



# FEAR NOT FOR I AM WITH YOU

Wednesday, April 12 | Psalm 23

It was 1:00am, I was sitting next to my mother's hospital bed. Earlier that day she had made the decision to accept Hospice Care. Cancer had taken over her body. (Two months prior she was playing golf, gardening, painting and participating in aerobic classes.) I did not want to leave her side so I was going to sleep in the chair at the hospital. During the night she lost her ability to speak clearly or to respond with any clarity. The nurse came in and said she was overmedicated. I think it was a stroke. I was scared. Over and over again I repeated the 23rd psalm out loud... probably 40 + times.

We were beginning our journey through the valley of the shadow of death. It was extremely dark. Our Shepherd, our Lord, never left my side. The darkness did not change but as I became more aware of Jesus' presence with me, the darkness lost its grip on me. I began to realize I was on sacred ground; my mom was living with one foot here on earth and one foot in heaven. This journey that seemed so grave, so rattling to my soul became one of my greatest treasured memories as I myself became changed. I began to understand not only the suffering of Christ, but the strength, the blessings, the courage we have through him and the complexity of hope we are offered in the darkest valleys.

**Prayer:** Lord, I thank you for never leaving me. Even when I am unfaithful, when I turn away, or "do not feel" you near, You remain present. Thank you for equipping me, encouraging me, giving me strength to continue to address the darkness with assurance that you will lead me through it. I acknowledge and proclaim that on my own I can not, but with you all things are possible! In the powerful name of our savior, Jesus, Amen.

Written by Pastor Judy Madden