

Glorify God in Your Valleys

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Valleys are very difficult for anyone to go through.

For example, when someone loses a loved one for whatever reason, be it by cancer or by accident, that is certainly a deep and dark valley. In facing those situations as a pastor, I have had to pray, "Lord Jesus, help me. How do I comfort these hurting ones?" And God's answer had always been, "Don't try to comfort them. Just love them. Be quiet. Pray with them and let your heart show its deep expression of compassion."

When I do that, I find that God makes Himself real in their valleys.

I would be lying to you if I said there were never times when I become discouraged in the valley. The children of Israel became discouraged in the valley (see Numbers 32:9). At those times, however, the only place I can go is to the God of the valleys. At those times, the only thing

you or I can do is run to our precious Lord Jesus Christ. He is in the midst of the valley with us.

As you will see in this booklet, the valleys bring hidden riches and secret treasures out of us. We really discover what we are in the valleys.

“And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel” (Isaiah 45:3).

Chapter One

THE SWEET THINGS IN THE VALLEY

“And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

“And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

“And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

“And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of

Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day" (1 Kings 20:26-29).

The Syrians came up against Israel and made this declaration: "God is the God of the hills, but He is not the God of the valleys." In other words, "When things are going well, God is doing it." But the Syrians mistakenly assumed that God was not God of the valleys for Israel.

Unfortunately, many believers emotionally refuse to recognize God in their valleys. He is God when they are in the hills, but they do not see Him in their valleys.

"The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him" (Job 21:33). What are the clods? These are the earthly things, the vileness of bad things on the earth. But for the believer, no matter what comes against him, it is sweet, because God is the God of the valley by Jesus Christ.

I can remember a family that suffered a devastating accident up in Northern Maine. Two daughters and their father went into eternity when a trailer truck crashed into their car. The mother, who was home at the time, made this statement: "I have no idea why God did that." And I agree with her. I have no idea either as to

why God allows these things. But even when we don't understand things, there is one truth we cling to: Our God is the God of the valleys, and the clods are sweet for us.

How can this be, realistically? According to the inspired, sure Word of God, this reality is forever settled in heaven.

Choice Places

“And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate” (Isaiah 22:7).

As a pastor for all of these years, I have seen a lot of sad things happen in relationships—in marriages, in friendships, in businesses. But still we have come to understand one thing thoroughly, and that is that God is the God of our valleys.

Recently, I received a call from New England. A wife was on the line telling me, “My husband has terminal cancer, and I have to tell my daughters.” She is a very beautiful Christian, a person I led to Christ myself. As I listened to the sadness in her voice, a sadness that each of us could understand, all I could think of was to assure her that God is the God of her valley.

I recall another time when a mother phoned to tell me, "Pastor, my daughter has leukemia." The girl was only 15, and the mom was in such tears that she could hardly get the words out. That can seem like a very, very lonely place when the doctor tells you something such as that. Yet, the Word of God tells me that our valleys are *choice* valleys, filled with His divine provision and protection.

It can be very difficult at times to find a way to comfort precious, hurting people. Still, there is one thing I cleave to, and that is this truth, that man is to live by every word of God. If I understand this, then one thing I can do is to glorify God during my span on the earth. I can glorify God in my valley.

Chapter Two

SPRINGS OF LIFE RUN
TO THE HILLS

“They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

“Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

“He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

“They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

“By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

“He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works” (Psalm 104:8-13).

We are taken to the mountains, to great and amazing experiences with God. Then, God allows us to be brought down to the valleys. There,

what we learned on the mountain is tested.

Look at Psalm 104. The springs, the water of the Word of life, are sent into the valleys for us. That river runs right through the valley and takes us to the hills. Oh, it is such a precious thing for someone to get to know God in the valley of cancer, to draw near to Him in the valley of heartache, to find the Friend who sticks closer than a brother in the valley of loneliness.

You have grown old, and it seems as if no one is there to take care of you, and no one is there to love you. But I'm here to tell you that God is there, and you can get to know Him day by day in that valley.

