

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** How to Smile at Death

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Psalm 23:4

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1365

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Psalm 23:4
- b) Most people do everything they can to avoid thinking about death.
  - i) Man is the only creature who knows that he's going to die, and he's trying desperately to forget it.
    - (1) This is why some splurge on cosmetics and others purchase a sports car during a mid-life crisis.
- c) We don't like the idea of dying, but death is a very real fact.
  - i) And it's something that we're not to fear.
- d) In the land of Palestine, there is a valley called "The Valley of the Shadow of Death."
  - i) It's a ravine, a canyon, that is very narrow and is always full of shadows.
  - ii) In Bible times, bears were there, as well as hyenas and leopards and robbers.
  - iii) There were steep places where the sheep might fall.
  - iv) It was a frightening place with grotesque shadows on the canyon wall.
  - v) In the winter when there wasn't much grass, a shepherd would take the sheep down to Jericho to winter there; and in the spring, he would lead his sheep through this valley to the greener pastures in the highlands.
    - (1) This is likely what David had in mind when he wrote this Psalm.
      - (a) David himself was a shepherd and likely led his sheep through this valley many times.
- e) David had learned to smile at death.
  - i) Today's message will give us three principles to help us do the same.

2) DEATH IS A DECIDED FACT (PSALM 23:4)

- a) It's a fact that many people don't want to face.
- b) It is a stubborn fact.
  - i) Hebrews 9:27
    - (1) It's an appointment that we have.
  - ii) Romans 5:12
  - iii) The only exception to whether or not we might die is if Jesus comes back first.
- c) It is an uncertain fact.
  - i) We don't know when we're going to die.
  - ii) Psalm 23:4
    - (1) David was walking through the valley, and he didn't know from one moment to the next what was going to happen.
  - iii) We live life one step at a time.
    - (1) 1 Samuel 20:3
  - iv) People of all ages die.
  - v) James 4:13-15
    - (1) God doesn't have to take your life; all He has to do is stop giving it.
      - (a) Lamentations 3:22

- (2) Life is a gift from God.
- vi) Life is like a breath on a frosty morning that is here for a moment and then gone.
- d) It is a personal fact.
  - i) Psalm 23:4
    - (1) Not “they walk”, but “I walk.”
    - ii) We walk through the valley just like David did.
    - iii) We are living on the very edge of eternity.
  - e) The first step in learning to smile at death is to look death straight in the face.
    - i) Bring it into focus and say with David, “Yea, though.”
      - (1) Acknowledge that it is there.
- 3) DEATH IS A DEFEATED FOE (PSALM 23:4)
  - a) There can be no valley without mountains.
    - i) Psalm 23:4
      - (1) David talks about a valley.
        - (a) It is impossible for there to be a valley unless there are mountains.
    - ii) Psalm 23 is in between two “mountain” Psalms.
      - (1) Psalm 22 deals with Mount Calvary.
        - (a) It tells of the crucifixion of the Messiah.
      - (2) Psalm 24 deals with the coronation of the Messiah.
        - (a) It deals with the second coming of the Lord Jesus.
      - (3) Psalm 23 is a valley between two mountains.
        - (a) Over here are the blood drenched slopes of Mount Calvary, and over there are the sunlit peaks of Mount Zion, and we are living in the valley.
    - iii) Three times in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus is described as a shepherd.
      - (1) He is called the Good Shepherd.
        - (a) John 10:11
        - (b) This is Mount Calvary.
        - (c) The Good Shepherd died for us.
      - (2) He is called the Chief Shepherd.
        - (a) 1 Peter 5:4
        - (b) The Chief Shepherd is coming for us.
      - (3) He is called the Great Shepherd.
        - (a) He’s the one who now lives for us.
        - (b) Hebrews 13:20-21
    - iv) The Lord Jesus has conquered the valley of the shadow of death.
      - (1) He’s the one who rose from the dead.
    - v) Psalm 121:1
      - (1) When we’re down in the valley, then look at the mountains.
        - (a) Look to Mount Calvary and to Mount Zion.

