



**Sheepish
Part 3
Learning About Our Shepherd
Learning How to Be His Sheep
Psalms 23:4-6**

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Psalm 23:title–6

“A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I will not be in need. He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For the sake of His name. **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of**



death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my life, And my dwelling will be in the house of the LORD forever.” (NASB 2020)

We are continuing here with David as he examines his relationship with the Lord as his shepherd, relying on the relationship he had with sheep when he would operate as their shepherd.

We are the sheep, no doubt about that and we now understand the great lengths He goes to to ensure we are healthy, well cared for, fed and right there with and in the flock.

Our shepherd always knows what He is doing and always is leading us. We are the recipients of His never ending always present and perfect care and love. This has been a present possession for us since we turned to Christ.

There is an intimacy also being reflected here. The shepherd is with his sheep and under his personal care and attention day and night. No matter where the sheep are, the shepherd is there with them. There are dangers out there as we do life, our Shepherd, because He has been here Himself, knows that and he is there with us in each and every one of them. Even when we think we have made it away from the flock and run off, He still knows where we are lying there flat on our backs needing the care of the Shepherd to get us back on our feet.

When everything is going well, when we are not under any stress at all we would assume we are at the waters of rest. But that is not a permanent thing for us in this life. Something about living in a fallen world. We would like to stay there at rest, Satan knows that.

Entire so-called ministries and “churches” exist today working hard to convince those who show up that nothing bad, challenging or anything that looks like a trial will ever happen to a follower of Jesus Christ. They will even go as far as to infer that if it does, it is the believer's fault and is an obvious example of sin or some failing on the part of the believer or something they have done.

That is nothing more than fresh hot steaming heresy.

I am tired of dealing with those who beat around the bush and make excuses for the trash they teach and the trash they accept, usually under the guise of “it’s just a teaching” and then promptly try to redefine what false teaching actually is. If the intent is to get you to believe that Jesus does not love us enough to perfect us in trials which have nothing to do with sin, then yes, that is heresy.

I am tired of the damaged and destroyed lives these people leave in their wake as it is all about them.

But what happens today when you point out false teaching? You become the victim of the classic redirect and suddenly you are the problem as gas lighting takes a whole new path.

Yes, the one telling the truth is attacked with a vitriol and vengeance reflective of the world.

It seems that the only real and intolerable heresy today is the despicable act of calling someone a heretic. If the one accused is guilty of heresy, he or she will probably elicit more sympathy than his accuser. Anyone who cries “Heretic!” today risks being identified as a native of Salem, Massachusetts. (Sproul 1994, 5, Sproul 1994)

And yes, this is real and taking place in so called churches and ministries throughout the globe.



I have on several occasions in my life pointed out the false teaching or understandings of others in an attempt to lovingly correct. In each and every case, I was the one who was booted out and accused of all sorts of things which I never did or was trying to do.

In other words, if you call someone out for being a false teacher, remember who they are working for, that would be Satan, and they will indeed attack. Be ready for it, and remember this.

1 John 4:4

"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (ESV)

As we follow what the Bible says, we will indeed be accused of being ignorant, anti-intellectual, intolerant, bigoted and many times, by other believers. "We have so surrendered to relativism and pluralism that we simply don't care about serious doctrinal error. We prefer peace to truth and accuse the orthodox of being divisive when they call a heretic a heretic." (Sproul 1994, 7)

False teachers do indeed support other false teachers.

John West has recently written about this phenomenon of those who assert they are followers of Christ, but are running away from Him while doing so, and destroying His flock at the same time. He refers to them as Christians who have been so affected by the world that they are now Stockholm Syndrome Christians.

I learned about that term Stockholm Syndrome, when I was undergoing counterterrorism training in the Air Force. There was an extended hostage taking event near Stockholm and those who were taken hostage began to identify with the hostage takers.

We see those followers of Jesus Christ today who begin to identify more with the world than the Lord or their brother and sisters. West states the following picture we see today.

