

The Journey of a Blessed Life

Part 3

God in the Midst of Life's Valleys

January 29, 2023

In Your Bible:

Psalm 23:1-4

Matthew 5:4

Introduction

1. What We Know About Life's Valleys.

A. Valleys are a part of life.

1 Peter 4:12

Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.

B. Valleys happen to everyone.

Psalm 34:19

The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.

C. Valleys are unpredictable.

Proverbs 27:1

Don't brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring.

2. Significant Valleys in the Bible.

Genesis 14:10

...this valley was full of sticky tar pits, and when (they) tried to run away from the battle, they slipped and fell in the pits.

A. The valley of failure.

Numbers 13:30-33

But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!" But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!"

B. The valley of fear.

1 Samuel 17:3

The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley of Elah between them.

C. The valley of conflict.

Psalm 84:5-6

Blessed are those whose strength comes from the Lord... As they pass through the Valley of Baca (WEEPING) they make it a place of springs.

3. What to Remember When You Are In a Valley.

A. I am not alone.

Psalm 23:4

Even when I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me!

Isaiah 43:2

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!

Psalms 73:28

As for me, God's presence is all I need! I've made the sovereign Lord my shelter.

B. Remember God has a purpose for this valley.

Romans 5:3-5

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.

Hosea 2:15

I will transform the Valley of Trouble into a Gateway of Hope!

C. The reward will last forever.

2 Corinthians 4:17

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!

Conclusion

Think It Over (Table Talk Questions)

Valleys serve as a metaphor for the low places in our lives; the difficult times. Valleys have three things in common: 1) Valleys are a part of life; 2) they happen to everyone; and 3) they are unpredictable. Valleys can be dark and full of despair, but we can take heart knowing God is there with us.

1. We will go through many different types of valleys in our lives. When we learn about how people in the Bible got through their valleys, we can have hope as we face ours. One such valley was the Valley of Siddim where a great battle took place (Genesis 14:1-11). This is the Valley of Failure, where you slip, fall and get stuck. It's your personal tarpit, the place of public failure and embarrassment; a place where you look foolish. Share some examples of such failures.

2. In Numbers 13, we read about the Valley of Eshcol, the Valley of Fear. Moses sent scouts into the Promised Land to see if they could possess it. Ten of them said no, they were too afraid. What did they feel like (see Numbers 13:33)? Describe a situation when you were similarly afraid. How did that fear affect you?

3. Another example is the Valley of Elah, which is the Valley of Conflict. This is where we read about David facing the giant Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:1-58. Name a big challenge you faced in the past, or are facing now.

4. When you turn your back on a shadow, what do you see? How can we learn to turn our backs on the shadows in our lives and focus on the presence of the shepherd?

5. Share stories of how God has transformed a valley from trouble into hope, either from personal experience or from the Bible.