

GROW: GROW IN THE DARK!

Scripture used: [Psalm 23 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

This week we are blessed to have [Dr Nicole Martin](#), Assistant Professor of Ministry and Leadership Development at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. She opened with a message about Mothers Day. While it is a joy-filled day, it can also be a challenging one. No matter how each of us is experiencing it, [Psalm 118:24 \(NKJV\)](#) reminds us "This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it." Dr Martin then shifted to the message, a powerful examination of Psalm 23, David's most famous Psalm.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Many of us are still afraid of the dark.** As children we saw movies and heard stories that scared us. The darkness was a place of evil. There were always monsters and other scary things in the dark. Growing up, we never quite lose this fear. Instead it changes into adult forms of the same fear. We are afraid of emotional darkness, when our minds feel cloudy and our hearts feel heavy. We are afraid of spiritual darkness, sometimes called "the dark night of the soul," when it doesn't seem like God is listening to us. We can't find meaning no matter how hard we search. Finally, we are afraid of terminal darkness, whether it be the senseless killing of an unarmed man, the sickness of a loved one, or just the general fear of death itself.
- 2) **David can teach us a lot about the dark.** David knew a lot about darkness. He can teach us a lot about how to deal with it, whether the darkness is in our community, our work, our school, or even our home. David lived in the darkness at every stage of his life, from being a shepherd to being a musician, from being a warrior to being a father, and from being a nomad to being a king. [Psalm 23 \(NIV\)](#) offers us the truth about the darkness based on all of his wisdom and experience.
 - a. **God is in the dark with us.** This is the first and most important thing to remember. The reason David could say in Psalm 23:4 (NIV) "I will fear no evil" is because God "is with me." Every step of this journey in "the darkest valley."
 - b. **With God, we are only passing through dark.** The dark places are not destinations. They are layovers. We may lay down for a while, or have a meal, but we will not stay forever. Every breath we take brings us closer to the other side.
 - c. **With God, we are guaranteed safety in the dark.** The reason David used the image of a shepherd is because he understood how hard God works to protect us. Shepherds combine discipline and love to ensure no one in the flock goes astray. Sometimes God has to protect us from ourselves!
 - d. **With God, we can grow in the dark.** Some of the richest food grows in the valleys, not on the mountains. And the purest water flows through the valleys as well. The truth is, we need the valleys to grow, just like we need the mountains. They both serve a purpose to help us, no matter how dark they are.
 - e. **With God, we can glow in the dark.** Jesus is the light of this world. His light never went out, even in death. This is the light David mentions in [Psalm 139:11-12 \(NIV\)](#) that makes the darkness seem like light. The light of Jesus is in us, and we take it with us wherever we go. We can shine that light anywhere.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - We have been conditioned to think of darkness as bad. We tend to see only the negatives and ignore the positives. Darkness also provides the light an opportunity to shine. What kinds of darkness are you tempted to fear?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Dr Martin asked us to look to the future and apply this message. The question is "How will I let God's light glow in the dark this week?" How does Psalm 23 speak to you differently after this message?
- 3) **DO** - This week's affirmation is "With God, I will not be afraid of the dark!" Based on the one thing you chose in the reflection question, pick a specific action you can take that will bring the light of Jesus into this world through your words or actions. Then make sure to show up next week at our new gathering times (9:00 AM and 11:00 AM) to share your story!