A lot of the hostility Stockholm Syndrome Christians express towards more orthodox Christians can be explained by their desire to be accepted by secular culture. Christians who are non-compliant with the culture can make it harder for other Christians to gain acceptance. So the traditional Christians are viewed as a threat. (West 2025, 250)

Pointing out the false teaching these days, even though we are warned of it being so in your face in the last days we live in, has the impact of the attention being drawn to the one who points out the false teacher. It is that person, following the Lord and doing His will, that is the one thrust into the trial. And as soon as the trial hits and the negative press hits, the false teacher then uses that as a proof text for only those who sin get thrust into this.

The gospel of personal peace and affluence is more important today than the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is the prosperity gospel in disguise.

But we need to face an uncomfortable truth: Christians who aid, abet, and even encourage the rejection of historic Christian teachings are also playing a key role in our disintegration. Biblical teachings "work" because they're true. Even prominent atheists and agnostics have acknowledged that the Bible's principles encourage better behavior and thus better societies and nations. But you can't expect to long enjoy the fruit of a tree if you're hacking away at its root, or running interference for those who are, and that's precisely what many are doing. (West 2025, 13)



Psalm 23:4

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” (NASB 2020)

Part of that loving care today also includes making sure we are fully prepared and warned about where it is He is taking us.

Peter told us.

2 Peter 2:1–3

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” (NKJV)

Be prepared to be accused of all sorts of things because we follow the truth of the Word.

What are we struggling against? Personal peace and affluence taught as if it is now the true gospel of Jesus Christ. It isn't.

“Personal peace means just to be let alone, not to be troubled by the troubles of other people, whether across the world or across the city—to live one's life with minimal possibilities of being personally disturbed. Personal peace means wanting to have my personal life pattern undisturbed in my lifetime, regardless of what the result will be in the lifetimes of my children and grandchildren. Affluence means an overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity—a life made up of things, things, and more things—a success judged by an ever-higher level of material abundance.” (Schaeffer 1982, 211) The basics of word of faith / prosperity gospel.

But the valley of the shadow of death is a place the Lord leads us to, it is real, and He is there with us as we go there. It is a trial. It is the follower of Jesus, learning how to be more like Jesus. It is not due to sin or a lack of faith. It also includes speaking up for the King.

James 1:2–4

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (ESV)

Trials are not an if, but a when. And the shepherd is with us and leading us there.

1 Peter 4:12–13

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.” (ESV)

The Christian life is a series of trials and tests because these reveal and strengthen our faith. If we are going to pass God's tests, we must expect them. They are part of life. (Brown 2018, 267)

Here in Psalm 23:4, David, who has learned through experience, to expect trials, references that. He also knows that as they take place, and many of the psalms were written by him because of his experiences going through them, he knew that God was with him.



While in the valley, the Shepherd is with us. He does not have us air lifted out of the valley; we walk through it with Him.

This may sound trite, but it is true, every mountain, has a valley to pass through before you get there. And I learned when hiking in the sierras, sometimes multiple valleys that you do not even know are there.

I still remember deciding to go up the eastern approach to Yosemite rather than the one most folks take from the west. It was over 100 degrees in the Owens Valley as we began ascending a ravine near Mono Lake.

I finally got to the top of the pass and looking back could see the Owens Valley and Mono Lake way below me, and it was way over 100 degrees down there. In front of me was all green, a lake on the south side and it was around 34 with a light snow squall taking place. What a difference.

The best route to the top will many times, take you right through these valleys and ravines. As we go through trials, tests, or are accused by the world of who knows what, He is walking with us through that valley.

Did you see this in the verse? “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” it does not say we die there or are left there by our Shepherd. He is with us the entire time.

It is customary to use this verse as a consolation to those who are passing through the dark valley of death. But even here, for the child of God, death is not an end but merely the door into a higher and more exalted life of intimate contact with Christ. Death is but the dark valley opening out into an eternity of delight with God. It is not something to fear, but an experience through which one passes on the path to a more perfect life. (Keller 2019)

Matthew 28:19–20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” Amen.” (NKJV)

Our Shepherd is always with us. While we remain here, there will still be more valleys to walk through. Where does the water flow as we walk up the valley? The water flows down the valley. Why are we going through the valley to the mountain top with the Lord? Because the valley is well watered.

