



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- November 3, 2022

The Lord be with you.

I'm looking at the news today and wondering, I can't help but wonder, how you're thinking about the future. There's a lot of trying things going on. There's inflation, there's a high cost of fuel, there's violence and crime, and we can't help but be wondering about the days ahead. In several of our Selah of conversations we've been looking at life with David as there was so much that we can learn from David about life. As scripture tells us that David was a man after God's own heart. Scripture tells us that David fulfilled God's purpose for him in his generation.

So for the next few moments, I wanna pull up a chair and sit by David and see how David looks at the future. And I'm sitting by David in that much love 23rd Psalm, the Great Shepherd Psalm. And I'm looking at the last verse of the Psalm in which David says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Notice here David's strong, bold expression of confidence for the future. That the goodness and the mercy of God will follow Him all the days of his life, and that He will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

I don't think that anyone would ever dare accused David of being Polyanna- of looking at life through rose-colored glasses. I mean, not after all the things that David has gone through. In this 23rd Psalm, David does acknowledge there is evil in the world, but David says that he fears no evil because God is with him. David does not say that there is no valley of the shadow of death, but David does say that he knows that the Lord is with him in that valley of the shadow of death. David does not say that he has no enemies, I mean he's got plenty of them, but David does say that The Lord prepares a table for him in the presence of his enemies.

So as David looks back at his life and as David looks ahead into the future, David can say surely [note the emphasis], not just maybe, not just hope so, but David can say, surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Now the translation of goodness and mercy following David, well, it's really a little bit weak as a Hebrew word translated following is much more bold than that. The Hebrew word translated follow is the Hebrew word radaph, that is R-A-D-A-P-H, and it is a word that is used 144 times in the Old Testament. And most of the times, it is translated as to chase, to hunt down, to pursue. For instance, with radaph use in Exodus Chapter 14:4, a Pharaoh's army that is pursuing the Israelites right up to the Red Sea. Radaph is used in 1 Samuel 23:25 of King Saul's armies as they are pursuing, they are hunting down David. They're more than just following Him, they are pursuing him.

Notice that David then takes that word radaph and he uses it here to say that God's goodness and mercy, I mean, they're chasing him, they're hunting them down. They will not let David escape God's goodness and mercy. And I think that one of the things that sets David apart from all the others that David lived life confident that God's goodness and mercy would not let him go. Some



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Bible commentators suggest that goodness and mercy were then like two sheep dogs chasing after us, forever nipping at our heels. The Good Shepherd leads us, and then bringing up the rear, are goodness and mercy as they are guarding us, rounding us up into God's fold.

Let's look at the word goodness for a moment. It's a Hebrew word *tov*, that's T-O-V. It is a word used in Genesis 1:26, where God looks at all that he has made and God says it is *tov*. It is very good. *Tov* means beautiful, pleasant, beneficial. If you've ever seen a Jewish wedding, you've probably have seen the guest as they're wishing the bride and groom *mozel tov*. Good fortune. Good destiny. So what David is saying is that God's pleasant, beautiful, good destiny is following after you and me. It's hunting us down.

But not just God's goodness, David says, God's mercy is pursuing us. The word translated mercy, well, it's a little bit weaker as it is a great Hebrew word *Hesed*, that is H-E-S-E-D, that literally means covenant love. It is the love of God that is steadfast. A love that never quits, a love that is based upon God's covenant that I will be your God and you will be my people, and over and over again, in the Book of Psalms, God is praised that His covenant love never, ever ends. This is the very love that the apostle Paul has in mind in Romans 8, where he says that nothing present, nor nothing to come can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

God's covenant love is with you. When you're in green pastures, God's covenant love is with you when you are in the valley of the shadow of death. So as we think about the future, the unknown future, we know this: That God's goodness and mercy, His covenant love will be following right after us. When your world caves in, every tear, every pain comes from God's goodness and mercy in order to bless you all the days of your life until until God's goodness and mercy takes you in death to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

So tonight, as I lay my head on my pillow, I'm not gonna be worrying about the future, but I'm gonna be thinking about God's goodness and mercy nipping at our heels, following after us all the way to our heavenly home. Can't get any better than that.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.