



## 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting 2020 – WEEK 5: A Legacy of Grace

### Day 29 – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

#### ***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A***

Adapted from 'A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23' by Phillip Keller

All that has gone before in the Twenty-third Psalm is now summed up by David in one brave but simple statement: "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life!" David knows that, no matter what comes his way in the future, the goodness and love of his Shepherd will never be far away.

Do I really feel this way about Jesus my Shepherd? Am I truly convinced that no matter what happens in my life, I am being followed by His goodness and love – every day – all the days of my life?

Of course, it is very simple to speak this way when things are going well. If my health is excellent, my income is flourishing, and my friends are fond of me, it is not hard to say, "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life."

But what about when my body breaks down? What about when I stand by helpless, as I have had to do, and watch my wife die? What's my reaction when my job folds up or when my friends prove false and turn against me? When my world is falling apart?

With my limited understanding as a finite human being, I could not always comprehend it all. With my natural tendencies to fear, worry, and ask "why," it was not always simple to assume that He really did know what He was doing with me. There were times I was tempted to panic, to bolt and leave His care. Sometimes I had the strange, stupid notion I could survive better on my own, without Him.

But despite this perverse behaviour, I am so glad that He did not give up on me. I am so grateful He followed me in goodness and love - every day - and will do all the days of my life.

- a. What has struck you most from this message? Journal your thoughts.
- b. Try this Spiritual Exercise today.

How have you experienced God's goodness and love "*being with you*" this past week. For example...

when you 'shared a table' with Him in authentic, humbling fellowship with God?  
when you had moments of being conscious of God's everyday grace in your life?  
when His goodness and love touched you as you felt disappointed or down?  
- Or when you felt anxious or fearful?  
- Or when you had let Him down or sinned?  
when His presence or His Word or His wisdom or His children blessed you?

## Day 30 – Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March

### ***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A***

The Hebrew word for "follow" in Psalm 23:6 literally means "to chase." One way to picture this kind of 'follower' is to imagine a tracker who is able to follow the trail of a missing person to locate and rescue them from the outback or the jungle or the mountainside. Despite the personal danger, the tracker is single-minded and fully committed.

Please read Luke 15.1-7

Now please take time now to watch and listen to this song here (you'll want to sing along!)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>

After listening to the song, slowly reflect again on the lyrics below... and worship your Good Shepherd

Reckless Love, by Cory Asbury

Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me  
You have been so, so good to me  
Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me  
You have been so, so kind to me

Oh! the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God  
It chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine  
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away  
Oh! the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God

When I was Your foe, still Your love fought for me  
You have been so, so good to me  
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me  
You have been so, so kind to me

There's no shadow You won't light up, Mountain You won't climb up  
Coming after me  
There's no wall You won't kick down, Lie You won't tear down  
Coming after me

Songwriters: Caleb Culver / Cory Asbury / Ran Jackson

Reckless Love lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Bethel Music Publishing, Watershed Music Group

- a. Highlight or write out the lines from this song that resonate most with you today
- b. Why do you think these lines resonate so much with you at this moment?
- c. Give your 'tracker' Shepherd thanks for the many ways he has followed your waywardness in goodness and love.

### Day 31 – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

**Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A**

Please read Psalm 143.3-4; Ezekiel 34.11-15; John 10.7-11

- a. Are you conscious of the 'pursuit' of the evil one in your life, as well as the 'pursuit' of God? How so?
- b. Why is Jesus pursuing you, and what are His intentions?
- c. How does that contrast with the intentions of the 'enemies' of God and His people?

### Day 32 – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March

***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A***

Take time to reflect on the eras of your life. Create a "life chart" and fill in the sections with your personal reflections:

- a) High Points – what were the high points of that era?
- b) Dark Valleys – what were the low points of that era of your life?
- c) Sense of God – How was God involved in your life at those times? Did you feel close to Him, or did you feel exposed and uncared for? Did you long for him to do more?
- d) Reflecting back what **good has come** from the highs **and** from the dark valleys in those eras of life? How do you track God's goodness and love through that era of life?

A possible template to use:

	Childhood and Youth	Young Adulthood	Adulthood	Older Age
a) High Points				
b) Dark Valleys				
c) Sense of God				
d) Good that's come				

**Spend time with God about your reflections.**

## **Day 33 – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March**

***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A***

The apostle Paul confidently states, "...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him..." (Romans 8.28)

This is part of Paul's discourse on how we are to live life "in the Spirit" in the midst of hardship, difficulty and suffering (I recommend reading the whole awesome chapter of Romans 8!)

Imagine you had the opportunity to chat with Paul and with Jesus about what Paul so confidently claims. What would you want to ask? What would you want to say to them? Write down your questions and thoughts.

Pray through what you have reflected on. Is God speaking to you in a particular way?

## **Day 34 – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March**

***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A***

Proverbs 13.33 says "A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous."

God has given us a glorious legacy of grace. Thank you, Lord! And we in turn all leave a legacy behind us: not just when we die, but when we leave a room, or when we leave one workplace to go to another! God wants us to share the goodness and mercy He has generously given to us each day and with the same grace He shows us.

Reflect on the legacy you leave behind you. Reflect honestly, both on the positives and negatives:

- Do I leave behind peace – or turmoil?
- Do I leave behind forgiveness – or bitterness?
- Do I leave behind contentment – or frustration?
- Do I leave behind joy – or frustration?
- Do I leave behind love – or rancour?

Give thanks for the ways you are able to invest in a legacy of goodness and mercy. In light of your reflections, what do you need to get right with God and others?

## **Day 35 – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March**

***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23.6A***

Go to 'Hill Cliffe Sunday Online' for this week's sermon and other resources for worship for adults and children.

Journal your own notes from 'Hill Cliffe Sunday Online' today...