

A Merry Heart!

by Ralph Sexton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's plan and purpose for our lives, even in the midst of challenges and struggles, and encourages listeners to rest on God's Word and look out for others who may be struggling.

Duration: 41:35

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:2-3, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Gods Providence", "Divine Care"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of God in the lives of believers. He describes God as a blessing, a fountain, a library, and a source of nourishment. The preacher also highlights God's role as a friend, a shelter, and a provider. He uses the story of David and Goliath to illustrate how God prepares and equips His people for battles. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God is always in control and will take care of His sheep.

Transcript

And by the help of the Lord Church, we ought to get back to where the world knows we're saved, and we're salt and light. But I'm convinced that you're an unusual generation. You know, those people that study demographics, and they study the statistical world, they tell me that if I go to Adam and Eve, when Adam and Eve were created, up until last night, and I take all those human beings that have lived and died through last night and add them up, and then I take all the people that are alive on planet Earth today and add them up, that there are more people alive this moment on the Earth than all the people that have ever lived in the past.

Yet at the same time, it's a very dark day and hour that we're in. Very strange time. But yet God loved you enough and had enough plan and purpose for your life that he wanted you to be alive right here before the Lord comes back.

Now, why did he want us here? Well, he says in his word, he wanted us to be salt and he wanted us to be light. But the Bible also says that we have an enemy, an adversary. And that enemy's very real.

The enemy of the Lord does not want you to live in victory. He doesn't want you to have joy. And he doesn't want you to be a light when you go home to your neighborhood, your family, your friends.

He doesn't want that. So he uses everything he can to discourage you. He does everything he can to keep you from living in the victory.

I want you to take your Bible and look with me at Psalms 22, and I'm going to talk to you for a few moments about victory in the valley. Can you go through a hard place and still have the victory? Psalms 22 is a very powerful psalm. It's a prophetic psalm.

It looks forward to Calvary. Let me, if you would allow me to read this verse to you, verse 1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? Alright, skip with me to Psalms 24, verse 1. The earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Psalms 22 is a picture of Mount Calvary.

Psalms 24, a picture of Mount Zion. Now, I am from the mountains. I love the mountains.

I live in western North Carolina, and I've lived in several other places, but I love the mountains. I'm a mountain boy, and I like it. And the reason I like the mountains is because God lives there.

And I seem to have a skeptical crowd. You don't find one verse of Scripture where God says, I will lift my eyes into the flatlands from which cometh my help. I'll lift my eyes into the desert.

He says, I'll lift my eyes into the hills. Amen. And there's something special about the mountains.

I love them. But, you know, growing up in the mountains and living there, I found out something about the mountains. My granddaddy spent a lot of time with me in the mountains, the Great Smokies, and we walked and hiked through there.

My great-great Uncle Tom Sexton was a circuit-riding preacher, and he preached in Cades Cove and Pigeon Forge and all through the Great Smokies. And my dad's family, we came out of the part of east Tennessee and into western North Carolina, and Uncle Tom, he would carry his saddlebag on the back of his horse, and one side he had an old black-backed King James Bible, and on the other side his smithing tools. And he'd go from village to village and farm to farm, and he would work on the animals there, and then he'd preach the Word of God at night.

And so granddaddy and I, we spent a lot of time in the woods, and we walked through there. But I found out something. I love the mountaintop.

I love living up there. I love the view. I love looking out.

But I found out that when it comes time to be productive and to grow something to eat, you don't do that on the mountaintop. You go down to the valley. That's where the big boy tomatoes grow.

That's where the Kennebec potatoes are dug. You don't grow greasy-cut short beans on the top of that hill. You grow them down in the valley where the topsoil is 20 or 30 inches deep.

And there's where you have the big crops. Well, look at Psalms 22. That's Mount Calvary.

Psalms 24, Mount Zion. But right between those two mountains is a valley. Psalms 23.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Now, that valley's there. It's in the Word of God.

And I got to looking through here, and I got to thinking about valleys. I've got two or three messages, maybe four, that I preach out of Psalms 22, 23, and 24. It's one of my favorite places to study.

