



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – December 28, 2021

The Lord be with you.

Wow. Another year is gone.

We are about ready to say good-bye to 2021, and I wonder, how are you thinking about the new year? How does the future look for you? If you've listened to the Selah podcasts for any length of time, you might have noticed that I often talk about David and about David's Psalms. The Bible actually tells us more about David than it tells us about any other person in scripture. Scripture tells us that David was a man after God's own heart. It tells us that David fulfills the purpose of God in his generation. There's a lot that we can learn from David from as many ups and downs through his good times and through his failures. And so today, as we think about a new year coming, I wanna pull up a chair and sit for a few moments alongside David and ask David, how he has learned to look at life and how he looks at the future.

Today, I'm sitting with David and then much beloved 23rd Psalm. And I'm looking at the last verse where it 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." Now we see here David's strong, bold expression of confidence in the goodness and mercy of God in His future, that will take him all the way to where he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Now, I don't think that anyone would ever accuse David of being a Pollyanna, or accuse David of ever looking at life through rose-colored glasses. David does not say the Lord is my shepherd, and therefore I'm 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 is not saying there was 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 so as David looks back at life, and as he looks into the unknown future, David says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Note the emphasis. Not just maybe, or I hope so, but no. Surely, surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

Now, this translation of goodness and mercy that's following David. Well, it's a little bit weak on our English translation, a Hebrew word translated as following is the Hebrew word radaph, that's R-A-D-A-P-H, and it's much more bold and aggressive than to follow. In fact, this verb is used 144 times in the Old Testament, and most of the time it was translated as chase, to hunt down, to pursue. For instance, radaph is used in Exodus chapter 14 of Pharaoh's armies that are pursuing that are chasing after the Israelites. It's used in 1 Samuel chapter 23 verse 25 of Saul's armies that are pursuing that are hunting down David. So this is more than just goodness and mercy following David. I think what David is saying here that God's goodness



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and mercy are not just following him, but God's goodness and mercy, that they're chasing them down, they're hunting him down, they're not letting him escape from God's love. So David can live life confident that that God is chasing down those whom He loves. Some Bible commentators suggest the goodness and mercy, well they are like two sheep dogs that are chasing after us. As the good shepherd leads the sheep. Goodness and mercy are nipping at our heels. Guarding us. Surrounding us, right up all the way to God's home.

And look at this word, goodness for a moment. Surely, goodness will pursue me. Follow me all the days of my life. This word translated goodness, it's a Hebrew word to tov. It's a word used in Genesis chapter 1 verse 26, where God looked at all that he had made, and God said, It is good, tov. Tov means pleasant. Beautiful. Beneficial, it is perfection. And if you've ever been to a Jewish wedding, guest will greet the new couple with Mazhaltov that is good destiny. Good fortune for you.

So 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, God's goodness and mercy. The word translated as mercy is also, it's a little bit weak here it's the Hebrew word hesed. It is one of the great words in the Hebrew Bible as it means covenant love. It is love that is steadfast, a love that never quits, because it is based on God's covenant promise that I will be your God and you will be my people. It says it over and over again. So in the Psalms, the Lord is praised because his covenant love for us... It never, ever ends. This is a love that the Apostle Paul was talking about, Romans 8, where he says that nothing present nor nothing to come, can separate you and me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. That is hesed. Covenant love, God's covenant love that with you and me, as we're grazing in green pastures, God's covenant love is with us as we're in the valley of the shadow of death, surely goodness and covenant love pursues us, chases us down all the days of our life, and that means wherever we go, we'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, and that means that through all of life, all of life's changes, through all of life's stages, God's goodness and covenant love will follow you until death, until death, which serves a believers is a greater good of taking him or taking her into the house of the Lord forever.

So tonight, as I lay my head on my pillow, I'm going to see the good shepherd going ahead of us. His two sheep dogs of goodness and steadfast love. They're nipping at our heels. They're guiding us safely home. Surely goodness and covenant love will actively hunt us down and pursue us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in God's house with him forever. Thank you, David, for showing us a great way to think about the new year... To think about our future.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.