

## BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”  
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

## PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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**MISSIONARIES OF THE WEEK**

Mexico | Steve & Debbie Poston



1. Pray for Gladis Kaal who reached out to the church before COVID, then did not show up for months. She recently reached out and is now attending online.
2. Pray for Pastor Cesar Delgado who has Pancreatic Cancer. He was not given much time to live, but God is working and he is handling chemo well.
3. Special Praise - we have a new grandchild! Matthew Poston was born on April 7th.

GROWTH  
GUIDE

STRESSBUSTERS  
PSALM 23

Handout: 05/24/20

Study: 05/31/20

## Busting The Stress Of Dark Valleys

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley,” or as most of us memorized it, “the valley of the shadow of death.”

There is no indication that this dark valley is not also the right path spoken of in the previous verse. Whether a place of rest and refreshment or a rocky river bed, the Shepherd leads and has his purposes for the way he has chosen for us to walk.

And also note that he doesn’t simply keep us from the dark place, but rather walks with us through it. It is not the rescue from death’s shadow for which the psalmist prays, but rather the presence of the good shepherd from which he takes comfort.

So many of us long for mountain top experiences, with lush, green, abundant food all around us all the time, and quite frankly the reality of the dark valley disillusioned us. Like the disciples on the boat in the midst of the storm, we wake the Savior and cry out “Master, don’t you care?”

Our faith has wavered and fear has taken hold, it grips us in doubt and panic sets in. We so easily lose perspective, and the things that matter most for eternity seem to pale in comparison to our present, with its very real and hard, yet temporary trial and pain. Jesus promised to never leave us nor forsake us. His presence with us is assured. Is it enough?

The psalmist not only speaks of the Shepherd’s presence but also of his tools: his rod and staff. The rod is a weapon that was used to safeguard both the shepherd and his flock in the face of danger. The staff was for walking but also for guiding, for prodding the sheep to go in the right way.

Together the rod and staff were used for discipline, to correct any wayward sheep that insisted on wandering away. Protection and guidance; defending and disciplining. Discipline remember is both instruction – this is the way: walk in it – and correction – you have gone off the path: get back on it. A father or mother who loves their children, and a shepherd who cares for his sheep, offer both.

The Psalmist says these tools bring him comfort. Comfort in the sense of security I would think. When we know we are protected by one who cares for us deeply, willing to lay down his life for ours – in fact has laid down his life for ours so that we are secure for all eternity – a calm confidence results.

We can face whatever temporary struggles come our way, whatever opposition, whatever suffering, knowing we are safe in the hands of the one who is all powerful, able to save.

Source: “Fearless Comfort: A reflection on Psalm 23:4” by Dave Roberts

## KEY VERSE

Psalm 23:4 (NKJV)

*“Yea, 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.”*

## WEEKLY READINGS

**Monday: Psalm 23; Psalm 138:7-8; Ezekiel 34:12; John 16:33**

### Introduction

1. Have you ever walked in a dark valley? If so, what was that time in your life like for you?
2. What does the Shepherd provide as his sheep walk through the dark valley?

**Tuesday: Psalm 23; Job 14:1; Psalm 34:17-18; I Peter 1:6-7**

### Realize You Will Walk Through A Dark Valley

3. Why do we have to go through the valleys? Is it possible to avoid the valleys?
4. Think of some of the dark valleys you have faced in your life. How has the Shepherd gotten you through these valleys?

**Wednesday: Psalm 23; II Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:14-17**

### Refuse To Be Afraid

5. What happens to fear when the Shepherd is with His sheep?
6. What is it about Jesus our Shepherd that can give you confidence in the midst of frightening situations?

**Thursday: Psalm 23; Isaiah 43:2; Hebrews 13:5-6**

### Remember That God Is With You

7. Can you think of a time when you were aware of God's presence in the middle of fear? How did it help you?

8. What does it mean to you that God is with you?

9. How have you experienced God's presence during our Covid-19 crisis?

**Friday: Psalm 23; I Samuel 17:34-35; Mathew 18:11-14**

### Rely On God's Protection And Guidance

10. What does a shepherd do with his rod and staff? What do the shepherd's rod and staff provide for the sheep as they follow?

11. What do you typically want when you are in the valley? What does God want when you are in the valley?

12. What is God teaching you through our current dark valley (the Covid-19 crisis)?