

The Shadow of Death

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Psalms 23:4 KJV I am not a big King James Version fan, but newer versions don't capture the emotion of this verse like the King James.

The “shadow of death,” may not be pleasant, but it serves a purpose. We know that in order for there to be a shadow, there must be light. If there is no light there can be no shadow; there can be nothing but darkness. If there is a shadow that means there is light.

We have shadows because something is blocking the light, something behind us or before us. Many things can block the light of our lives. Many things can get in the way of our seeing life as it really is. Even though there are shadows, there is still the light and the light will win.

The gospel of John talks about light and darkness as an analogy for Jesus and his mission. All things came into being through him (Jesus), and without him (Jesus) not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. John 1:3, 4, 5, 9 NRSV

We have had way too many funerals recently. We have had 12 funerals at St. Ansgar's in the past 17 weeks; not to mention the other members of our community we have lost. We have had to say goodbye to too many members of our families and too many good friends. It does get to feel like we are walking into the “shadow of death.” This shadow can block our view, cloud our minds, and attack our spirit.

As Christians we do not live in denial. We don't stick our heads in the sand. We are people of reality. God does not let us turn away and deny that which blocks the light. God calls us to walk through the “valley of the shadow of death” but as we walk and see the shadow we also see the light around its edges. Do you see the light? There is a light back there. It might be slivering through or seeping or cracking or breaking through. As Christians walk through the dark shadows in the valley, we know the light is behind us and in front of us. The darkness in the “valley of the shadow of death” cannot overcome the light. Jesus is the light! Nothing overcomes Jesus! The light of Christ will break through so that the light can shine on us again.

You may be walking in the “valley of the shadow of death.” Maybe you are walking in the shadow of a broken relationship, or the shadow of a failure, or the “shadow of death.”

When you walk in the Valley of the “Shadow of Death” you can begin to see the brightness of Christ's light. Remember that there can be no shadow without light, so there is hope. Christ's light and hope overshadows fear and grief and death. **Do not fear. May your heart be consoled. The Lord is with you. His light will win out. Take heart, have hope.**