Psalms 22 is the Good Shepherd. Psalms 23 is the Great Shepherd. Psalms 24 is the Grand Shepherd or the Chief Shepherd.

Another view of these three Psalms is Psalms 22 is that Mount Calvary. And then the valley in Psalms 23. And then Mount Zion in Psalms 24.

Now, when I study these passages, I find out that these mountains are only connected by the valleys. When we have to live on this earth, God saved you, God saved me, we're on this planet Earth. But we're still going to have to walk through the valley.

Now, watch this. There's a physical valley, and then there's an emotional valley, and then there's a spiritual valley. You're a threefold person, right? You're a body, you're a soul, and you're a spirit.

If the devil can attack you in one area and get you weak, then he'll try to hammer you in another area and make you even weaker. Have you ever had the Hong Kong Louie flu? I mean, have you ever had the real bad flu? I mean so bad that you can't stand for the cat to walk in the room because he's making so much noise, and the light hurts, and you can't stand being alive. And you're too sick to die.

You'd have to get better to die because you've got to have a little strength to die. And you've had that, and you've been there. That's when the devil shows up to tell you you're not even a Christian.

That's when he shows up to get you to doubt the inerrant, infallible Word of God. Because we are complex. So I can go into a physical valley.

I can go into a spiritual valley. And I can go into an emotional valley. Now listen to this preacher right here.

I believe between now and the coming of the Lord, the greatest battles and valleys you people of God are going to face is going to be the battle between your ears. I believe it's going to be for the minds of God's people. I believe with all the technology, and all the medicine, and all that's happening today, I believe more than being tested physically, or being tested spiritually.

Because we've got the Word of God, and we've got wonderful churches, and great southern gospel music. I mean, if I'm going through a tough day or a bad time, I just go next door and get my neighbor to sing. It's Squire Parson.

So he does pretty good. I've helped him, and he's coming right along. But you can just enjoy a good song.

Do you not do that when you go through a hard place, and how a song can be a blessing, and God will use something to encourage you? Have you ever noticed the power of that music? That music can strengthen us, and it can uplift us. I do two or three messages on the power of music, and music can depress you. It can bring you down.

You know, you can put on some of those old sad songs, and melancholy songs, and next thing you know, that old CD's in there whining and crying, and it's cold outside, and dark clouds hanging on the back yard trees, and you're all alone, and nobody cares. Oh, it's crying time again. You're going to leave me.

And those old sad songs are just playing, and the next thing you know, you're sad, and you're down. Well, you know what? If we can be affected in our emotions by what we hear or what we see, you think the devil has forgotten the power that he could exert upon our lives to get us to be defeated Christians? He doesn't want us to have victory in the valley. He just wants us to be in the valley.

Now, watch this with me if you would. We find that in the Word of God, there were several great struggles or battles in the valley. If you remember, there was a place in the Word of God where the children of Israel were fighting in the valley.

And up on the mountaintop, there was a prayer meeting going on. And the children of Israel were actually in the war for their lives. And when the man of God quit praying, the enemy prevailed.

And he got so tired he couldn't hold up his hands. And you know what happened? We had to have somebody hold up holy hands so he could pray. And when he did, guess what happened? They prevailed in the valley.

They won and had victory in the valley. Now, there's a double lesson there. Number one, the power of prayer.

Number two is, you may be on a mountaintop. This may be a wonderful week for you. You didn't have any problems when you left home.

You didn't have anything bothering you, no stresses in your life. You'd just gotten a letter from the IRS right before you left and said they was refunding everything they'd taken out for the last ten years. They'd made a mistake.

And you said, I believe I'll just go on a cruise. And it hasn't rained and you've had a good time. And you're trying to get by on your Atkins diet, just trying to survive.

Now, that may be you. But what God's saying is, if you are on a mountaintop, do you know someone in a valley? Because then we can pray and help hold up those that are fighting for their lives that's in a valley. I've got a precious little couple in my church.

Their son has had 42 operations. He's got a rare bone disease. His bones break and are very fragile.