He takes care of our thirst with living water, and He has never removed that source from us since we came to Him. What is it that we discover in the valley, in the trial, in the test? We discover that our refreshment comes solely and completely from the Lord.

He is leading us beside the waters of peace even in the valley. He is our peace, and He is our strength. We fear no evil because He is with us.

And what happens when we get to the other side, we come out of the darkness and into the light as we move further up the valley?

We discover that what we have learned from the Lord, can now be used of the Lord to console comfort and encourage others who are walking through a similar valley.

We don't like or want to be in valleys where it is dark, but He is indeed with us and as we learn from Him, we can take what we learned and use it to encourage and love other sheep of His in the flock.



Psalm 23:4

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” (NASB 2020)

As the shepherd and his sheep climbed down into the valleys that separated one mountain from another, they passed many shadowy crevices in which death in the form of wild animals lurked. Alone, without the shepherd to care for them, sheep are utterly helpless. (Adams 2020, 11)

Our Shepherd is fully prepared for whatever will come our way. He has the tools at His disposal to protect us.

I have been asked, more than once, why would a good God allow us to experience the bad things that take place here on earth? When God created us, He placed us in a safe place under His loving care, it was called Eden. But we rebelled against His loving care and because of our rebellion and rejection of His care, the entire universe is cursed and as we learn from Paul, looking forward to the day Jesus returns in triumph.

He summed up the valleys, the why of the valleys and the glorious future we have in Christ. As you and I go through the valley, this is a promise we must rely on.

Romans 8:18–23

“Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. **We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.” (NLT)**

Meanwhile, we fear no evil, we will encounter it, but we will not fear it because of our shepherd. I mean, His rod and His staff comfort us.

What is a rod and staff? How can that bring comfort?

The word translated “rod” (Hebrew—šēbet) may designate not only the shepherd’s rod (Lev. 27:32) but a teacher’s staff (2 Sam. 7:14; Prov. 13:24), a ruler’s scepter (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 14:5) and a weapon (2 Sam. 23:21). (Davis 1979, 98)

The rod is a defensive weapon and may have been one of the tools used by David when he discussed with King Saul how he killed a lion and a bear.

The rod is “a stout oak stick, that is larger at the business end from which nails protrude, is the sort of instrument about which we are speaking. It hung by the shepherd’s side on a thong suspended from his belt.” (Adams 2020, 21)

Our Shepherd protects us against wolves, lions and bears. He does so by using, as needed, the rod. The rod is used for protecting the flock.

The rod, for the flock being led by the Lord, is His word. “Just as for the sheep of David’s day there was comfort and consolation in seeing the rod in the shepherd’s skillful hands, so in our day there is great



assurance in our own hearts as we contemplate the power, veracity, and potent authority vested in God's Word." (Keller 2019)

His Word protects and guides. Yes, the rod can also be used for the discipline of the sheep, for when they go astray.

Hebrews 12:4–11

"You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin. And have you forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons? **"My son, do not scorn the Lord's discipline or give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts. Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons.** For what son is there that a father does not discipline? But if you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and are not sons. Besides, we have experienced discipline from our earthly fathers and we respected them; shall we not submit ourselves all the more to the Father of spirits and receive life? For they disciplined us for a little while as seemed good to them, but he does so for our benefit, that we may share his holiness. Now all discipline seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness for those trained by it." (NET 2nd ed.)

Discipline is for our welfare and takes place because our Shepherd loves us and wants only the best for us.

A skilled shepherd with a rod can, with direct aim, stop a sheep from wandering off to where they shouldn't be. If the sheep gets too close to danger, a rod may go flying right in front of them to warn them to turn back. Well timed and placed scripture does the same for us as we too are prone to wander as well.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (ESV)

One more thing that a shepherd may use a rod for, to be closely examined by the Shepherd to make certain there is nothing happening to the sheep that should not be happening.

