

Journey to Christmas with the Midwives of the Messiah

The Valley of Death

By Sharon W. Betters

TODAY'S TREASURE

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.

Psalm 23:4 ESV

David was at a fork in the road. Would simmering rage toward God for taking his son be the grid through which he lived life or would he submit in repentance to the sovereignty of God? David responds by getting up, cleaning up and worshipping God. He ate and when his servants asked how he could respond to the death of his child this way when he had grieved so deeply the past week, David responded:

He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live, But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again?"

I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.' "

2 Samuel 12:22-23 ESV

How beautifully reminiscent of similar words of hope that David penned:

...and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 23:6

The choice David made corresponds to that point in time when God began to call him a man after His own heart. God blessed David's repentance with a more positive event that followed:

Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son and he called his name Solomon. And the Lord loved him and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

2 Samuel 12:24 ESV

Though grieving himself, in time David comforted Bathsheba. I imagine that tears covered that time of lovemaking, as David took responsibility for the death of their son and shouldered responsibility for the grief of his wife, Bathsheba.

Through Nathan the prophet, the Lord told David to name this son Jedidiah which means “beloved of the Lord”. Imagine the sweet moment that David received this redeeming love message from Nathan.

Yet, David would bear the curse of his restless home in a variety of ways such as the betrayal by his own son, Absalom, and the many, many wars David would have to fight. He yearned for peace when there was no peace. He would never see that great temple built, for God stripped him of that privilege. Sadly, as is often the case, David’s anguish impacted Bathsheba, his wife.

What gift are you yearning for that cannot be broken? David declared in Psalm 51 that his sin was ever before him, yet the words of Psalm 23, written by David, speak comfort and peace:

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Psalm 23:4 ESV

Which is it? I think it’s both. God’s redeeming love through the sacrifice of His dear son, Jesus, draws His children to repentance. We may have life-long consequences (our sin is ever before us) but we face them with the confidence that no matter how dark the journey, He goes with us.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

If you haven’t done so yet, read Chapter 4, Bathsheba, in [*Harlots and Heroines, The Midwives of the Messiah*](#). There is so much we cannot unpack in this passage, but gift yourself with the time to read Bathsheba’s story in this book and the accompanying Scriptures. Watch for the signs of grace that David ignored and ask yourself if you, too, are receiving signs of grace that you are ignoring.