



“The Shepherd in the City”

Session 6: “The Forever Shepherd” (Ps. 23:6)

Teacher: David Ray

“He does not ever give up on us!”

“Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

1. FOLLOW

- ◆ Not that we follow, but that we are *followed*!
Hard on the heels, chasing after, tracking us down.
- ◆ Not pursued by the *fierce*, but the *friendly* pair of “goodness” and “mercy”
“With [the Lord] before and them behind, even poor sinners like you and me can hope to win home at last.” -- J. R. P. Sclater
- ◆ Reminiscent of another pair: “grace” and “truth” --John 1:14
“We need goodness for our steps; we need mercy for our stumbles. God’s goodness supplies us and God’s mercy soothes us. God’s goodness helps us, while God’s mercy heals us. God’s goodness provides for us and God’s mercy pardons us.” -- James Merritt
- ◆ Mercy = love, loving kindness, covenant love
“I will stand by you *no matter what* happens . . .”
- ◆ That a god could sit in heaven and wait on us to make our way to Him—lots of religions worship a god like that. But *our God*—the *true God*—comes down off of His throne and passionately pursues us, chasing us down with His *goodness and mercy*.

“The Hound of Heaven” -- Francis Thompson

*I fled him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled him, down the arches of the years.
I fled him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped; and shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after . . .*

2. FOREVER

- ◆ “All the days of my life” . . . but even *more*! It sings of the *temporary* giving way to the *eternal*.
“. . . we know that when this tent we live in—our body here on earth—is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last forever. And now we sigh, so great is our desire . . .” -- 2 Corinthians 5:1,2 TEV
“Our homeland is in heaven.” -- Philippians 3:20 TEV
God has “set eternity in the hearts of men.” -- Ecclesiastes 3:11 NIV
- ◆ Do you ever find yourself homesick for the place where you most belong? Are you satisfied with the *temporary*, or are you longing for the *eternal*? He is the Shepherd of the *now*, but even better, the Shepherd of *forever*.
“I am going to prepare a place for you . . . I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life . . .” -- John 14:2b,3b,4,6b TEV

“Deep down you know you are not home yet. So be careful not to act like you are. Don't lower the duffel bag too soon. Would you hang pictures on the wall of a Greyhound bus? Do you set up a bedroom at the roadside rest stop? . . . The greatest calamity is not to feel far from home when you are, but to feel right at home when you are not.” -- Max Lucado

“We are not citizens of this world trying to work our way to heaven. We are citizens of heaven trying to work our way through this world.” -- Tom Gerdts

“For this God is our God forever and ever;
He will be our guide even to the end.” -- Psalm 48:14 NIV

3. SURELY

♦ A word of *certainty!* We can know!

“Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;

He will lead them to springs of living water.

and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” --Revelation 7:16-17 NIV