

Psalm 23: Getting Through Difficult Times
“I’m No Celebrity. But Get Me Out of Here!”

Psalm 23:4

THE BIG IDEA: Celebrities can simply bail out of the miseries they experience on their “reality shows”. But the rest of us are stuck with the difficulties of Real Life and usually have no easy way out. When we go through difficult times, it is good to remember that God, the Good Shepherd, stands by us and defends us. He also guides us through the dark valley to safe highland pastures.

OPEN WITH PRAYER

GETTING STARTED: What’s the most difficult trip or journey you’ve ever taken?

LEARNING & APPLYING GOD’S WORD

Together, read Psalm 23

1. A.W. Tozer once said, “What we think about God is probably the most important thing about us.” Why do you think he would say that?
2. What does Psalm 23 tell us about the God of the Old Testament?
3. In his sermon, Allen described the difficult journey a congregation experienced as its leaders attempted to reach out to a new generation of people. Bidwell Presbyterian has not only survived its passage through that “dark valley” of adaptation, change, and cultural shift. It has gone on to thrive and prosper as a renewed mission of Jesus Christ. Why do you think we have experienced this outcome rather than darker alternatives that were available?
4. What kinds of “dark valleys” have you experienced?
5. How would you use the language of Psalm 23 to describe where you are in your spiritual journey right now? Enjoying green pastures and still waters?....heading into a dark valley?....discovering God’s gracious care in the midst of the valley?...safely through, enjoying highland pastures?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

6. How have you seen the Good Shepherd stand by you and defend you in difficult times? How has he used his shepherd’s staff to pull you out of “the pits” or to gently guide you through difficulties and get you to a better place?
7. In our companion text from the New Testament (Philippians 1:19), we found that Paul was going through his own “valley of the shadow of death”. He was waiting for his trial date under the capricious emperor Nero. That trial could easily result in his execution. Paul quotes the Book of Job and reminds his friends (his RLG group?) in Philippi that “through your prayers and the help (literally, ‘choreography’) of the Spirit of Jesus, ‘this will turn out for my deliverance’”. How can this Real Life Group pray for you this week?

SHARING AND PRAYER (Prayer Requests)

Take some time to share prayer requests, where you need to find God’s grace and peace. Be sure to give thanks for each other and pray for one another’s needs. When we pray together, we find the power of God.

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