And he trips and falls. And obviously, he's in a wheelchair now. But, you know, how do you go to the surgery center 42 times for your child? You know, I've got a precious deacon in my church.

And he was actually in Duke Hospital with his wife who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. And I got a phone call to go to the trauma center at our hospital. And when I got there, I could hear this child crying out in unbelievable pain.

And I went back into there and the RN said, Pastor, is this kid a member of your church? And I said, yes. He said, well, where are his parents? I said, his mother's dying. They're doing an experimental procedure down at Duke University.

She said, well, the doctor needs to talk to you. I think his older brother or cousin brought him into the ER. And the doctor walked out and he said, Reverend, he said, we've called for the life flight helicopter.

We're going to fly this 10-year-old boy down to Duke. He said, he's got a brain tumor the size of an orange. He said, we don't expect him to live through the night.

And I'm, listen, I had to get on the phone and call my deacon, who's there with his dying wife, and say, they just found a brain tumor in your 10-year-old son. And they're flying him to meet you. Now, I'm going to tell you something.

I think I've had some bad days, but I haven't had a day like that. Huh? Listen, if you think you're in a valley, I promise you if you look around, you'll find somebody in a lower valley than you're in. And if you want God to bless you, you love on somebody else that's going through deep water.

And while you're praying for them and loving on them, God will come by and hug your neck. And give you a little something to get you through your day or through your long night. Now, church, we can either be very selfish and turn inward, or we can look up to heaven and say, God, I know there's a reason I'm going through this valley.

Now, God, you help me pay attention. I want to grow. I want to mature.

I want to be more like you. Watch what happened in the Word of God. When we go down through these valleys, we see that the mountain is a place of rest.

It's a place for a view. It's a place for relaxation. The valley's a place of work, a place of dedication, a place of planting, of watering, of weeding and harvesting.

But it is also a place that you bear fruit. Sometimes while you're in your valley will be the time that God shows you off, just like He did Job, and say, I want everybody to see how good I am, and how wonderful I am, and how much mercy and grace is available to the people of God. Now, whether it's a physical valley or a spiritual valley, hey, all of us are that triune being, a body, soul, and the spirit.

And the body, that physical valley, you know, remember the Apostle Paul, he had the thorn in the flesh. Alright, it could be sickness, it could be suffering, it could even be the pain or the separation of death. You see, if you've ever lost a loved one, a mom, a dad, a brother, a sister, a child, you know, I've got another couple in my church, they have gone to the cemetery, and in the last three years, buried two adult children.

Now, I'm going to tell you something, they lost their son and lost their daughter. And I'm thinking, my goodness, how can any family take that much pain and anguish? But you know what, ladies and gentlemen, I don't know what your valley may be. It could be a spiritual valley.

The body, the spirit, it could be temptation, it could be the battle, where is God, why God? It could be any number. A loss of feeling. Sometimes you can go to church and everyone seems to be having a good time and you can't find God.

And you read your Bible and all of a sudden it's turned into black letters on white pages. And you try to pray and it seems like the heavens are made of brass and your prayer just rains back down on your head. Well, that's a valley.

My dad wrote a book about a valley he went through. It says, my God shall dwell in the thick darkness. He went through a spiritual place for seven years that he could not feel any presence of God.

Now, I couldn't go seven hours, let alone seven days. But he went through a period of time, had to pastor a church, had to go do revivals and camp meetings, and had no feeling that there was even a God in heaven. Now, let me tell you something.

When those kind of battles come, those valleys, those are overwhelming. Those are unbelievable. They're mind-boggling.

But aren't you grateful that we're not saved by our emotions? We're not saved by our feelings? We're not kept by how we feel or what we go through? If we did, we'd lose our religion as soon as we got the flu. Right? As soon as you got real sick, then you would be out of fellowship of the Holy God. So, that's not the criteria.

It's what Jesus did on the cross 2,000 years ago. And then we've got that emotional side. And that's what I wanted to emphasize tonight, because as a pastor and as a man that has the opportunity to meet a lot of people, and a lot of the people that I'm praying and working with are other pastors and other people in ministry, and I'm telling you this is what I'm hearing all across the country.

