

Even Though

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Rest.

Even 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.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Psalm 23:4-5a

So far this Psalm has revealed these benefits to the Lord's sheep:

The Lord is my shepherd - that's relationship

I shall not want - that's supply

He makes lie down in green pastures - that's rest

He leads me beside quiet waters - that's refreshment

He restores my soul - that's healing

He leads me in the paths of righteousness - that's guidance

For His Name's sake - that's purpose

But this portion of the Psalm takes a dark turn into the realm of _____, _____, and _____. And there, in these most difficult times, we find our Shepherd has not changed.

In the dark valleys of our lives, we find an even _____ with our Shepherd. *The fellowship we had with the Shepherd in the first verses (in the good times) causes us to know He is with us in the valley facing enemies, evil, and death.*

The Psalmist speaks of fears, and he deals head on with the greatest fear of mankind: _____.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, Blessed indeed says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors." Revelation 14:13.

Death (in the Lord) is part of God's blessings to His redeemed ones. It is the entrance into the _____ of the _____ that Jesus Christ purchased for them.

For you are with me — The fear is not here because of the _____ of the Living God, our Shepherd and Keeper is here.

The shepherd uses the rod and staff to protect, to discipline, to guide and to inspect the sheep. This causes the sheep (which is naturally a fearful and timid animal) to live with great assurance and peace. Our Comforter, the Holy Spirit does the same with us (draws us, convicts us, comforts us, guides us).

The great table that our Good Shepherd has prepared for us is the table of _____.

Fill-ins: evil, enemies, death, greater intimacy, death, fulness, redemption, presence, communion