

Chapter 7: Even though I walk through the valley . . .

In chapter 7 of Keller's book, we come to the place where we familiarize ourselves with funerals. However, as Keller states this is not a death poem because of the fact that it says "I walk through." There is action, not stillness, and even though we may not feel like walking through the valleys we must realize they have great value in our spiritual growth. Keller states there are three reasons why sheep are taken to mountaintops by way of valleys.

1. The valleys are the way of the gentlest grades.
2. The valleys are the well watered routes.
3. The valleys are generally where the richest feed and best forage is to be found along the route.

Because of the richness of feed and forage and the availability of water, this is also the routes that the predators take as well. Therefore, we are grateful to have a Saviour Who will always be with us.

When we are in the valleys we long for better days. This must be how Joshua and the Israelites felt as they were at the end of "forty years of wondering" in the desert. The Lord was ready to show them the promise land, but they had to obey His Word to be able to inherit the land.

Read Joshua 1:6-9

What did God tell Joshua he needed to do? (Note: There is more than one thing.)

What did God promise Joshua in verse 9?

After His resurrection, Jesus met the disciples at the mountain in Galilee. Read Matthew 28:16-20.

What were the instructions Jesus gave the disciples?

What did He promise them in verse 20?

God is the same today as He was then. He gives us the same promises. He will be with us and guide us through the valleys. A common saying of Christians is "we grow in the valleys." While this statement is very true, there is a responsibility we should acknowledge to be able to grow. We must acknowledge that we cannot grow in the valley unless we allow the Lord to lead and nurture us through them. Otherwise, we are usually stuck in the valley and are not successful in coming out.

Thanksgiving for Trials:

It is hard for us to be thankful for the trials that we encounter in our lives. However, if we think about it in the aspect that through the trials we are growing closer to God, then we *should* be thankful.

For the Christian, every day should be Thanksgiving Day. We should even be thankful in the midst of problems. Read 2 Corinthians 7:4, what did the apostle Paul state about trials in this verse?

Paul knew that God was working all things together for His good, even though he was going through trials. (Romans 8:28).

Read the following verses. What does each say about giving thanks during adversity?

Philippians 4:6

Colossians 2:6-7

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Trials Satisfy Our Soul

Trials bring out the thirst that we should have for the Father. When things are going good we don't have a great thirst for refreshment from the Father. However, when we are in the midst of the valleys our lives tend to become so complicated that we long for refreshment from Him. One of the wonderful things about the Lord is that He satisfies our souls even in the midst of trials. It is a refreshing that brings peace which passes all understanding. On the following page Psalm 103 has been printed. Circle the descriptions that tell how the Lord refreshes our souls. Reflect upon ways in which the Lord may have refreshed your soul in the manners that you have circled.

Psalm 103

- ¹ Praise the LORD, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- ² Praise the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits-
- ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
- ⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
- ⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
- ¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear
him;
- ¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
- ¹⁵ As for man, his days are like grass,
he flourishes like a flower of the field;
- ¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
- ¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting
the LORD's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's
children-
- ¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.
- ¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.
- ²⁰ Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.
- ²¹ Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.
- ²² Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.
Praise the LORD, O my soul.