

The Facilitator

Community Groups @ Trinity Presbyterian Church

1/15/17

Text: Psalm 23

Title: The Shepherd Drives out Fear

Teacher: Stan McMahan

Surrender through Prayer:

Surrender through prayers for Illumination and Transformation, asking that Jesus would meet with you in this time.

Engage with the Sermon

Read the passage together

In his sermon, Stan taught us the reality of life that we will and do walk through the valley of the shadow of death. When faced with dark valleys we can tend to freeze, to wallow in self pity, or to run as fast as we can to escape. The beauty of our savior Jesus, who is our great shepherd, is that he personally and intimately leads us through the dark valleys in our lives, knowing that they are ultimately for our good. He himself entered the Valley of the Shadow of Death to die in our place, and provide a way for us to ultimately live in his light. As Stan said, for the Christian, our life will never end in the valley. So we can have hope in the midst of the valley, that Jesus is with us, and that he is leading us as our shepherd to his green pastures.

Reflection Questions:

1. *(Stan said that Jesus does not lead us through valleys in our lives from a distance, but like a shepherd leading his sheep through darkness, and the only comfort is the voice of their master, Jesus is intimately with us as we slowly walk through to the other side. While we tend to try to find joy in things of this world when we're going through a dark valley, God wants us to rely on him and his presence as he is always with us.)*

How do you tend to respond when you, or someone you know, is in a dark valley in their life? What do you think about God in those times?

**What fears in your life are you most quick to treat with things of this world?
What fears in your life are you most quick to treat with being in God's presence?**

2. *(Stan said that there are usually three reactions people have when they go through the valley of the shadow of death. They can either Sit and Wallow in it ("woe is me"), they can Freeze and bear under it's weight and just wait for it to be done, or they can run through it and try to find their way out, avoiding as many dangers as possible along the way.)*

How do you tend to respond to the Valleys in your life? Do you Wallow, Freeze or Run?

How do you tend to respond to the Valleys in the lives of people around you in your family, or even your Community Group?

How does Jesus teach us a better way?

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A.C.T.S.

1. ADORATION

What draws you to Adore and Praise God for His attributes and Actions?

Worship the LORD, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for His ownership of and care for all things in creation. Wonder at the truth that nothing is outside His Fatherly control!

2. CONFESSION

How has this sermon brought to mind sin that you need to Confess and Repent of?

How have you lived dominated by fear? How have you tried to find refuge in your own resources and in other created things? Confess your stubbornness to Jesus, asking Him to recover you, wash you, and restore you to your Shepherd's flock.

3. THANKSGIVING

What has drawn you to thank Jesus for his salvation (past, present, future)?

Give thanks to Jesus for joining you in your sin and suffering so that you could be restored to relationship with God forever. Praise Him that through His death and resurrection He is with you through everything in life.

4. SUPPLICATION

In what particular ways do you need Holy Spirit to transform you?

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a personal experience of God's presence with you because of Christ's work on your behalf. Reflect on God's promise (Isaiah 43:1-7) to be with us as you pray.

Prepare for Gospel Community:

How has God impacted you the most through today's passage(s)?

Who in your life is struggling to find meaning and hope in suffering? Ask God to open their eyes to see the light of Christ (God with us) in the valley of darkness.