

He Pursues Me
Psalm 23:1-6 (NLT)

For the past five Sundays, we have explored the meaning of one of the most beloved psalms in the Bible, Psalm 23, under the title of “**If the Lord is My Shepherd.**” Today is the last Sunday of our sermon series.

Let us read Psalm 23:6 in the New Living Translation. “**Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.**” (Psalm 23:6 NLT). **If the Lord is my Shepherd, He pursues me all the days of my life.**

The last verse of Psalm 23 serves as a conclusion to David’s confession of God as his Shepherd. Let us delve into David’s profound understanding of God and his ultimate commitment to God in Psalm 23:6.

First of all, what is the meaning of God’s goodness?

The Hebrew word for “**goodness**” is “טוֹב” (*tob*). It can be used either as an adjective or a noun, depending on the context in which it is used. It is not about general goodness. It encompasses meanings such as “**excellence,**” “**prosperity,**” “**welfare,**” “**happiness,**” “**ethical rightness,**” and “**moral goodness.**” It is about the goodness in every aspect of our lives, holistic goodness. It is the goodness only God can provide for us.

We have two distinct creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2. In Genesis 1, we encounter a God who is transcendent, powerful, and sovereign. The story offers us a cosmic view of creation. In Genesis 2, we have a God who is intimate and personal. The story reveals that God is a relational being with humanity in His creation. Even though these chapters differ in their perspectives on God and His creation, both stories are full of the word “*tob*”: in Genesis chapter one, seven times, and chapter two, four times. So God’s creation is rooted on God’s goodness and reflects God’s goodness.

So, King David’s confession, “**Surely, your goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life,**” signifies that God will continually work on us, treating us as we were meant to be in the beginning. In other words, if the Lord is our Shepherd, that goodness of God in God’s creation will follow us. God’s excellence, God’s prosperity, God’s welfare, God’s happiness, and God’s moral and ethical righteousness will pursue us all the days of our lives so that we can enjoy and represent God’s goodness all the days of our lives.

What about God's unfailing love?

The Hebrew word for “unfailing love” is “חֶסֶד” (*hesed*). The word can be translated as “mercy (KJV & ESV),” “kindness (NCB),” “love (NIV),” “loving kindness (NASB),” or “faithful love (CEB).” Ultimately, *hesed* refers to God's faithful love based on His covenant with us. So, if you find the words “mercy” or “kindness” in the Old Testament, it is about our covenant relationship with God; even death cannot separate us from it.

“The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (*hesed*) and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love (*hesed*) for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...’” (Exodus 34:6-7 NRSVUE).

As God's covenant people, we must extend God's *hesed* to other people. “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8 NIV).

So, God's faithful love for us as His covenant people in Jesus Christ is meant to be shared with others in the world. God's covenant love, *hesed*, is never static but is very active and vibrant, always moving from His covenant community to the world.

“Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life.” (Psalm 23:6a)

What is the meaning of the verb “pursue”?

Here the verb “pursue” in the Hebrew word is “רָדַף” (*radaf*), and it can imply a strong, persistent, and vigorous pursuit, no matter what situation we are in. In times of peace, struggle, or challenges, God's goodness and unfailing love actively, ardently, and eagerly pursue us, follow us, stay close to us, and remain with us all the days of our lives. “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him... We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:9 & 19 NIV).

Let us read the rest of Psalm 23:6 on the screen.

“and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23:6b NLT).

What is the meaning of the house of the Lord?

The “house of the Lord” can refer to the Temple of God, symbolizing both the presence of God and the Kingdom of God—our ultimate destination. In the Bible,

whenever we encounter the phrase “the house of God,” we should immediately think of three things: **Worship, Obedience, and Hope.**

In the Book of Revelation, multitudes from every people, nation, and language gather before the throne of God, worshiping Him and the slain Lamb—Jesus, who was crucified. This is a beautiful picture of the restored creation in God’s Kingdom, where people from all nations worship Him.

Micah 4:2 says, “**Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of Jacob’s God. There He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths’**” (NLT). The house of God is where we learn His will and ways, so that we may walk faithfully in them. It symbolizes our obedience.

