

The Road to the Cross...

The Valley of Shadows

We've spent weeks breathing the thin, exhilarating air of Moriah, Sinai, Carmel, and more. Yet, we must remember that the path to glory always winds through the shadows. Today, we begin at the beginning—not in the light, but in the long shadows of the Old Testament that point us toward the Hill of Calvary.

As Easter approaches, we're going to spend time looking at the "shadows" cast across the Old Testament. And, these aren't just stories. They are mile markers and a roadmap to a Savior promised long ago. Let's walk this road together.

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 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. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23

David Knew What This Meant

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 1 Samuel 17:34-35

- I shall not want
- He leads me beside still waters
- Thy rod and thy staff comfort me
- Valley of shadows and death

70 He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; 71 from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. Psalm 78:70-71

God's Warning and Promise

The word of the Lord came to me: 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; 6 they wandered over all the mountains and

on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. Ezekiel 34:1-6

15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. 16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. Ezekiel 34:15-16

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

Lays down His life

11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. John 10:11

Knows them by name

He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... I know my sheep and my sheep know me." John 10:3, 14

Searches for the lost

4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? Luke 15:4

The Deeper You Look, the Better He Is!

1. The Good Shepherd

11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

2. The Great Shepherd

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, Hebrews 13:20

3. The Chief Shepherd

4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
1 Peter 5:4

The Second Mile: *Going Beyond Sunday*

Let's dig deeper together to see how God is calling and equipping each of us to reach the lost.

Monday – David talked about sheep and shadows. He knew a lot about both. When were you in your deepest, darkest valley? Could you see God in it? How did you get through?

Tuesday – God sees our need and promises to come for us. How does this promise comfort you? How has He already demonstrated this to be true?

Wednesday – Jesus declares that He is the Good Shepherd. Do you know the sound of His voice? Are you following Him?

Thursday – The Good Shepherds dies for us. The Great Shepherd rises for us. The Chief Shepherd returns for us. You are His sheep, whom He loves. What is your responsibility and job in this? (Hint: it starts with faith and follows in obedience).

Friday – Easter highlights this great story with Jesus as both the Spotless Lamb and the Shepherd. What do you love most about Easter? Are you inviting friends and family to join you?