"In caring for his sheep, the good shepherd, the careful manager, will from time to time make a careful examination of each individual sheep. The picture is a very poignant one. As each animal comes out of the corral and through the gate, it is stopped by the shepherd's outstretched rod. He opens the fleece with the rod; he runs his skillful hands over the body; he feels for any sign of trouble; he examines the sheep with care to see that all is well." (Keller 2019) This is what He does as He searches our hearts.

Psalms 139:23–24

"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (ESV)

As we allow our Shepherd to examine us with His rod, His word, we are either encouraged by what He discovers, or we are chastened and realize that we have fallen short. His word, His rod, then brings us to 1 John 1:9. Here is the lesson, you cannot pull the wool over God's eyes, He will indeed examine us with His rod. And as we allow Him to do so, he wants to remove our self-will, self-love, selfishness, and anything else that prevents us from being an example of a sheep under His care. He searches us because He wants the best for us.

His rod comforts us. His word comforts us.



Then there is the staff. A staff is for direction and identity. No other profession carries a staff like this.

The staff is another tool, many times with a crook in it. It is used to prod the flock on along, keeping them together and moving as a flock.

“The staff usually was used to protect sheep against their own foibles and their inability to handle dangerous situations...In a sense, then, it corresponds not only to the way a shepherding elder meets personal sins and inadequacies of individual sheep, but perhaps also to Paul’s warning about those who would arise from among the flock itself to lead them astray. On these occasions, it became a defensive instrument used to guard the sheep against harm brought on by themselves or by other straying sheep.” (Adams 2020, 18)

The staff is for the care and management of the sheep. It cannot be used on any other animal, just sheep. As the rod conveys defense, authority, discipline and power, the staff conveys comfort, kindness, longsuffering.

Who is the comforter? The Holy Spirit. As we turn to the staff, we are turning to the one who, at the moment of salvation, came into each of us to live forever. He will always be with us and will never leave us.

The Holy Spirit gently corrects us pointing us to the scriptures and exhibiting the grace of God to us. The shepherd will use the staff to bring a newborn to its mother or to draw those sheep who are trying to stay away from the shepherd, closer to the shepherd and to the flock.

The Holy Spirit draws us to the Lord, to the source of all we need, and He explains what the food we are eating, God’s word, means. He also draws us together as a flock to be fed on the word and to make certain we have lots of living water for sustenance as well.

Just as the shepherd wants the sheep to be part of the flock, the Holy Spirit wants the same for us. He does not use His staff to separate us from the flock so we can go it alone, He uses it to draw us closer to Himself and to the flock as there is safety in the flock.

Just as we see the Holy Spirit being the one who draws us to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, He is also the one who continually guides us as well.

If we try and go a different direction, He uses His staff to move us back to the right path. This is not a tool to strike or bat, but rather to lay alongside and with gentle pressure, move in the right direction. Jesus told us that it would be the Spirit who would guide and direct us.

John 16:13

“When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” (ESV)

To guide us in all truth, just ask. When was the last time you asked the Holy Spirit His opinion of what you are looking at doing? I ask Him for wisdom all the time. Need help sorting through something, just ask Him for help and He will do so. This is called a relationship, and it is the sheep asking the Shepherd if this is the right way?

Or we can be stubborn sheep and allow the culture to command us as we do what is our truth. We see something nice and green in between a few thorn bushes so we shove our way in, and then we can’t get out. It will take the shepherd with His staff to pull us free of the thorns.



His rod and His staff, they indeed comfort us.

We get a different picture starting in verse 5, now we see the Shepherd, in his tents with guests. I never really understood this picture until I went to a wedding.

Psalm 23:5–6

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my life, And my dwelling will be in the house of the LORD forever.” (NASB 2020)

When I was in Kuwait, I was invited to a wedding and let me tell you, it was a really big deal. My first shock was arriving at a location in the middle of the desert that had a tent over it, Persian carpets all over the ground, and the sides were sealed up with multiple air conditioners running. My friend, Caliph, who was getting married, again, was seated on a golden throne at one end.