I'm seeing God's people go through the battle of depression. I'm seeing God's people, people that are saved, they love God, they read their Bible, they go to church, and yet they're battling depression. They're battling anxiety.

God's people going through panic attacks and anxiety attacks. Well, now let me tell you something. If the devil can't defeat you, and he can't distract you to go back into sin, then one of the things he will try to do is to use something that will depress you spiritually.

And anything he can use. Now you've got to remember that, because when those times of testing and battle come, that you're resting on the Word of God and what God has said, not on what you're feeling or what your emotions are telling you. It's not what I say, it's what God has said.

It's not what I do, it's what God has already done. And there's the strength for God's people tonight. You can have a valley day, you can have a valley week, you can have a valley month, you can have a valley year.

But I want you to know the same God that was on the throne and alive and well when you went into that valley is the same God that will be there when you come out of that valley. Now, go with me for the sake of time. I don't have time to develop all this like I would in a study, but go with me to 1 Samuel, in chapter 17.

And if you don't have your Bible with you, you give a copy of the Scripture text because you'll enjoy reading this. Now, 1 Samuel 17, that's a very familiar passage of Scripture. That's the passage of Scripture where David encounters Goliath.

Now, I'm going to read verse 2 and verse 3 and notice what it says. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and pitched by the valley of Elah and set battle in a ray against the Philistines. Philistines, by the way, are a type of the devil.

And the Philistines stood on the mountain on one side and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side. Now, watch this, verse 3. And there was a valley between them. Philistines are on this side, children of Israel on this side, and there's a valley between them.

Now, that valley, Elah, has been in the news recently. There's a Jewish kibbutz in that valley. I love going to the Holy Land.

I love studying over there. And Maurice Templeton is the premier man to get us over to the Holy Land and take care of us and our safety and our food and make sure that we just have a Bible cruise on a bus in the Holy Land. Because that's what we do.

And we go make the Bible come alive during the day and we have fellowship together at night. And one of the things that I like is that valley of Elah because that's the valley where David encountered Goliath. But as I said, it was just in the news because in that kibbutz we just had a red cow born.

Now, a red cow is not a big deal to us in the United States because we've got hundreds of them, thousands of them in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. All kinds of red cattle. But there hadn't been a red cow born in Israel for 2,000 years.

And just three years ago we had a red cow born in Israel and that cow's name was Molly. And that cow that was there was thought to be the first red cow born that could be used for the sacrifice for Israel to start back on the Temple Mount and to build the third temple, a house for God, and a prophecy will be fulfilled in the last days. And to do that they've got to have a red cow to slaughter and then they burn that cow up on an altar outside of the gates of Jerusalem and then they take spring water, running water, and the ashes, they mix it and then they dip a hyssop into it and then they sprinkle that on the priest and the priesthood's then clean and then they can start having the altar of sacrifice again on Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount.

That's where the gold dome is in Jerusalem. Well, they were all excited. But the Bible says that that cow has to be at least two years old, be a mature cow.

And before that cow turned two, they found two or three white hairs on her face and she was disqualified. But in Elah, last year, a red cow was born and they've not found a red hair on her, a white hair on her. She's so red that they said that even the horns, the picture I was emailed even the horns have a red tint to them, her hooves have a red tint to them.

And they are believing that this will be the cow that will be declared sacred as far as the priesthood of Israel is concerned and will be able to start the sacrifice there in the valley of Elah. Now, when we come back to the Bible story that we're reading about this place it says there was a valley between them. Look at verse four.

And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines named Goliath of Gath whose height was six cubit and a span. Now, here's the story you can take home off this book. The Bible says that there was a champion of the Philistines.

And I'm telling you tonight, no matter where you live or where you work the devil's got a champion in your neighborhood that will try to make sure you don't live in the victory in the valley. It may be in your church, it may be where you work, it may be in your family but the devil doesn't want God's people living in the victory. Now, when I was there and I read this verse I walked over, there's still a stream there in that valley and I got to thinking about Samson.

