

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 19, 2020

The Lord be with you.

As you look at the news today, as you browse the internet, what's stirring in you? How are you thinking about life in the age of COVID-19? How are you thinking about your future in several? In single conversations we have been looking at life with David, there's so much that we can learn from David. As scripture tells us that he was a man after God's own heart scripture tells us that David fulfilled the purpose of God in his generation.

And so today, I wanna pull up a chair and sit for a few moments alongside David, and ask him how he looks at life, how he looks at the future and I'm sitting with David in that much beloved 23rd Psalm, looking at the last verse, it says Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. We see here, David strong, bold expression of confidence in the goodness and mercy of God into the future, all the way straight into the house of the Lord forever.

Now, I don't think anyone would ever accuse David of being a Pollyanna. Of ever looking at life through rose-colored glasses. David does not say the Lord is my shepherd, and therefore I am spared life's troubles in 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 there is no valley of the shadow of death, but David does say that he knows that the Lord is with him there. 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 looks back at life and as he looks into the future David says, Surely.

Note the emphasis not just maybe not just hope so, but surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. This translation of goodness and mercy following, David, is really a little weak. As a Hebrew word translated following is a word radaph. That's R-A-D-A-P-H, and it is a much more bold and aggressive than to follow. This verb is used 144 times in the Old Testament and most of the time it is translated as to chase, to hunt down, to pursue. For instance, radaph is used in Exodus 14:4 of Pharaoh's armies pursuing the Israelites, it's used in 1 Samuel 23:25 of Saul's armies pursuing hunting down David.

They are more than just following him.

I think what David is saying here is that God's goodness and mercy are not just following him, but God's goodness and mercy are chasing him down, they're hunting him down, they're not letting him escape from God's love. David lives confident that God is chasing down those whom he loves. Some Bible commentators suggest that goodness and mercy are like two sheep dogs, that are chasing after us, the good shepherd leads the sheep and goodness and mercy are nipping at our heels guarding us surrounding us up into God's hope. And look at this word goodness for a moment. It's a Hebrew word tov, T-O-V, it's a word used in Genesis 1:26 where God looked at what he had made and said, It is very good, tov, tov means pleasant beautiful beneficial. It is perfection. Now, if you've ever seen a Jewish wedding, guests will with the new couple Museoltov... That is good destiny, good fortune.

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What David is saying is that God's pleasant, beautiful, good destiny, good fortune is hunting down you and me, but not just God's goodness David says, but God's goodness and mercy, the word translated as mercy is also a little weak as it is the Hebrew word hesed one of the great words in the Hebrew Bible is hesed means covenant love. It is love that is steadfast a love that never quits. Because it is based on God's covenant His promise, I will be your God and you will be my people and over and over again. In the Psalms, the Lord is praised because his hesed, His covenant love for us, never ends. This is a love that the apostle Paul was talking about in Romans 8, How nothing present are nothing to come can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, that is hesed, covenant love, God's covenant love is with you when you're grazing in green pastures, and God's covenant love is with you in the valley of the shadow of death, surely goodness and covenant love pursue me, chase me down all the days of my life. That means that everywhere you go, you're going to leave a trail of God's goodness and covenant love. When 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, that means through all of life's changes through all of life stages goodness and covenant love will follow you until death until death, which serves a believers greater good of taking him taking her into the house of the Lord forever.

Tonight, 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 of goodness and steadfast love they're nipping at our heels they are guiding us safely home.

Surely, surely goodness and covenant love will actively hunt us down and pursue us all the days of our lives and we shall dwell in the God's house with him forever.

Thank you David for showing us such a great way to think about life and to think about our future.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler in the pilgrim way, thanks for listening until next time...

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