

FALLING FORWARD

STRUGGLING WELL MAKES ME WHOLE

The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake. ⁴Even 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.

⁵You prepare a table before me in
the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Psalm 23:1-5

Choosing the Lord as our Shepherd is a choice to follow His lead.

He tells us in advance the kinds of places He'll lead us.

The quiet waters we like. The right paths . . . okay.

We can accept that His paths are better than ours.

But how did I end up in Death Valley?

And why do I have to sit at a table while my enemies surround me?

What am I doing here?

We're surprised to find ourselves in these places

**— I certainly didn't see my season of trial coming —
but the Shepherd wants us to know He's present with us,
even in the least expected places.**

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32:7

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Psalm 32:10

Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

Psalm 22:12

Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me,
they have pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalm 22:16

GOOD NEWS!

We have a Shepherd who's willing to lead us.

**According to Psalm 23,
list at least three places our Shepherd leads us:**

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

WE'RE MORE LIKELY TO FALL FORWARD

IF WE BELIEVE...

**... just because we find ourselves
somewhere we didn't expect to be,
it doesn't mean the Shepherd has abandoned us.
Perhaps He's led us there for a very good reason.**

**... the Shepherd's greatest provisions are
often found in the most unexpected places.**

**... the presence of our enemies should not
be interpreted as the absence of our God.**

**... one of the greatest gifts faith gives us is
an empowering perspective on our trials.**

NEXT STEPS

Suggested Reading (available at the bookstore):

An Honest Look At A Mysterious Journey by John and Joanna Stumbo

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