

Intro: PICTURE HERE

First trip to China; went to meet Pastor Alan Yuan at his home, Daytime first, through a series of alley's in Beijing
Was all good...and THEN...we went back that night to preach! It was the darkest I have ever been;
Jesus if you get me out of here...I'm NEVER coming back!

That is the kind of experience David is talking about in Psalm 23:4

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil!"

How do you learn how to trust God that way?

There are 3 pieces of that I want to look at with you tonight.

1. The Place: (More of an experience than a place)

- Lit = "the valley of deepest darkness"
- Generic: *Underworld; grave; dungeon, cave; pathless desert; mineshaft; blinding storm; any place of danger; affliction fear; terror*
- Illus: Daniel in Lion's Den; Before fiery furnace; Peter around the fire; Paul shipwrecked; Jesus in the Garden

We all have those experiences in life. It can come in MANY different forms. What they all share in common is we are afraid of what the future holds for us, and we aren't sure what the outcome will be.

2. The Person:

- Personal language change: *"YOU are with me..."*
- Jesus is NOT a "hireling": John 10:11-15
- Jesus IS the "Good Shepherd": John 10: 14-16

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart..."
Isaiah 40:11

When we KNOW that Jesus is with us, it doesn't matter what we have to walk through.

3. The Peace God Offers.

- Peace: Lit = *quietness; rest; to be set at one again; calm of spirit and mind*
- Peace WITH God: Rom 5:1-5
- Peace OF God: Phil 4:6-7

"The Closer We Walk to our Shepherd the safer we are, and the more His peace will fill our hearts."
Warren Wiersbe

CONCL: Knowing God doesn't exempt us from the valley experiences. In fact, sometimes I think that we are more susceptible
A couple of questions to ask yourself tonight

- *Do you KNOW the Good Shepherd, so well that you experience His personal presence?*
- *Do you have peace WITH God tonight?*
- *Do you have the peace OF God ruling in your heart?*