

I Will Fear No Evil

Ponder: What do you fear? Why?

Scripture: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4a, NKJV).

As a child, I was afraid of the dark. I still don't particularly like it, but I'm no longer scared of it. David's “valley of the shadow of death” sounds dark and foreboding. Why, then, wasn't he afraid? Because the Lord was with him.

If one or both of my parents were with me, my childish fear of the dark evaporated. I knew I could count on them to protect me from whatever dangers (real or imagined) were lurking in the shadows. Even so, with the Lord as his Shepherd, David feared no evil. This refers not to moral evil such as drunkenness or murder, but to dangers and hardships such as the patriarch Jacob had experienced when he said, “few and evil have been the days of the years of my life” (Genesis 47:9). Jacob had not been a wicked man, but he had gone through some harrowing occurrences.

David certainly faced his share of dangers, any number of which might have taken his life. The giant Goliath thought he would be easy prey. Jealous Saul would have pinned him to the wall with a spear. Even David's own son wanted to kill him to take the throne of Israel. He must have felt at times like his ancestors who wandered for 40 years in the desert full of pits, drought, and the shadow of death (Jeremiah 2:6). But David knew that God was with him, and that He “turns the shadow of death into morning” (Amos 5:8).

People fear death because they don't know or aren't prepared for what comes afterward. Jesus came to free us from the bondage of the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). Isaiah prophesied concerning Him: “The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined” (9:2).

Let us walk without fear through the valley of the shadow of death! Whatever dangers we encounter, the Lord is with us. Even when we die, we can do so with the confidence that our Shepherd gave His life to save our souls.