

"As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a source of springs." Psalm 84 verse 6

Let's have the whole of this phrase. The Psalmist says "Happy are the people whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a source of springs." We need to understand that the name "Baca" means "weeping", or "trouble." As these people pass through trouble, they make it a source of refreshment and blessing.

People often ask why God allows trouble and suffering in the world, even saying that the very existence of these things is a denial of his reality in the first place. That's is a valid discussion, but in the end there's another way of looking at things which perhaps helps us more.

No explanation of where trouble and suffering come from makes them go away. The only thing that is really helpful is to accept that they are an inevitable reality of every life and make a decision about how to deal with them in positive ways.

The people mentioned in today's verse, who are able to find springs of water in the valley of trouble and weeping are described with two characteristics. Firstly, their strength is in God. They do not rely on their own strengths and abilities to bring good out of troubled times. They know that there are some troubles that would crush them. Only God is greater than any trouble we could face and is able to make us stand and even thrive in and through any trouble that life could throw at us.

Secondly, they have set their hearts on a journey that takes them ever deeper into loving relationship with the God who strengthens, guides, encourages and upholds them. They know where they are going and have determined that they are going to complete the journey, though they know that it will often be difficult.

The simple fact that we face in life is not that trouble and grief exist, but how we respond to them. As we travel through them, we need to be in a place of strength. The one unshakable place of strength is in Jesus Christ, who is our rock.

Prayer

Father, I know that I cannot adequately protect myself from the certainty that, like everyone else, I will face trouble in the world. Please help me to accept it, not as something to hide away from, but to face in your strength as a necessary part of my journey of faith in you. Help me to find the place where I can stand which is secure in every storm of life, so that I can know what it means to be content and to thrive, whatever life brings. In Jesus' name, amen.

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