

Sermon Notes  
Good News Church  
“The Shepherd & Our Stories”  
**Psalm 23:6 – Goodness & Mercy... Forever!**  
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8-17-25

**The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm**

*1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.*

*3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness*

*For His name's sake.*

*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.*

*5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.*

***6 Surely goodness and mercy (lovingkindness) will follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

**Psalm 23:6a**    ***Surely goodness and mercy (lovingkindness) will follow me all the days of my life,***

***Follow (def) = דָּרַךְ (raw-daf')***

- *to pursue, chase after*

God's love pursues us and chases us down. We can't outrun it. We can't hide from it. We can't get away from it.

*“If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”*

– David (Psalm 139:8)

**SURROUNDED BY GOD'S GOODNESS & MERCY**

We are surrounded by the goodness and mercy of God, but we often don't recognize it. Why? Because God's goodness, mercy, and lovingkindness are so immense and so obvious and so full that we miss it!

We are swimming in an ocean that is full of God's lovingkindness, but because it is so vast and deep in widespread, we take it completely for granted. It's in the air that we breathe and it's in every single good gift of life that comes our way.

Our situation is similar to a goldfish swimming in a fishbowl. We don't appreciate the water until we get scooped up with a net and flopped out onto the kitchen counter. Now, all the sudden we realize that we can't move, and we can't breathe and we can't do anything! That wet stuff that we completely took for granted (because we didn't even really realize it existed) is now gone, and we are undone!

It's not until being out of the fishbowl that realize that, every moment of every day, is spent swimming in the life-sustaining waters of God's goodness, mercy, and lovingkindness.

For us not to experience God's goodness and mercy in life, we have to ignore and suppress the truth of who God is. The bad news is that every one of us is born into the condition of truth suppression. That's who we are and what we do.

But when God (by His goodness and mercy) opens the eyes of our heart to see, know, and experience His life-changing love and presence, our hearts are filled with gratitude, and it changes everything. And with King David, we now begin to express that His goodness and mercy chases after us every day of our lives.

Sometimes though, we know all of this to be true, but we're not connected to it experientially. Which begs the question...

**Q: How do we "experience" the incredible goodness, mercy, and lovingkindness of God in our lives?**

### **Creating an Environment of Grace**

starts with and includes (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- |                 |               |              |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Surrender    | 3. Brokenness | 5. Community |
| 2. Availability | 4. Identity   |              |

1. **SURRENDER** - Pray along the lines of something like this. *"Lord, I am so messed up and so in need of You and of Your Spirit to change me from the inside out. I confess my pride, selfishness, sinfulness, etc. Please help me."*

- When I refused to confess my sins, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. - Psalm 32:3-5
  - "They cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress." – Psalm 107:6
- "The world says, 'I need to see first, then I will believe.' Jesus says, 'Believe first, then you will see.'" - Nicky Gumbel

2. **AVAILABILITY** - Giving God time and space to connect with you and speak to you (i.e., through reading scripture, reading a good devotional or book, journaling, listening to worshipful music, taking a walk outdoors, etc.).

- "Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for him to act." - Psalm 37:7

- *"We deceive ourselves if we claim to want to hear His voice but neglect the primary channel through which it comes. We must read His Word." - Elisabeth Elliot*
  - ***"Reading the Bible, cover to cover, has changed my life. I've gotten to know God in ways that I've never known Him before (and I've been a Christian since I was 13). He's shown me different facets of Him, and He's really taught me that He's kind. He's kind."** - TobyMac (McKeehan)*
  - *"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of **music** is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits." - Martin Luther*
3. **BROKENNESS** - Seek humility and brokenness of heart. Beg God to change your heart and to give you faith to believe. Ask Him to get rid of any idols, character traits, behaviors, thoughts, misbeliefs, actions, etc. that may be getting in the way of your relationships with Him.
- *"The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise." - Psalm 51:17*
  - *"Our pleasure and our duty, though opposite before; since we have seen His beauty, are joined to part no more." - John Newton*
4. **IDENTITY** – Believe the truth about who God says you are, *"a sinner yes, but a beloved sinner."*
- *"I have loved you deeply with an everlasting love. I have written your name on my hand. You are my beloved child, adopted into My family. I call you son / daughter, and you call me Dad." - Malachi 1:2, Jeremiah 31:3, Isaiah 49:16, Romans 8:15*
  - *"Adoption is the highest privilege of the gospel. The traitor is forgiven, brought in for supper, and given the family name." - J.I. Packer*
5. **COMMUNITY** - Don't go through life in isolation. Find a local church and a few other mature Christians who will encourage and walk with you in your faith journey.
- *"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." - Hebrews 10:25*
    - *"Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe." - Proverbs 28:26*
  - *"Church is not an organization you join; it is a family where you belong, a home where you are loved and a hospital where you find healing."*
    - Nicky Gumbel
    - Serving others (eyes off of yourself) is a HUGE help, too!

***Keep showing up, and don't give up!***

**Psalm 23:6b** *And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

God's mercy and lovingkindness will pursue us FOREVER!

- **Heaven**

- “No eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived - the things God has prepared for those who love him.”

- 1 Corinthians 2:9

- “In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I have told you.” – John 14:2

- “For Christians, this present life is the closest they will come to Hell. For unbelievers, it is the closest they will come to Heaven.” – Randy Alcorn (“Heaven”)

**COVERED IN CHRIST**

For this to be true of you and of me, we must wrapped up in the protective covering of the righteousness of Christ. We must admit our need, acknowledge His provision, and embrace by faith the protective covering of His righteousness on our behalf.

Similar to the space shuttle and the heat reflecting panels that are necessary for the shuttle to re-enter the atmosphere, Jesus is our heat reflecting protection (so to speak). On February 1, 2003, as the space shuttle Columbia attempted to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere, some of the panels were missing from having been knocked off during launch. Tragically, the shuttle suffered catastrophic damage and the crew was lost. Similarly, we need the heat reflecting protection of the righteousness of Christ.

**CLOSING THOUGHT**

When Jesus is our Shepherd, we have everything we could possibly need. We have rest, refreshment, restoration, guidance, presence, comfort, confidence, courage, and overflowing joy. And it's not only 'all the days of my life' that we will be drenched in His goodness and lovingkindness, but for all eternity, as we dwell in the house and presence of our Heavenly Father forever and ever and ever.

**And THAT'S Good News!**