



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- December 30, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Well, here we are new you receive. And 2023 has been quite a year, hasn't it? And we wonder what the new year will bring and how are you feeling about the future.

Well, on this last day of the year, I wanna pull up a chair and sit alongside the psalmist, David king, David, the man whom the Bible twice calls a man after God's own heart and a man who fulfilled the purpose of God and his generation. That's quite a man. So would you pull up a chair alongside of me? And as we asked David, how he looks at life, how he looks at the future. And today, I'm looking at David's much beloved 23rd psalm. And on this last day of the year, I want to skip down to the last verse of the Psalm that says, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Here we see David's strong, bold expression of confidence in the goodness and mercy of God for the future, the goodness and mercy of God taking him all the way straight into the house of the Lord forever. Now, I don't think anyone could ever accuse David of being a Pollyanna. No one could ever accuse David of looking at life through rose colored glasses. For instance, David does not say the Lord is my shepherd and therefore I am spared life's troubles or tears.

In this 23rd psalm, David does acknowledge that there is evil in the world, but David can say I fear no evil. 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 there with him. David does not say that he has no enemies, but he does say that the Lord prepares a table before him in the presence of his enemies. And as David takes his time to look back at life and to look ahead into the future, David can say surely, surely goodness and mercy. Notice the emphasis here, not just that I hope so for the New Year, but no, surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

Now this translation that talks about goodness and mercy following. Well, the word following here is a little bit weak. That's the Hebrew word here that is translated following is the Hebrew word with D that's R ad A ph and, and it's, it's much more bold than to just follow this word redo is used 144 times in the Old Testament. And most of the time it is translated as to chase after, to hunt down to pursue.

For instance, Rado is used in Exodus chapter 14 verse four of Pharaoh's armies as they are pursuing the Israelites. It's used in first Samuel 23 verse 25 of Saul's armies that are pursuing, they are hunting down David, they are more than just following him. And I think what David is saying here that is that God's goodness and mercy. Well, they're not just following him into the future, but goodness and mercy. They are chasing him down, they're hunting him down. They won't let him escape from God's love. David lives confidently that God is chasing down those whom he loves with his goodness and mercy.



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Some Bible commentators suggest that goodness and mercy here, whether they're like two sheep dogs that are chasing after us, the good shepherd leads and the sheep have the goodness and mercy of God nipping at our heels, guarding us, surrounding us into the hope of God.

And let's, let's look at this word goodness for a moment. It's, it's, it's a Hebrew word Tov. Tov that is used in Genesis 126 where, where God looked at what he made and said it is good. Very good tove. It's pleasant. It's beautiful. It's beneficial. Now, if you've ever been to a Jewish wedding guest will greet the new couple with the word Mazel Tov. That is good destiny, good future. And what David is saying here is that God's pleasant, beautiful, good destiny, good fortune.

Well, it's hunting down you and me, but not just God's goodness. David says, but God's goodness and mercy. The word translated as mercy. Well, it's also a little bit weak as it's the Hebrew word Hessen hesed. That's one of the great words in the Hebrew Bible as Hes, it means God's covenant love. It is a love that is steadfast. It is a love that it never quits. It is a love that is based upon God's covenant promise. I will be your God and you will be my people in the Psalms. The Lord is praised because His He his covenant love for us never ends.

This is a love that the Apostle Paul was talking about in Romans eight that there's nothing present, there's nothing to come that can ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, that is He said that is covenant love. God's covenant love with you. Whether you're grazing in green pastures, God's covenant love is with you, or whether you're in the valley of the shadow of death, surely goodness and covenant love pursues us, chases us down all the days of our lives. That means that wherever you go, that you're going to leave a trail of God's goodness and covenant love.

If your world caves in around you every tear every pain comes from God's goodness and covenant love in order to bless you all the days of your life. And that means that through all of life's changes, through all of life stages, goodness and covenant love will follow after you until death until death, which serves a believer's greater good of taking us into the house of the Lord forever. So tonight, as, as I lay my head on my pillow, I'm going to see the good shepherd going ahead of us and his two sheep dogs. Goodness and steadfast love. They're nipping at our heels. They're guiding us safely home. Thank you, David, for showing us I think a great way to think about 2024 and to think about our future.

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