

Psalm 23

Lesson 11

Surely Goodness and Mercy Will Follow Me

Leader Guide

A Bible Study to Accompany
“A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23”
by Phillip Keller

Leader Guide Bible Studies

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Lesson 11, Psalm 23, A Psalm of David

"Surely Goodness and Mercy Will Follow Me..."

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. *2Peter 1:3*

Prayers

Luther's Morning Prayer

Thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Read

Psalm 23, A Psalm of David. The LORD Is My Shepherd

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will 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 anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Discussion

1. Goodness and mercy are traits of God's character. God bestows his goodness on us with blessings we *don't* deserve and bestows mercy on us for punishments we *do* deserve. How are God's goodness and mercy to us shown in Christ?

Goodness in Christ- redemption, salvation, rebirth through the Holy Spirit (Christ's Spirit), eternal life

Mercy- forgiveness of sin, no condemnation, Christ's substitution

2. Refer to the following verses describing how God shows his goodness to us and fill in the blank.

a. God showed his goodness to us by giving us **faith and saving us.**

Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

b. God showed his goodness to us by filling us **with joy, peace, hope, and the Holy Spirit.**

Ro 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

c. God showed his goodness to us by preparing **good works for us to do.**

Eph 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

d. God showed his goodness to us by giving us **the ability to produce wealth.**

Dt 8:18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

e. God showed his goodness to us by giving us **every spiritual blessing in Christ.**

Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

f. God showed his goodness to us by giving us **one blessing after another.**

Jn 1:16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

3. What blessings would you add to this short list of God's blessings to you?

1. Faith
2. Hope, joy, peace, and the Holy Spirit
3. Good works
4. Talents, abilities, skills, and wealth
5. Spiritual blessings, every blessing
6. Your blessing _____

4. How does God show his mercy to us?

a. God shows his mercy to us by **making us alive in Christ.**

^{Eph 2:4} But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
^{Eph 2:5} made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved.

b. God shows his mercy to us by giving us **the gift of eternal life in Christ.**

^{Ro 6:23} For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

^{1Pe 1:3} Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

c. God shows his mercy to us in **our time of need.**

^{Heb 4:16} Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

d. God shows his mercy to us by **his comfort.**

^{2Co 1:3} Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ^{2Co 1:4} who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

5. The flock's welfare is due to the shepherd's work and wise management; he makes decisions out of his care and concern for them.

a. How have you seen God's direction in your life, even if you were unaware of it at the time?

b. How have you seen God's direction, even through hardship?

6. It's only natural to ask "Why" during calamity and suffering, especially as we helplessly see our loved ones suffer. Refer to the following verses and discuss the lessons have you learned to help you through the "why" times?

a. We live in a **fallen broken world – natural disaster, disease, violence, evil.**

^{Ro 8:18} I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

^{Ro 8:19} The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

Ro 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Ro 8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

b. We are **short-timers in the world, citizens of heaven.**

Phil 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

c. We should **remember God's faithfulness in the past and promises in the future.**

2Pe 1:12 So I will always **remind** you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.

2Pe 1:13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,

2Pe 1:14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

2Pe 1:15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to **remember** these things.

Heb 10:32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

Heb 10:33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.

Heb 10:34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your

d. In all ways **trust in the Lord. Do you ever stop asking why?**

Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Ps 125:1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

7. Psalm 103 is another Psalm of David reflecting on God's goodness and mercy. What acts did David remember in his praise of God?

Ps 103:1 Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Ps 103:2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

Ps 103:3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

Ps 103:4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Ps 103:5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁵

Ps 103:6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

Ps 103:7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:

Ps 103:8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Ps 103:9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

Ps 103:10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

Ps 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Ps 103:13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him

- a. Verse 3 **Forgiveness and healing**
- b. Verse 4 **Redemption from the grave, the pit**
- c. Verse 5 **Blessings of Good things**

Jas 1:17 **Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.**

- d. Verse 6 **Righteousness and justice for the oppressed**

Lk 4:18 **“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”** Isaiah 61:1-2

- e. Verse 7 **God made his ways known to Moses because...Moses was seeking God with all his heart, or his actions were righteous, or because he had great faith and confidence in God?**
- f. Verses 9-12, **Sins removed as far as the east is from the west, by David, a king who lingered too long in his place while his army went to war, was tempted and committed adultery and murder. Yet God could call him a man after his own heart.**
- g. Verse 13 Compassion

8. Sheep can devastate pastureland if improperly managed or leave it as fertile parkland when properly managed. Pastor Keller reflected on his many blessings and asked himself if he would leave behind a legacy of blessings to others by reflecting on five questions:

- a. Do I leave behind peace in lives – or turmoil?
- b. Do I leave behind forgiveness- or bitterness?
- c. Do I leave behind contentment – or conflict?
- d. Do I leave behind flowers of joy – or frustration?
- e. Do I leave behind love – or frustration?

How will the goodness and mercy you have received be left behind for the benefit of others?

9. Peace, love, joy, contentment, and the power to forgive are evidence of a life guided and transformed by the Holy Spirit. How do you bear the Spirit's gifts in increasing measure?

10. Pastor Keller said that only men and women who know firsthand of the goodness and mercy of God in their own lives will be warm and affectionate with goodness and mercy to others. How are you intentional about showing warmth and affection to others?

Closing

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.