



23: FREEDOM FROM FEAR

June 16, 2019

Pastor Randy Remington

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

MAIN TEXT(S):

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, 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.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23 NIV)

SUPPORTIVE TEXT(S):

"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:40-44)

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (Hebrews 2:14-15)

"When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time." (Luke 4:13)

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV)

"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 48:22)

"I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." (Psalm 16:8-11)

"When the Shepherd leads you, he takes you on the path that's right for you, the one that will make you most like him."

-Pastor Randy

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The first three verses of Psalm 23 can make life sound like a vacation, relaxing and restful. However, in verse 4 the psalmist acknowledges the reality that life can feel more like a dark and dangerous valley than a green pasture with still water. Despite circumstances, the psalmist declares that one can still trust God because even in the darkest of valleys he is with us, guiding us and caring for us.

We all go through "darkest valley" moments, where we can easily be overcome by fear, doubt, pain, and darkness. Even Jesus had one of these moments in Luke 22:39-44 where he asked God to take away the cup that he was about to drink by being crucified. Jesus' example shows that no matter what we walk through, we should walk in faith, not fear, knowing that whatever we go through God is with us. He doesn't leave us in the valley, but walks through it with us, bringing us to a place of joy on the other side.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What were you most afraid of as a child?
2. What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you?
3. What are you most fearful of this upcoming week?
4. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon?
Why was it significant to you?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. In Psalm 23, what is the next statement after "He guides me along the right paths for His name sake"? What does that tell you about walking in "the darkest valley"?
2. Because the Psalms are poetic, it is often helpful to look at different versions of the Bible to get a feel for the different ways they can be translated. Read Psalm 23 in a couple of different versions. Do any of these versions give you new insight or understanding of the Psalm?
3. Luke 22:39-44 records Jesus' experience of a "darkest valley". What was Jesus' prayer? How would you rephrase it in your own words?
4. What do you notice in Luke 22:39-44 this passage about Jesus' attitude, behavior, words, etc? What sticks out to you? What can you relate to?
5. What additional insight does Hebrews 12:1-2 give us about this "darkest valley" moment in Jesus' life?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What are some examples of "darkest valleys" that you have seen people walk through (either those you know or those you've heard about)?
2. What has been the long term outcome of "darkest valleys" you have seen people walk through?
3. In his sermon, Pastor Randy stated that all our fears ultimately boil down to a fear of death? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever witnessed a situation where fear kept someone from doing God's will? What happened?
5. Have you witnessed a situation where someone experienced unexplainable peace in the midst of a difficult situation? What happened? What brought about that peace?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Have you ever walked through a "darkest valley" in your life? What happened?
What were the long term effects of that season?
2. How have you seen/experienced Satan using fear in your life to keep you from God's will?
3. When have you experienced God's peace in the midst of a fearful or chaotic situation?
4. Have you ever made a life decision based solely on fear? What happened?
5. Is there a situation in your life where you have overcome fear and relied on your faith in God? What happened?

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.****LIVE IT OUT**

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Pastor Randy said that the first step in overcoming fear in our lives is to admit our fear without shame, both to God and to our community. Is there any fear that you need to admit to this group so you can begin to overcome it? If so, share it with your group.
2. The second step to overcome fear in our lives is to submit our fears to God. This means that we acknowledge our feelings and emotions, but we don't allow ourselves to be overcome by them. We recognize that our feelings are not facts. If this is where you're at this week, how can your group pray for you as you seek to submit your fear to the Lord?
3. The third step Pastor Randy gave to overcome fear is to focus on God's presence and love. What can you do this week to move your focus from your fear to the fact that God is with you and for you? How can your group pray for you as you try to refocus this week?

NOTE: On the following page you will find a set of sermon notes created by Charissa Burns, an artist who calls B4 home. We include them purely for your enjoyment and encouragement, courtesy of Charissa. You can follow her on the 'Gram @charissaburnsstudio

