

Daily Devotional, October 28, 2020 God is Ever Present

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 (NIV)

Do you remember the first time you rode a bike without training wheels? How about the first time you swam without a flotation device? Can you remember your first roller coaster ride, or the first time you rode a horse? How about your first date, or the first time you kissed someone? Do you remember the first time you drove a car on a busy highway, or when you were first married or became a parent for the first time?

Most of these moments in my life were like double-edged swords; I was both excited and yet, full of trepidation! Anxiety led the way, and the “what ifs” were BIG; what if I had a bike wreck, what if I drowned, what if the roller coaster tracks flew off of its tracks! What if the horse ran away with me or threw me off, what if the person disliked me, what if I had a wreck, what if we were miserable in our marriage, what if I was a lousy parent? Other “what ifs” have consumed my thoughts over the years. While being a good husband and raising children became primary concerns, and the list of “what ifs” has grown, such as “Am I meeting the needs of this congregation, I thank God, because through the years, my faith has grown bigger and faster than my fears!

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” These words from Psalm 23:4 bring me peace. I think they always have, My “darkest valley” has been different things at different times; going through the loss of a job, the deaths of each of my parents, and the loss of my younger brother when we were children, to name a few. The glorious thing about these situations is that God was ever-present with me through them all. In fact, He seemed *closer* to me when I was going through them. Psalm 34:18 tells us, ***“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (NIV)***

Through some of the darkest valleys, as I’ve read my Bible and prayed, I’ve sensed God’s presence with me in some most amazing ways. There’s an old hymn I often think of when I am feeling down that helps lift my spirits. It’s pretty familiar. Maybe you know it, maybe you don’t, but I hope the words will resonate with you as they do with me.

In the Garden

*I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses...*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other, has ever, known!*

There are many contemporary praise songs that I appreciate it, but for some reason, this particular hymn has had a calming peace for me like an old worn out blanket you just can’t let go of. I hope there is a hymn or special praise song that has that same impact on you. The most important thing is that God is near and God wants nothing more than for us to find peace and joy in this life and with Him in the eternal life we will share when our time here has run its course. And that thought for me is bliss!