

Good morning! Christians and non-Christians alike often characterize their lives as a journey. For Christians, our life-journey is directed. God is taking us somewhere and not only that, He's traveling with us. I like that, don't you? When we read Psalm 23 we are reminded of the places God takes us: *green pastures, still waters, the presence of our enemies, the Valley of the Shadow of death*. Some places are places we like to go; others are places we'd like to leave alone. Still, our Savior is our Guide, so if we are obeying Him, we follow Him where He leads. Do you think of life as a journey? If not, maybe today's passage will help; let's read it together:

Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.

Psa. 84:5-7

This passage---a life verse for me---encourages us to think of our lives with God as a journey. In fact, it tells us that we will be blessed, or some translations read "happy", if we set our hearts on pilgrimage. And what is a pilgrimage if not a journey? The psalmist tells of passing through the Valley of Baca. The word Baca comes from the word meaning "to weep". We do pass through times when we are weeping, don't we? As we pass through with our Savior as our Guide, that valley of tears becomes a spring, refreshing us and giving us strength. Have you found this to be true in your life? I have in mine, many times. We have gone through times of great sadness, thinking how terrible things are, and yet at some point we seem to come to into a time of refreshment with the knowledge that we would not be experiencing this goodness had we not first experienced the sadness. Think about it; is your heart set on pilgrimage this morning? If your heart set on something else, let me encourage you to change your mind. Begin to think of life as going on a journey with God. He will point things out to you along the way, things you would never have seen if you just stayed home and acted religious. Oh, and don't take much of your religious baggage with you---you won't be needing it. God is going on a journey today... and you must travel light if you're going to travel with Him!