

The Path of Death that Leads to Life

Yea, 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. (Psalms 23:4 NKJV)

Anyone reading this psalm would naturally associate it with physical death because obviously that is what the writer had in mind when he wrote it. But allegorically speaking it can have a different application. There is a death that the disciple of Jesus must face on a daily basis. That is death to self.

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:34-35 NKJV)

While carnal or young believers are intent on accomplishing great things for God, the spiritual or mature believer has come to the place that Jesus spoke about where he realizes that death (to self) is really life (in Christ.) Our daily walk ceases to be a hurried, forced effort to please God, others, and even ourselves, and becomes instead a pathway of peace through a tumultuous world. Notice I said "through" and not "in." Listen to what Charles Spurgeon says about the path to physical death and apply it instead to death to self:

"To walk indicates the steady advance of a soul which knows its road, knows its end, resolves to follow the path, feels quite safe, and is therefore perfectly calm and composed. The dying saint is not in a flurry, he does not run as though he were alarmed, nor stand still as though he would go no further, he is not confounded nor ashamed, and therefore keeps to his old pace."¹

The exchanged or surrendered life is no longer a race to be run in order to keep up with those who are intent on proving their worth, but a path to walk along with a Savior who knows the way. He is confident and able to accomplish His Father's work through us, if we take His hand and let Him lead!

Lord too often I hit the ground running in a futile attempt to accomplish that which I am not capable of accomplishing in my own strength. Help me today to simply stay in step with you on the path of life that You have chosen to walk with me. Amen

Jim Freed

¹ Spurgeon, C. H. (2009). *The treasury of David: Psalms 1-26* (Vol. 1, p. 355). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.