**The 23rd Psalm / Rod and Staff**

**Psalm 23:4 / March 16, 2025**

**Pastor Josh Jacobs**

**God really is a Good Shepherd!**

**He makes me lie down in green pastures (Gives me rest)**

**He leads me beside quiet waters (Gives me peace)**

**He guides me along the right paths (Guides me)**

**I lack nothing (I have everything I need)**

**Why does God allow us to walk through dark valleys?**

* + **Situations we have put ourselves in (I brought myself here)**
	+ **Because of something someone did to me (Someone brought me here)**
	+ **Life circumstance (It is no one’s fault that I find myself here)**
	+ **Church hurt (The Church brought me here)**
	+ **God’s guidance (God brought me here) – James 1:2-4**
		- **A shepherd walks sheep through valleys…**
			* **Because it’s the way to higher ground**
			* **It’s a well-watered path**
			* **Richest feed**
			* **It’s the best route**

**What drives fear? Where are your eyes fixed? What are the obstacles that surround you?**

* + **Eyes on the Good Shepherd reminds us He is in control. – John 10:10**

**Why I can trust the Good Shepherd in my darkest valleys**

* + **His rod brings protection**
	+ **His staff provides comfort and guidance**
	+ **The dangers before us are familiar to Him**

**What is on the other side of the darkest valley?**

* + **Multiplied faith (I’ve seen what God can do!) – Peter walking on water**
	+ **Minister to others (I can tell others of what God can do!) – 2 Corinthians 1:3-7**
	+ **Molded heart (I’ve been shaped by what God led me through!) – Romans 5:3-5**