

June 2, 2021

Surely Goodness and Mercy

As we come to the final verse in this Psalm, take a moment to read **Psalm 23:1-6** in its entirety, reflecting upon the principles we have already considered. Verse 6 begins with the word surely, which means of a certainty. Faith is based upon things we know to be true. Because the Lord is our shepherd, there are certain things that we can count on. These truths, however, do not apply to everyone. They are only for those who can claim the Lord as their shepherd, as one being born into God's family by faith in Christ and Christ alone. What are some Bible truths that serve as a foundation for your faith? If we are to be steadfast and unmovable, we must be grounded in spiritual truth. If the foundation isn't sure, the house will fall.

What encouragement does the Lord give us for daily living? He promises two things, goodness and mercy. Goodness is a very broad term with multiple definitions and applications. The Bible teaches that goodness is a character trait or quality of God. It is also listed as part of the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22**. Certainly it includes the undeserved and unmerited blessings of God toward us. Consider **Psalm 27:13-14**. David said he would have fainted or given up if it were not for his belief in the goodness of the Lord. Verse 14 reminds us there are times we must wait for God's goodness. Many people fail to see the goodness of God in this life, because they lack faith or patience. The farmer sows and waters the seed, then he must patiently wait for the seed to grow before he can reap the goodness of the harvest. What are some good things you have to wait for? Read **Psalm 31:19**. Who does God reserve His goodness for? Four times in Psalm 107 we read, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" According to **Romans 2:4**, what does God's goodness lead us to? No one is ever saved apart from the goodness of God.

The second thing God promises us is mercy. Mercy speaks of God's kindness toward us in not judging us according to what we deserve. Again, God's goodness and grace speak of God's undeserved blessing whereas God's mercy speaks of God's undeserved withholding of punishment and judgment. Grace and mercy always go hand in hand. According to **Lamentations 3:21-25**, what gave Jeremiah hope? Why do we need the mercy of God? How often do we need the mercy of God? If it were not for God's faithfulness in demonstrating compassion and mercy toward us, we would be cut off for our sin. We are alive today solely by the mercy of God. Like goodness, mercy is also a character trait of God and part of the fruit of the Spirit.

There are some character traits of God that are unique to His deity. They are His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, His immutability, and His eternity. There are other character traits of God that we are to emulate in our own lives. God is love, we are to love. God is holy, we are to be holy. God is merciful, we are to be merciful. God is good, we are to be good, God is truth, we are to be truthful, etc. As we are transformed into the image of Christ, we are to display the characteristics of God. In what ways are you manifesting a Christlike spirit?