Samson had a battle and he had his battle of temptation in a valley. I thought about Jesus there hanging on the side of the Mount of Olives on that valley, the Kidron Valley there and there he prayed for you and me until his sweat became great drops of blood. And that valley of temptation for him to turn his back on

us and go back to heaven and say we're not worth it.

But he didn't do that. So I thought about Samson, I thought about Jesus, I thought about David. I thought about Mary and Martha there at the tomb of Lazarus and they were in the valley of separation by death and the valley of doubt.

Where is Jesus? He didn't show up. He's not here when he said he'd be here. And they began to wonder.

And then I thought again about those children of Israel down in that valley and they were losing the war until someone prayed up on the mountain. And I thought, boy, you know what? It's obvious that God put a lot of valleys in the Bible and it's obvious I'm going to have to walk through the valleys on this world and so if I am, then God's saying, Ralph, now you know you're going to have to go through some valleys but I want you to walk through those valleys in victory. I'll never leave you and I'll never forsake you.

So you know what I did while I was in the valley of Elah? I did like little David. I walked over to that spring and that creek that's still running down through there and I just got down on my knees and I reached down into that stream and I picked up five smooth stones. I brought them with me.

Five little rocks. Five smooth stones. And these are out of the valley of Elah, out of that little creek that still runs down through the valley floor and that's where David got his stones.

I don't know what size they were but I know that he had to fight a big giant. Now, the reason I got five small ones was obviously I was traveling. I got to thinking about these five rocks because those smooth stones were the things that David used to defeat Goliath.

Now, Dake's commentary says Goliath was over 13 feet tall. Now, that's a big boy. Obviously, his mother wormed him when he was young.

I mean, that's a big boy. Most Bible commentaries, when you read this verse we just read, they say that Goliath was nine feet, nine inches tall. Now, during the World's Fair of 1905 at the London Hippodrome, they brought in a Russian giant in 1905 and he was nine foot, eight inches tall.

They measured him and he had a chest of 60 inches. They measured his feet. His feet were 24 inches long.

This was 1905 at the Hippodrome in London. According to the old history books, he was 9'8". Goliath, according to the Word of God, was an inch taller, 9'9".

That's still a big boy. And you know what? The tip of his spear was 18 pounds. Just the tip of his spear.

So you've got to be large to do that. And here comes little David into that valley, a shepherd boy. The eighth son of Jesse.

And by the way, those of you that love to study numbers with me and the Word of God, you know that eight's the number of new beginning. Amen? And so, here comes little Jesse's son down into that valley floor and he sees that giant, and if we had time to go down through all these Scriptures, he would declare, is there not a cause? Now, he picks up five smooth stones, and I won't get ahead of myself, but the reason they got five rocks is because Goliath had some brothers at the house. You read on in the Word of God, there were some big giant brothers.

And in case he had to meet them, he was prepared. But Goliath was making fun of him and laughing at him, and he picked up these five stones. Now, in that part of the world, many of you have seen a bean shooter, we call them, in the mountains.

You take the fork of a tree and you take a piece of inner tube, a piece of leather in the middle, and you tie it off and then you pull that back, and you can lay some damage on a neighbor. I mean, that stuff's serious. And you can put a crab apple in it and cause a lot of discussions.

And you can take a rock in it and, well, you could kill someone. I mean, it's very lethal. Now, over in Israel, when you go with us over there and we study, I'll show you that they don't use that concept.

They take it loose from the forks on both sides, and so they've got the piece of material with the leather in the middle. They take theirs and they actually weave it. It's a woven material and a flax-type material, but it makes a long piece, sometimes 30-something inches long, with that piece of leather in the middle, or a woven fabric pouch.

And then they load their rocks into that. And then the shepherds swing it in a motion like this, where we're used to this motion of pulling back and releasing. They swing it and get momentum.

They can actually have the velocity almost of a rifle bullet because they take it and they swing it around and around. And when I demonstrate it, I usually do it down behind Mary Martha's house when we're over there in Israel. I have a couple of Palestinian friends that are just unbelievably accurate with theirs.

