

*In  
search  
of*

# Truth and Right

*Tim Henderson, Editor*

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*"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)*

**A publication  
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Christ**

## *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*

*By: Earl Kimbrough*

The beautiful twenty-third Psalm is a song of faith. It abounds with assurance of God's guidance and protection. There is mention of danger of enemies, both past and present, but it is muted by David's trust in the perpetual presence and ceaseless care of God.

The psalm begins with an affirmation of faith for time and ends with an expression of hope for eternity. Its message is couched in figures in which the psalmist sees himself first as a journeying sheep in the hands of a gentle shepherd (vv 1-4) and then as a permanent guest in the house of a gracious host (vv. 5,6). But each facet of this lyrical jewel is centered in the believer's walk with God that calms his fears and gives peace to his soul each day of his life.

**1. Faith in the Shepherd's Care (vv. 1-3).** *"The Lord is my Shepherd."* These words declare the simplicity of David's faith in God as the one who laid the foundations of the earth and made the morning stars sing together, yet is ever mindful of his lowly creatures (see Psalm 138:6). As he sorrowed over whatever troubled him at the time of writing, he claimed the trust he learned as the shepherd of his father's sheep on the perilous hills near Bethlehem. He knew that the Divine Shepherd who had delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear would deliver him from every affliction. The most telling word in the sentence is "my." David saw the Lord as his own Shepherd. This implies an abiding companionship with God in which he continually meditated on his words, walked in his law, and communed with him in prayer.



### **In Memoriam:**

Dorothy Ann O'Dell Sams, 85, passed away Wednesday, September 12.

Mother, grandmother and friend to all, she will be greatly missed. A wonderful example of a life lived in service to God.

### **TIMES OF SERVICES**

#### **SUNDAY**

<b>Bible Classes*</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
<b>AM Worship</b>	<b>10:45 AM</b>
<b>PM Worship</b>	<b>6:30 PM</b>

#### **WEDNESDAY**

<b>Bible Classes*</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
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(\* Bible Classes for All Ages)

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*"I shall not want."* David rose to be king of Israel, but he never rose above a constant awareness of his dependence on God for all things. No faithful child of God ever reaches the place where he can say, *"I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"* (Revelation 3:17). We, like David, must always remember our reliance on God for every good thing in due season. But we cannot have freedom from want without condition. While God sends rain alike on the just and the unjust, only the just may claim the promise, *"And my God shall supply all your need"* (Philippians 4:19; see Hebrews 4:16). None today can say in truth, *"The Lord is my Shepherd,"* unless he follows Christ, the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and is known of them (John 10:14).

*"He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters."* The picture here does not portray the needs of life so much as the righteous rest that God gives the burdened pilgrim. The tender grass and quiet waters are an invitation to a cool and refreshing repose on a hot and weary day. There is work to do and there are dark valleys to cross, but God provides peaceful meadows for his faithful sheep. *"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me"* (Psalm 138:7). When problems pressed upon David and his spirit was ready to sink under their weight, the Lord revived his strength to endure and overcome them. God so wisely balances our labors and rests, and our sorrows and joys, that we are moved to ask, "How can a holy God deal so graciously with a sinner like me?"

*"He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."* The writer for the moment drops the metaphor to declare his spiritual renewal. His life, like all servants of God, no doubt had many restorations. Once when he took another's man wife and Nathan rebuked him, he repented and God restored him to his favor. To restore the soul is to bring it back from the brink of destruction. God refreshes us when we are weary; he comforts us when we are troubled, and he restores us when we stray.

**(Continued on next page)**

But he does not restore our souls that we may continue in sin. He restores us that we may walk with him in the paths of righteousness, which he shows us in his word (Jeremiah 23:10). *"For His name's sake"* may mean that God restores us and leads us that his name may be exalted. Our greatest mission is to glorify the name of God.