Doors of Hope, Flourishing Vines

"And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hosea 2:15).

In the valley, there is a door of hope.

"I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded" (Song of Solomon 6:11).

In the valley, there is much fruit.

God is looking to see the fruit of our lives revealed in our valleys. Every time we are placed into the valley, it is as if God were saying, "Now, I have taught you a lot through the years. I live inside of you. I have inspired you. Now I want to see what grows in the midst of this valley."

What will you do in the valley? Will you complain to others? Or, will you heed the message of Psalm 142:1-3?

"I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

"I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me."

You can come through because God has been, and will be, the God of your valleys.

Chapter Three

REST, PROSPERITY, FOUNTAINS, AND FRIENDS

“And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes” (Isaiah 7:19).

“And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

“And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

“And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water” (Genesis 26:17-19).

Consider these fantastic truths. God causes us to find rest and prosperity in the midst of desolate valleys. Isaac did a little digging in his val-

ley and found springs of water.

I don't know how many times it seemed as if we were washed up, as far as prospering as a church goes. And yet, when it was all over, we had lost nothing. The crowds were still coming out, the finances were still sound. God has been the God of every valley that seemed to hurt us so deeply.

By the grace of God, we are brought through. I guarantee you He will do it—just ask some of the dear folks who have been with me for all of these years. We have discovered something. We have discovered that it is really not crazy to trust in God. We have discovered that when all is said and done, we have been right where we belong. We have discovered that God is faithful, even in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death.

David always knew that God was with him in the valleys. When Saul was hunting him down, and when he was running from Absalom, David understood this: "God, You are with me. Your rod and Your staff comfort me. I am in the valley of the shadow of death, but, Lord, You are weeping with me in that shadow."

Every day, every week, every month, every year, there's a shadow of death following each of us. It doesn't matter what your age is. Man is

bound to die and yet not to die. "Whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25). Yes, Lord! We believe it. Amen.

Rivers from High Places

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

"I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

"That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it" (Isaiah 41:17-20).

God opens fountains in our valleys. In the valley, there are springs of living water! Here are the fountains! Here are the old and precious words of God. He sends them to us, and the praise ends up in parts of all the world.

God develops our capacity to know that He will never leave us alone in any valley. There is hope, there is sweetness, there is beauty—all there in the valley. God looks for fruit and He finds fruit.

An Army Is With Us

In our valley, God gives us strength (Job 39:21). In Joshua 8, Israel enjoyed a tremendous victory. Where? In the valley. Joshua thought he was helpless, but, really, he had the army of heaven with him, just as the prophet Elisha did in 2 Kings 6:15-17:

“And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?”

“And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

“And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

For David, there were green pastures in the valley. Israel was discouraged in the valley, yet

God had a provision. For Joshua, there was victory. Abraham met Melchizedek in the valley after leading a mission and battle to rescue his nephew Lot and his family. I am personally convinced that Melchizedek is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, a priest who had no beginning and no end, no father and no mother.

“And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale.

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

“And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:17-19).

Are you in the valley? Look for Jesus to meet you there.

CONCLUSION

If you haven't faced any valleys, just wait. You will face some. If you are in a valley, God is the God of that valley.

Don't give up.

Don't get discouraged.

You are loved. God cares for you, and He is in that valley with you.

The Lord Jesus Christ was on the Cross of Calvary, suffering, with stripes upon His back. His back was bloodied; His brow pierced by a crown of thorns. All He said then was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He was in a terrible valley, paying for the sins of the whole world. He exposed Himself to the wickedness of mankind and carried all of our sin with Him.

Glory to God, He was resurrected from the depths. Now, He is seated above, and we are hid in Him.

Bring the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ into every one of your valleys. Not only are you joined to Christ in His death and burial, but also you are joined to Him in resurrection life.

The valleys are just training grounds, preparing us to reign in heaven with Him forever and ever. I cannot wait to see how many of us will reign with Jesus. We will have glorified bodies and big smiles on our faces! Gone will be the body of death. You will stand triumphant in the power of God.