And I'll just point up the hill and I'll say, up at the top of the hill about 100 yards is a telephone pole. And I say, I just want you guys to hit that. And they'll load up a rock.

Bam! And you can hear that rock hit the telephone pole up on the hill. I mean, they're just, you know, the shepherd boys of that day, they could hunt rabbits and small game to feed themselves and they could use it. Well, David, he didn't wear the armor of Saul.

He didn't do any of that. He just picked up five rocks and he loaded them up and took his sling and he went out to go to battle against this giant. Now, here's the thing you've got to watch.

Psalms 22 is that Calvary. Psalms 24 is Zion. Psalms 23 is that valley.

And we think about Jesus suffering and praying for you and me in the valley there, asking God if there's another way, if there's another way, just take this cup from me. And yet he went down to the valley of death. He went to the valley of identifying with you and me.

He went to the valley of terror and fear. The valley of that trial and the mockery. It's going to be portrayed in just a few days in the Passion of Christ, the Mel Gibson movie.

All of this that we study and know about. And then in Psalms 22, he declared that he was all alone. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Now, Jesus has already walked through every valley that I have to go through.

You think about that. Every valley I have to face, he's already gone through that valley. The valley of sickness, of suffering, separation, sadness.

You've just got to remember your Jesus has already been there. Now, church, if you understand that, then you begin to understand, then God, you've got a plan, you've got a design, you ordained my footsteps, so while I'm in this valley, then God, I want to grow, I want to know more about you, and then God, I want to praise somebody that may be in a lower valley. Now, one of my favorite places in the Holy Land is a literal valley.

It's a literal valley. It's right above the old archaeological site of Jericho, and there's a little dirt road, an old Roman road, 2,000 years old, and it winds around, actually goes up the backside of the Mount of Olives eventually, but it comes out of Jericho. Now, I preached on that little precipice there on that valley floor, and if you were with me up here on the platform and we're looking down into the valley, here's what we would see.

We would see that right off here, this just drops right off. I'm standing on this little narrow road, and I look down here, and it's 1,400, 1,500 feet just right here in front of us, and then there's a narrow floor of that valley. On the backside, it rises up 2,000 feet, 1,800 feet places, and the floor's real narrow.

How narrow? In some places, that valley floor is as narrow as this ship right here is wide. I mean, it's narrow. Now, the reason that is important is because think how sharp up this is, how steep that is over there.

If the sun is not right overhead, then if you're down in that valley, on either side of it, there are dark shadows. It's rocky. It's full of limestone and sandstone caves, and guess what? If you are up on this end of the valley, and you're a Jebusite resider up near the old Jebusite city, and your name is Jesse, and you've got a shepherd boy named David, he's got to walk his sheep down this, in Hebrew it's called a wadi, down this valley floor, and he comes down through here, and he comes down towards the old city of Jericho, which was there, and right here is the Jordan River.

It's right there. Lush greenery and water. Now, watch this.

David would walk down through there with the sheep. If you were a lion, a bear, a wolf, a predator, all you have to do is to get in one of these dark shadow places, a setback, a cave in the cool, wait for the sheep to walk by, and if there's a wounded sheep, a limping sheep, an old sheep, or a little wild lamb that's prone to wander and gets away from the shepherd, all you've got to do is just be lurking in those dark shadows, and you've got meals on wheels, right in front of you, because the predator can grab the sheep. Now, watch this.

Walking down through there is a shepherd boy. He's got a rod and a staff. The rod's for the bad guy.

I don't have time to go through it, but it's nothing more than a big club. They would cut a knot on a tree, cut a hand hole, and if a lion or a tiger, a bear went after the sheep, the shepherd would actually fight off the predator. You remember, David fought a bear, and he fought a lion.

Remember that in the Word of God? Because he was a shepherd. All right? Now, the staff, that's for the good guys. That's the one we see in the Christmas plates.

It's got the hook on the top. Okay? Now, the reason for that is that if one of these sheep, it's real steep and rocky, and if his foot slips off, and I sit in her lap. No.