He had chairs on both sides of him and some were already taken by others wearing the same traditional attire he was in. Those of us who were invited joined the reception line and, in a few minutes, I was shaking his hand and congratulating him. Now I thought that would be it and I would go to the end of all the chairs to sit but no. He grabbed my hand and took me to the chair to the immediate right of his and told me that was for me to sit in, and within seconds I was being offered juices, chai or coffee. And because of where he seated me, now all of the folks who were coming to shake his hand, wanted to shake mine too. I am one of the few non-Arabs in the tent.

Welcome to Middle Eastern hospitality and yes, I did indeed participate in the sword dancing to celebrate my host's wedding. Next to this tent was another, and we went there to eat. No tables, no chairs, just more Persian carpets, a place to wash your hands, a place to put your shoes and then stretch out and recline on the floor in front of a huge spread of food. Oh yes, plates, no silver wear, you eat with your right hand, and I am left-handed. But it worked and was really delicious.

Talk about having a table prepared for you. Wow.

For the first time, I began to understand what David is talking about here in Psalm 23. In the middle of the desert, technically in the presence of my enemies and theirs as well, since Kuwait was still a bonafide combat zone, was this table, actually, a spread laid out in Bedouin style on the ground, and I was shocked.

The picture here in Psalm 23:5 is the same. The Shepherd and his tent with a spread, there on the ground, a table, Bedouin style, and confidence in the protection of the Shepherd even though there are enemies all around.

This is a picture of the good host and the good guest. I don't read of the reception line anywhere, but most everything else is still done today in some places in the Middle East. We see pictures of this also in the Old Testament, my favorite is Abraham greeting the Lord and two angels in Genesis 18.

“The Lord, as the Perfect Shepherd, not only knows the needs and hungers of wandering sheep, but He also anticipates the desires of His guest. David was not dealing in mere repetition of thought by presenting a table after discussing pastures. He found himself overwhelmed by the extent of God's blessing, the nature of which went far beyond that which would be enjoyed by the sheep. Not being able to express the fullness of God's provision with a shepherd-sheep image, he turned our attention to the large tent of the shepherd and his graciousness as a host.” (Davis 1979, 116)

Having experienced this firsthand, I now get it. Everything was done with an emphasis on hospitality.



Remember, the picture has shifted now to the Shepherd and his guest. A picture of our Lord Jesus, who has defeated Satan and then invites us to come.

Isaiah provided a picture of this yet future feast.

Isaiah 25:6–9

“The LORD who commands armies will hold a banquet for all the nations on this mountain. At this banquet there will be plenty of meat and aged wine— tender meat and choicest wine. On this mountain he will swallow up the shroud that is over all the peoples, the woven covering that is over all the nations; he will swallow up death permanently. The sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from every face, and remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. Indeed, the LORD has announced it! At that time they will say, “Look, here is our God! We waited for him, and he delivered us. Here is the LORD! We waited for him. Let’s rejoice and celebrate his deliverance!”” (NET 2nd ed.)

There is also something else we need to take advantage of here as well. He is our Shepherd and there are times where, as His church, we gather together in communion, in table fellowship with each other and with our Lord.

He commanded us to do this.

When we do, we are pausing from the ongoing spiritual warfare we are all engaged in, and taking the time to just sit down and be with our Lord and worship Him.

Our engagement in spiritual battles is often so furious and lengthy that we fail to realize necessity for withdrawal for contemplation and feeding. The Lord desires to prepare a table for us even in the midst of the most distressing circumstances of life. Our responsibility is to avail ourselves of this opportunity, for it is by this means that the Lord’s rich provisions are enjoyed. (Davis 1979, 120-121)

Psalms 37:1–9

“Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. **Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!** Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.” (ESV)

Psalms 23:5

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.” (NASB 2020)

If you take this still as all about the sheep, then the sheep have oil poured on their heads to prevent flies.