In his old age, King David reflected on his life and proclaimed that because God’s goodness and unfailing love had been active, vigorous, and persistent, he looked forward to eternally dwelling in God’s presence in His Kingdom. His life was saturated with hope for God, God’s presence, and God’s kingdom, which may have been motivations for his life as the King of Israel, keeping his focus on his true leader, the Shepherd, God.

If the Lord is my Shepherd, He provides for me. If the Lord is my Shepherd, He gives me rest. If the Lord is my Shepherd, He restores my soul. If the Lord is my Shepherd, He walks with me. If the Lord is my Shepherd, He prepares a table before me. If the Lord is my Shepherd, He pursues me all the days of my life.

I hope and pray that these confessions will be ours, and we can enjoy God as our Shepherd throughout our lives.

Two weeks ago, my friend **Rev. Jong-il Jang** sent me a letter and some pictures of Borodyanka (located 415 miles from the nearest border with Russia) in Ukraine, where he is doing missionary work. He has served Ukraine as a Methodist missionary since 2000. **Let me show you the pictures on the screen.** The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) has documented at least 13,580 civilian deaths and 34,115 injured civilians since the full-scale invasion began on February 24, 2022 (as of July 10, 2025). In recent months, the Russian bombing campaign has intensified. In June 2025, more civilians were killed or injured than in any other month over the past three years.

Let me share with you his letter.

“Borodyanka was one of the first cities attacked by the Russian army at the start of the war. It wasn’t just this city that suffered; nearby small villages were also devastated as tanks and armored vehicles passed through, turning once vibrant

places into ruins. However, many parts are now being restored and transformed with a new look. Apartment buildings made unusable by missile attacks have been demolished with heavy equipment, and new buildings are being constructed in their place.

In the early days of the war, we focused our relief efforts intensely on this area. In one village, most residents had left, leaving countless dogs behind. I still remember an old woman complaining that she had to take care of other people's dogs when she barely had enough food for herself. Another time, as we tried to enter a village with a vehicle full of relief supplies, a child appeared with a wooden toy gun and demanded to see our passports. The scars the war left on these people were deeper than words can express.

I also heard about an elderly couple whose house was completely destroyed, but thankfully their underground cellar was intact, and they were continuing to live there. Three years have passed since the war began, but its shadow still lingers over this region. It's 8 PM as I write this. A little while ago, an alert sounded that drones had been launched from several Russian military bases. They are expected to reach Kyiv in about 3-4 hours. There are even YouTubers livestreaming the war situation all night. Ukraine is also launching drones towards Russia, and as of today, some Russian airports are closed.

Borodyanka, initially devastated by the passing Russian forces, is now undergoing remarkable recovery. Government aid has been provided for homes destroyed by bombs, and reparable apartments have already been fixed. Basic infrastructure like sewage, water supply, and roads also suffered significant damage, but much of it has been restored. I once thought war recovery would take a long time, but I couldn't hide my surprise seeing how quickly it's progressing thanks to modern equipment and technology.

A new church building is currently being constructed in Borodyanka, supported by Jinkwan Church. They are building this church with the mindset of constructing a new city.

The reason I continue my mission here is the thought that this might be the last opportunity. If this country falls under Russian control, it could become a communist state, and spreading the Gospel would become much more difficult. That's why I am doing my best in ministry now, while I can and while the opportunity is given.

I pray that the war will cease and that peace will come to both nations. And I hope and pray that Ukraine will be restored as a country where the Gospel can be freely proclaimed.”

Missionary Jong-il Jang

Missionary Jang has asked us to pray for Christian youth summer camps that will be held in conjunction with evangelism rallies at 30 different locations until the end of August. He anticipates that at least 150 people will attend each location, resulting in a total of 4,500 people. He prays that over 3,000 young souls will meet Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Even though we must go through the darkest valleys, God never fails to reveal His goodness and unfailing love for us, because we are His covenant people in and through Jesus Christ. Our life on earth is to demonstrate God's goodness and unfailing love, which is how we can experience God's Kingdom presence here on earth.