If his foot slips off, and they get down on the thorn, then he'll turn that staff upside down, and he'll hook that lamb in the belly and pull him back up and put him on the trail. Now then, when you turn that staff upside down, it makes a J for Jesus. Do you remember when you were a lamb out in the world, caught in the briars and the things of this world, and Jesus passed by, and He reached down with love and grace and hooked your heart and put you back up on the path? You see, all of this is in the Word of God.

Now, watch what happens. David encounters this giant Goliath, and it's in the valley. David, earlier in his life, walked a valley with his sheep.

The name of this valley, to this day, is the Valley of the Shadow of Death. There really is a valley. It's not just a phrase in the Bible.

There's really a valley just outside of Jericho, headed up into Jerusalem, and it's real stark, sharp-sided, and if the sun's not right overhead either side, it makes big, old shadows. Now, watch this. David had to walk through there, and his life was in danger, and he would write in his heart, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

You see, and then he thought, I've got a rod and a staff, but so does God. You see, and God's not going to put on you more than you're able to bear. When the enemy comes against you, praise the Lord, He's there as your great shepherd, and the shepherd that'll protect you and take care of you.

Now, do you remember what I wrote down to give to you a moment ago about we had five smooth stones? Remember that? And I told you about those five rocks? Now, you remember, he's a teenager boy. You say, well, how do you know he's a teenager? Well, if you were in Israel in Bible days, you had to be at least 30 years old to be a priest. That's why Jesus didn't start His public ministry until He turned 30, because He couldn't fulfill the prophecies of the Word of God.

And to be in the army in Israel, you had to be at least 20 years old. Okay? So we know David was not yet 20. He was a teenager.

And he picked up five smooth stones in the valley of Elah. Now, I've got some words written on those rocks. I don't know if you can see those, but I took a marking pen and wrote some words on those rocks, because these are very important words, because I believe these are the five stones.

God will. God has. God shall.

God can. And that first one is God is. And you know what, ladies and gentlemen? When David met Goliath, all it took was rock number one to be loaded into that sling, and that is God is.

You say, what are you talking about? God is a very present help in the time of trouble. God is my refuge in the time of storm. He is all I need.

And he was loaded in that sling. You know what I believe? I believe David could have thrown that sling between his legs, backwards over his head, because I believe it was laser-guided from glory. Listen, they're all excited over in the rock because they've got heat-seeking missiles and laser-guided bombs and the JDAM.

Why, they've not seen anything. Do you see a rock loaded by God in a little boy's sling? Because it was guided. He could have thrown it over his shoulder straight up in the air, but when it came down, it got that

giant right in the forehead.

You know why? Because it is God is. And what you've got to take home with you off this ship is the fact that God has already provided for you. Maybe you are in a valley of spiritual battle.

Maybe you are in a physical valley. Maybe you are in an emotional valley. But whatever valley you're in, you just remember God's still in charge.

And He's still providing for His church. And He will take care of every one of His sheep. The great shepherd, as David walked through that valley of the shadow of death, and he would give his life for the sheep.

Listen, the Lord God Almighty, you are His sheep. He already gave His life for you 2,000 years ago. And He will not allow the devil to put on you more than you can bear.

God is the everything that you need here tonight. He is my refuge. He's a blessing for every believer at this very moment.

He is my fountain. He is where I drink. He is my library.

He is the book where I read. He is my bread, ladies and gentlemen. He's the place where I feed.

He is my friend that sticketh closer than a brother. And He is my shelter. He is the place that I can hide in the time of storm.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we gather here tonight, you need to know that your God loves you. He cares for you. He protects you.

And He will always provide for you. You can have victory in the valley. You don't have to be defeated in that place.

David had five stones he picked up. I'll let you see these. You can come by the book table after the service.

Those are five little rocks in the Valley of Eva. But I'm telling you, God's got a provision far greater than any man could even imagine. There's nothing that we, as God's people, that have to go through on this earth.

I don't know what your valley may be. I don't know what your circumstance may be. But I know this much.

The Great Shepherd will go through there with you every step of the way.

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