But this is much more. Again, we are now in the tent of our Shepherd and He is providing lavish hospitality. “The Lord not only makes full provision at His table for all of our needs, but He anoints our head with oil; that is, He provides something far beyond the requirements of a gracious host. This is grace. The Christian life is filled with blessings, all of which come as the result of His grace—and not our merit.” (Davis 1979, 122)

While in Kuwait I had an id card in Arabic. I have no idea what it said. But I do remember being stopped at a military check point once and being asked for identification in very broken English and handing this card



to the Kuwaiti military member. He literally lost all the color in his face and invited me and my driver to sit in an air conditioned out building while they served us Chai. Eventually, an officer arrived and then personally escorted to our destination, another military installation. While in their care, we received rather lavish hospitality. Way beyond what was required and to include an armed guard the entire time as well.

The Lord does that for us. He has gone above and beyond what any host would ever have to do to include the Holy Spirit. All of us need a fresh anointing of the Spirit every single day and as we rest and commune with Him, we go to the Lord and He refreshes us anew.

So much so that our cup literally overflows. We are under the protective care of the Shepherd, in His tent, He has made full provision for us demonstrating to the defeated enemy that we are empowered by His Holy Spirit to overflowing and are more than adequate for anything He would have us to do.

Our Lord has given us more than a simple meal, He has lavished His hospitality on us so that there is no lack, we are empowered with His Holy Spirit to overflowing, and we are empowered with and filled with the joy of the Spirit as we go and achieve what it is He has for us to do laboring in His fields and adding to His flock.

Psalms 23:6

“Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my life, And my dwelling will be in the house of the LORD forever.” (NASB 2020)

As we come to the end of this psalm, we should now be fully comfortable in the knowledge of the provision provided by our Shepherd. His care and love is lavishly provided to us. We have everything we could possibly need all from the Shepherd. We are even invited to eat with Him in His tent and He further prepares us to do work for Him in His fields.

In light of all we have learned and seen, what are our prospects as followers of Jesus Christ?

We get that here in verse 6. We not only get the goodness of the Lord, the word translated goodness is *tob* in the Hebrew and means that which is “pleasing, desirable...in order, usable...qualitatively good, efficient.” (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 371)

We also obtain His steadfast love, His *hesed* (hesed). This word is not one easily translated or understood from the Hebrew.

Many biblical words such as mercy, compassion, love, grace, and faithfulness relate to the Hebrew word *hesed*, but none of these completely summarize the concept. *Hesed* is not merely an emotion or feeling but involves action on behalf of someone who is in need. *Hesed* describes a sense of love and loyalty that inspires merciful and compassionate behavior toward another person. (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

The core idea of this term relates to loyalty within a relationship. In relation to the concept of love, it denotes God’s faithfulness to his people. The OT frequently uses the term *hesed* to denote an aspect of God’s character as it relates to his covenant with his people. Perhaps the most well-known use of *hesed* is found in Psalm 136, where the term is used 26 times as part of the refrain, “for his loyal love (*hesed*) endures forever.” (Nettelhorst 2014)

Here, the divine attributes of goodness (*tôb*) and *hesed* are pictured as incarnate forces, which will not rest until they have tracked down and provided a safe harbor for the endangered psalmist. (Jacobson and Tanner 2014, 244)



God's faithfulness and His goodness are in full continuous tracking of you and me. Anywhere you and I go, His goodness and His faithfulness to us pursues us.

Not only is the Lord in love with each of us, demonstrated by Him by His sacrifice on the cross, not only has He walked out the grave so that we too can have the assurance of being with Him for all eternity, but He is wanting us to understand that He is in active ongoing pursuit of us at all times to make sure we are lavished with His goodness and His faithfulness is all that we do.

If you have at any time thought you didn't matter, you do because the God of the universe is in full pursuit.

And the really cool thing we see here at the end of the Psalm, our dwelling, the place we will live forever, is in His house.

John 14:3

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (ESV)

I can't wait.

Let's pray.



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