares us through the experience of the valley.

John 16:33

*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Being a Christian does not give us a "valley exemption".  
But when you're walking with the Good Shepherd,  
the valleys always lead to higher ground.  
It's in the valleys that we get to know the love and compassion  
of the Good Shepherd more intimately.

And since God walks with us, therefore...

### 3. WE CAN LIVE WITH CONFIDENCE

*"... Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."*

ROD was used to:

- Protect the flock
- Correct the flock
- Examine the flock
- Compare the shepherd's rod to the WORD OF GOD.

1 Sam 17:34-35 (David talking to Saul before slaying Goliath)

*"Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it."*

2 Tim 3:16-17

*16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

STAFF was used to:

- Draw the sheep to the shepherd for examination
- Comfort the sheep from danger
- Guide the sheep
- Compare the shepherd's staff to the HOLY SPIRIT.

John 12:32

*[Jesus said] "When I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."*

2 Cor 1:3-4

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles,*

John 16:13

*"When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth."*

### HOMEWORK

- Memorize verse 4 (write it out)
- Yea, 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.
- At least 3 times a day (morning, noon, bedtime) say;  
"You are with me."