- b) There can be no shadow without a light.
  - i) Psalm 23:4
    - (1) Death is just a shadow if you know the Lord Jesus.
      - (a) Jesus has become the death of death.
      - (b) Jesus pulled the sting out of death.
      - (c) Jesus has given us a hope that is steadfast and sure.
    - ii) A shadow may frighten us, but a shadow cannot hurt us.
      - (1) God made us to walk through shadows.
    - iii) Jesus has taken the sting out sin, the dread out of the grave, and He has become our victor.
    - iv) Isaiah 9:2
    - v) When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need to look to the light.
      - (1) If we look to the light, the shadow will fall behind us.
- c) There is no evil without a greater good.
  - i) Psalm 23:4
    - (1) He is comparing the evil with the Great Shepherd.
    - (2) The “Thou” in this passage is the Lord, Jehovah.
      - (a) In the King James version of Scripture, the word “LORD” is in all caps.
        - (i) The word LORD means “Jehovah” or “Yahweh.”
        - (ii) “Yahweh” is an unpronounceable word; just four consonants that cannot be pronounced.
      - (b) This is the most sacred name for God that the Jews knew.
        - (i) When Moses was preparing to deliver the children of Israel out of bondage, he made excuses.
        - (ii) God told Moses to tell them that “I AM that I AM sent you.”
          - 1. This means the great eternal, personal God; the ever-existing one; the one who never had a beginning; the one who never had an ending; not I will be, but I AM.
          - 2. God then told him that Jehovah is His name.
          - 3. Exodus 3:14-15
    - (3) The name Jehovah is not mentioned in the New Testament, only in the Old Testament.
      - (a) This is because Jesus is our Jehovah.
    - (4) The name Jehovah is so sacred that a Jew copying that name would take a bath before he would copy that name.
      - (a) He would get a new pen before writing down that name.
    - (5) The name Jesus means “Jehovah saves.”
      - (a) When Moses could no longer lead the children of Israel, a man named Joshua took his place.
        - (i) Joshua’s name was not always Joshua, but Hoshea.
          - 1. Hoshea means “salvation.”
        - (ii) Moses gave him a new name.

1. He took part of the name Hoshea and part of the name Jehovah and put them together.
  2. This new name was Joshua, which means “Jehovah saves.”
    - a. Jesus is the Joshua of the New Testament.
    - (b) The name Jesus is the same as the Old Testament name Jehovah.
  - ii) David is saying that Jesus (Jehovah) is with us.
    - (1) There can be no evil without a greater good.
    - (2) Truth is mightier than error.
    - (3) Grace is greater than sin.
    - (4) Our Sovereign is greater than Satan.
    - (5) Life is greater than death.
    - (6) Jehovah is with us.
- 4) DEATH IS A DELIGHTFUL FRIEND (PSALM 23:4)
- a) 1 Corinthians 3:22-23
    - i) Of the things that belong to us, the Apostle Paul says that death also belongs to us.
      - (1) It is one of our possessions.
    - ii) Paul thinks of death not as an enemy but as a servant to help us.
  - b) Psalm 116:15
  - c) Philippians 1:21
    - i) It is gain physically.
      - (1) Our bodies will be made like the Lord Jesus.
    - ii) It is gain intellectually.
      - (1) We will know as we are known.
      - (2) 1 Corinthians 13:12
    - iii) It is gain emotionally.
      - (1) We will be able to praise Him with our whole heart.
    - iv) It is gain socially.
      - (1) We will be with the saints of all the ages.
      - (2) We will be with the Lord face to face.
    - v) It is gain spiritually.
      - (1) Temptation and sin will be behind us.
      - (2) We will be one with our Lord like never before.
    - vi) Death is the thing that brings us into this relationship.
  - d) There is the presence of the Shepherd.
    - i) “Thou art with me.”
      - (1) Psalm 23:4
      - (2) Up until this time, David had been talking about the Lord.
        - (a) Now when He is in the valley, he is talking to the Lord.
    - ii) There is nothing that will bring us face to face with God more than the dark valleys of life.
      - (1) Hebrews 13:5
      - (2) Matthew 28:20

- iii) The Shepherd is Jehovah.
  - (1) The ultimate is our intimate.
  - (2) We won't have to cross Jordan alone.
    - (a) We will not die alone.
- e) There is the power of our Shepherd.
  - i) His rod and His staff comfort us.
    - (1) Psalm 23:4
    - (2) The rod is used to protect the sheep.
    - (3) The staff is used to lift the sheep.
  - ii) When it is our time to die, the Lord will be with us and will strengthen us.
  - iii) The presence of Jehovah God will be there.
    - (1) Psalm 116:15
  - iv) His rod will be there to protect us from all the powers of evil, and His staff will be there to draw us up close to Him as we walk through that valley.
- f) There is the purpose of the Shepherd.
  - i) The purpose of the Shepherd is through the valley.
    - (1) The valley is not a box canyon.
    - (2) Jesus has kicked the end out of the grave.
      - (a) He is bringing us through.
  - ii) Trouble and difficulty are only for a season.
    - (1) It's only for a purpose.
  - iii) David knew that a shepherd would never lead his sheep through any place like that unless he was leading them to a better place.
  - iv) Whatever it is, it has come to pass, and we are going through.
  - v) The purpose of the Shepherd is to lead us through.
  - vi) Hebrews 2:14-15
    - (1) The devil keeps people in bondage through the fear of death.
  - vii) We are not ready to live until we are no longer afraid to die.
    - (1) We need to put our faith where God has put our sins: on Jesus.
    - (2) Isaiah 53:6

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) To be able to smile at death, we must know the one who conquered death and the grave.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16