



THE SUNDAY MESSAGE

THE VALLEY

sunday 22 august



Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These notes provide some ideas to reflect upon about what we are to achieve in this life.

When you think of a valley or a shadow in our life what comes to mind?

 **Psalm 23:4; Joshua 7:26; Hosea 2:15; Psalm 84:6**


Maybe because of the power of David's Psalm we think of valleys in life as places of trial, hardship or fear. In these other verses the word *Achor* means trouble and *Baca* means weeping. The photo here is said to be of the place named the Valley of the Shadow of Death in Israel where sunlight only reaches the bottom at mid-day. Shadows in life often cause us to think of darkness, gloom, danger and foreboding. A shadow is something which gets between the sun or light. A shadow is constantly varying until it can suddenly cease to exist.

If we all experience valleys in life and threatening shadows, what should we do about these?

 **1 Samuel 17:31-37 and Psalms 17:8; 36:7; 57:1 & 63:7**

We can prepare ourselves to move through them successfully while we are on the mountain peaks with God enjoying people, work, our acts of service, our relationship with God and basically everything about life. Armies which only start training and equipping once their land has been invaded take longer to win the victory. A strong, trained and confident army can overcome an attack more quickly and successfully. They become more confident when they next face a threatening shadow appearing as a giant. The verses from Psalms create an image of being the centre of God's attention and protection – 17:8 especially has a powerful image of truth we all need in our hearts before encountering a valley or before we learn it in the valley.

How do I prepare for valleys in life?

 Look at **2 Corinthians 1:3-7** (focus upon v4) and **2 Corinthians 7:6**

Decide in advance that you will pass through valleys when you encounter them. Accept that valleys come with real pain, sometimes overwhelming pain. Learn from guides who know the valley you are in and they way through them – these guides will be people who have gone your way before and God will bring these guides to you in the form of other believers. Grow your relationship with God in the good times. Learn the truth of God's love for you, learn that He doesn't just love you but He is in love with you. He thinks about you all the time. Surround yourself with friends who will carry you and who you will carry when they encounter their own valley. There are a hundred other things I could suggest, but above all don't live in fear of the valley and its shadows, instead be like Jesus and set your "eyes on a new horizon" (**Isaiah 50:7 & Luke 9:51**) as He faced Calvary He saw beyond it to your salvation.

NEXT STEPS

If you are not in a valley at the moment then praise God because this is a time to grow strong. If a trial comes in the future you will be in peak spiritual condition and you will be able to overcome the trial more quickly. Wisely use this time available to you and know that the trial will make you even stronger and you will be less vulnerable to the enemy's schemes to destroy you.

If you are in a valley, if you are struggling, if there is little light in your life and the shadows appear real and deadly then you need help. Right at the moment you may need others to help you safely out of the valley. These people can apply the truth of the Word and the power of the Spirit. One option for help starting this week in each campus is [Cleansing Stream](#). If you try to do this alone you increase the risk of being stuck in the valley.

Lord we ask You to bring help to these children you love and to bring them safely out of the valley into the Light. Amen.

Valley of Troubles

One of the easiest things to find in the Bible is an example of people who suffered great trouble. Many came through their Valley of Trouble successfully. One example is Job.

At one stage in Job's life everything was going right but then he found himself in a valley of trouble. Friends came alongside him trying to offer explanations of what was happening to him. They seemed to make things worse for him because sometimes we will not get answers. It was as if they could just know the answers to their questions then it would fix things. Would it? Sometimes we can fix things that are wrong in our life. Other times all we can do is live as we journey through the valley whilst avoiding accusing God of leaving us but instead we hold onto the truth of God's nature.

Someone said "I do not know what is happening. I trust God." Maybe it wasn't God's plan but He does know how to rescue us. Read John 16:33. Some lessons are learnt in a valley. Some changes in our life happen in the valley.