**2. Faith in Time of Trouble (v. 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."* *"The valley of the shadow of death"* calls to mind a ravine overhung with cliffs and foliage that casts dark shades over the dangers that lurk along the path below. Such a place is well calculated to arouse dread in the fragile sheep, but his Shepherd knows every pitfall and precipice, and the way of every preying beast that could endanger him there. Under his direction and care, the sheep has no cause for fear. His Shepherd is ever with him and the symbols of his office, the club for the foes and the crook for the pits, calm his trembling heart. Those who have God as their companion need fear no danger to their soul for his way is plain and his presence assured.

Only when we forsake him to walk in our own way is there reason to be afraid (Proverbs 14:12).

*"The valley of the shadow of death"* is expressive of any danger or cause of fear that may arise to trouble one's life. But this does not exclude the greatest valley through which all must pass, and to which the phrase is popularly applied: the valley of death itself. God's promised presence, his rod and his staff, comfort us also in that dark and dreadful hour. As he safely guides us through every danger in our present life, so he will safely guide us when we make our final departure from it (see Luke 16:22). There is no cause of fear for the righteous in death for, *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"* (Psalm 116:15). The Lord said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

This promise does not stop at the river's edge. But we cannot expect God to be with us in death, if we refuse to be with him in life.

**3. Faith in God's Goodness and Mercy (vv. 5,6).** *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over."* David now sees God as a benevolent and protective host in whose house he is a guest. There God fully supplies his every lack and fills his

heart with surpassing joy, which even the presence of enemies cannot mar. Ancient laws of hospitality required the host to provide food, companionship, and security for his guests. The table implies the psalmist's personal communion with God. Anointing the head with oil was a mark of special honor and suggests divine favor. God exalts all who find refuge in his house. The overflowing cup represents the fullness of God's blessings. The feast in the sight of enemies indicates the safety of God's children in the midst of a hostile world. Nothing men may do can separate the faithful child of God from his Father.

*"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."* The goodness and mercy of God are ever present with his servant. They are both the fruit of God's presence and the reason for it. David seems to have looked back over his difficult and troubled life to remember that God's goodness and mercy had attended each step of his way. Based on his friendship with God and the promises of his word, he looked to the future with confidence that these marvelous virtues of God would keep him safely to his journey's end. The day is not too long, too dark, or too stormy for the goodness and mercy of God to shine through to those who love him.

*"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* The reference is to Israel (Hebrews 3:5,6). To dwell in God's house means to live with him among his people. David saw himself as always in fellowship with God. He said, *"One thing I have desired of the Lord, This will I seek; That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life"* (Psalm 27:4). He was in God's house then and he expected to be in God's house through eternity. Christ said, *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also"* (John 14:2,3). The church is God's house today and it will one day be delivered up to live forever with the Lord in his heavenly home (Revelation 21:3).

The Twenty-Third Psalm describes the believer's constant communion with God, which calms his fears and brings peace to his soul. All whose Shepherd is the Lord can have the assurance David had in his Divine Friend. The psalm teaches us to trust God for every need of body and soul. It teaches us to depend on God for guidance, to lean on him in trouble, and to hope in him for eternity. A thoughtful and prayerful study of the psalmist's sublime song can help us understand what it means to truthfully say, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

**Via Guardian of Truth XXXII:17, pp. 534-535, Sept. 1, 1988**

## *News N Notes*

**Our Gospel Meeting**—October 14-19 with Jarrod Jacobs.

**Remember these in your prayers:**

- The Marshall's in the loss of Linda's mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband remains in Wheeling Medical Park Hospital due to an infection after his surgery.
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Terry Smith, Jr., dealing with cancer treatments.
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Amanda Dowdy in her recovery, Mabel Fleming also Joyce Coen taking care of Amanda & Mabel.
- Terry Smith's brother George is scheduled for surgery Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>
- Ed & Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

### **Nursing Home:**

- Hazel Carroll
- Pauline Sellers

### **Shut-ins:**

- Rhea Henthorn
- Ethel Mahan
- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap