

The Good Life

Week 6 - "Valleys" - Psalm 23:1-4

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul He leads me in the right paths for his name's sake. Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me!" – Psalm 23:1-4

"The Syrian military advisers went to their king and explained: 'Israel's gods are the gods of the hills, and the last time we fought them, we fought them in the hills, that's why they defeated us. But if we fight them in the valleys where they are weak, we will defeat them there!" – 1 Kings 20:23

"The Syrian forces covered the whole countryside, but the Israelites looked like two little flocks of goats." – 1 Kings 20:27 (NIV)

"Because the Syrians think that I'm only the god of the hills and not that I am the God of the valleys, I'm going to give you victory over this huge army so everyone will know that I am the Lord!" – 1 Kings 20:28 (NIV)

Three things about Valleys ~ Difficult Times:

1. _____

"The promised land you are about to enter is a land of hills and valleys." – Deuteronomy 11:11

"Don't be surprised when you are tested by troubles or painful suffering, as if something unusual is happening to you." – 1 Peter 4:12 (TEV)

2. _____

"The good man does not escape all troubles – he has them too. But the Lord helps him in each and every one." – Psalm 34:19 (LB)

"The rain falls on the just and the unjust." – Matthew 5:45 (NIV)

3. _____

"Don't ever brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring forth." – Proverbs 27:1

The Valley of Siddim

"Then the four kings of Shinar, the king of Babylon, the king of Ellasar, Elam and Gooim went to war against the five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah and three other cities. The five kings joined forces in the valley of Siddim which is now the Dead Sea. For twelve years they'd been oppressed by other kingdoms, so in the thirteenth year, they rebelled. But in the fourteenth year their oppressor recruited his allies to team up and reconquer the land." – Genesis 14:1-5

"Now this valley was full of sticky tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah tried to run away from the battle, they slipped and they fell and they got stuck in the pits. So the invaders plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and they took everything they had. They also captured Abraham's nephew, Lot, who was living in Sodom." – Genesis 14:10-12

The Valley of Eshcol

"Then the spies came to the Valley of Eshcol. The fruit was so abundant that they cut off a grape branch which had a giant cluster of grapes on it, but it was so large and heavy that it took two men to carry it back on a pole between them. They also brought samples of beautiful pomegranates and figs." – Numbers 13:23 (LB)

"This was their report to Moses: 'It is indeed a magnificent country, rich and fertile and here's some fruit as proof. But the people living there are powerful and they're stronger than we are and they look like giants to us, in our own eyes, we felt as small as grasshoppers next to them. Saul and the Israelites camped in the Valley of Elah and they drew up a battle plan to fight the Philistines. The Philistines and the Israelites each stood their ground, shouting and taunting each other from opposite hills, with the Valley of Elah between them. Now the Philistine army had a giant champion fighter, named Goliath who was about nine feet tall and when Saul and the Israelites saw this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.' – 1 Samuel 17:2-4, 11 (NIV)

Elah is the valley of conflict: When you're facing a giant challenge.

"The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the Valley of Elah between them." – 1 Samuel 17:3

The Valley of BACA (Weeping)

"Blessed are those whose strength comes from the Lord as they pass through the Valley of Baca, the valley of weeping, they make it a place of springs." – Psalm 84:5-7

Three things to remember in the valley:

1. _____

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me." – Psalm 23:4

"I am the light of the world." – John 8:12

"Let there be light." – Genesis 1:3

"God uncovers deep things out of darkness and he brings into light even black gloom and the shadows of death." – Job 12:22

"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 (LB)

"As for me, God's presence is all I need! I've made the Sovereign Lord my shelter." – Psalm 73:28

2. _____

"We can even rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and that kind of hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured his love into our hearts." – Romans 5:3-5 (ESV)

"I will transform the Valley of Trouble into a Gateway of Hope!" – Hosea 2:15 (NLT)

"God will strengthen you with his own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come, but you will be patient." – Colossians 1:11 (LB)

3. _____

"For our present troubles are quite small and they won't last very long. Yet they are producing in us an eternal glory that will last forever and is greater than anything we can imagine." – 2 Corinthians 4:17

"Some were living in gloom and darkness like prisoners suffering in chains, because they had rebelled against the commands of Almighty God. And had rejected his instructions. They were worn out from hard work. Then in their trouble they called to the Lord, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of their gloom and darkness and broke their chains in pieces. They now must thank the Lord for his constant love, and for the wonderful things he did for them." – Psalm 107:8-15