At Home with the Lord

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Date: 14 April 2024

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Welcome to Through the Bible with Pastor Michael, a podcast from First Baptist Church in Mustang, Oklahoma. Here's Pastor Michael.

If you would open with me to Psalm 23. Psalm 23. Psalm 23. I'm thankful just in my own heart for these days of study and reading in Psalm 23.
Of course, every day for the last two years I've been reading or working in some way through the Gospel of Mark in preparation. With our institute classes I get a chance to count my mind, go through all the books of the Bible.
With our read to the Bible, my mind every day is trying to grasp all that I can through our read to the Bible for my own reading and for our daily videos with that.
But Psalm 23 has just been a special kind of landing place for my own soul the last couple of months. And I pray it's been an encouragement to you. As I mentioned a couple of months ago when we started this, there is both a delight and a danger when you study very familiar passages.
[1:18] The delight is that you know the story. It's not new in the sense of you're not having to figure something new out. We understand it. We've heard it. We've sung it. Most of us have memorized it.

The danger, though, is that it can be so familiar that we would be too quickly to bypass what's there. And I hope for you these have been encouraging days throughout this semester.
Psalm 23, verse 1. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. 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.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, and you anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. We've looked in depth at those five verses. Tonight, verse 6.
[2:18] Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

However, if you picked up one of the handouts on the back, I've got a brief outline through each of the verses that we've gone through this semester that I hope maybe will, if you just kind of look at it all at one time, show you the flow of the entire psalm and to show you the different aspects of God's shepherding care that He provides for us.
We've looked at how the Lord is our shepherd, the Lord is our provider, the Lord is our restorer, the Lord is our guide. And I want us to consider tonight, in verse 6, the Lord is my home.
The Lord is my home. And I hope by the time we get finished tonight, you'll know exactly why I precisely am wording it that way.
The Lord is my home. In this short verse, surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. That's one promise. And then I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
[3:37] A second part. So let's just look at them in those two parts. First, the hope for today. The hope for today. It's the first half of verse 6. And as we've often done, because it just deserves this, each word here deserves a bit of emphasis.

Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me. Surely. This is a promise. This is a guarantee. This is sure.
This is absolute steadfast. Our hope for today is sure. You don't have to wonder, is this real?
Is this legitimate? Is this going to hold up? This is a promise that is sure. Surely, goodness and mercy. These are the two things that give us hope for today.

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That our shepherd gives us goodness and he gives us mercy. His mercies, lamentations says, are new every morning. He forgives us our sin each day.
[4:45] And so, as we live in the forgiveness the Lord gives to us, his mercy is fresh. And our expression of worship is fresh. And so, in one sense, every day is a chance to sing to the Lord a new song.

Because you've got new reasons to praise him. Because his mercies are new every morning. Goodness and mercy. One author said this.
It's goodness and mercy. Not goodness alone. For we are sinners in need of mercy. Not mercy alone. For we are fragile in need of goodness.
We need them both. Goodness to meet our every need. And mercy to forgive our every sin. Goodness to provide.
And mercy to pardon. Surely, goodness and mercy. Here's the hope for today.
[5:50] Will follow me. The goodness of our shepherd. The mercy of our shepherd will follow us. And to understand the language in Psalm 23, verse 6.

You need to think of the word follow in the sense, in a positive sense, of a pursuit. This is an energetic chase. The goodness of God and the mercy of God is pursuing you.
It's chasing you. It's coming after you. David will often in the Psalms write about the reality of enemies who pursue him.
Here's the hope for today. Here's the hope for today. So does the goodness and mercy of God. It pursues you. It's coming right behind you.
Like a police officer in a high-speed chase, God's goodness and His mercy is pursuing you. It's coming right behind you.
[6:53] And if you just think about the metaphors in Psalm 23, just think of it this way. Psalm 23, we begin with the sheep following the shepherd.

And then we have the shepherd walking beside the sheep. And now we have the shepherd behind the sheep pursuing them. Do you see the imagery that He wants us to see?
The Lord is in front of you. He's beside you. He's behind you. The good shepherd surrounds His sheep.
The prayer of old says, Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, all around us.
The shepherds in front of you leading, the shepherds beside you protecting, and the shepherds behind you pursuing with His goodness and His mercy.
[8:10] Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me. That's the imagery. That's the meaning behind that statement.

I want you to think of it by way of application in this sense, too, though. The point here is that the goodness and mercy of God is coming after you.
You can't avoid it. If you're His sheep, His mercy will pursue and catch you. His goodness will pursue and catch you. But I want you to think of it, too, in this sense.
If the goodness and mercy of God is pursuing you, and it's going to catch you, it's going to sustain you, then by way of application, when you leave somewhere, it should also be said that God's goodness and mercy follows you, not only the sense of the shepherd pursuing you, but also the fragrance of Christ that you leave behind, to borrow from the New Testament language.
That when people are around you, you leave behind the aroma of grace and goodness and kindness and mercy. That people, after a conversation with you, just love Christ more.
[9:36] That people who have been under your teaching or your leadership or your ministry or your discipleship, they just trust the Bible even more because you've left behind this sense of the goodness and the mercy of God.

So just consider your own words and your own life. Do you leave behind a trail of sadness or gladness? Peace or turmoil?
Forgiveness or bitterness? Contentment or conflict? Joy or despair?
You see, sometimes I think we forget that the shepherd is before us, beside us, and behind us. We sometimes feel alone, but the whole purpose of Psalm 23 is to ensure you that's never true.
Sometimes we feel neglected. Psalm 23 assures us that's never true. He is protecting, He is defending, He is feeding, He is guiding, He is right there with you, in front of you, beside you, and

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behind you.
[10:56] And with that in mind, we should be influencing other people to get their eyes on the shepherd. When you come to the end of Psalm 23, we're speaking of the hope that we have.

We've dealt with the reality of the shadow of darkness. It's real. There are dangers in this life. We've covered that. There is death in this life, at least in a physical sense.
We've looked at that. There are enemies in this life. That's true. There's opposition. There's persecution. We dealt with that in chapter 5. So it's not that Psalm 23 is forgetting that life can be hard.
It acknowledges it. It's not that it's forgetting that there are predators. It acknowledges it. But there is a hope that we live with every single day even in the presence of our enemies according to verse 5. So with the hope that we have of knowing that the Lord is our shepherd, we ought to be influencing other people to know the shepherd, to love the shepherd, and to trust the shepherd.
[12:09] Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. every single day. This morning, you woke up, the Lord sustains you.

You walk outside in just a few moments, the sun is shining. Five hours from now, we'll say the sun is not shining. But of course it is.
the sun never stops shining. It's just sometimes veiled. Well, so it is with the sheep and the shepherd.
The goodness and the mercy of God is always pursuing you. God's goodness and mercy is always active in His life. There may be seasons or days or moments where your perception feels differently, but rest in the truth.
that your lack of perception of the sun shining doesn't change anything with the reality of the sun. And so, the goodness and the mercy of the shepherd pursues you every single day.
[13:25] All the days of my life, it's the goodness and the mercy of God at work in my life. You may tend to say, I don't know, Michael, I don't feel much mercy.

I don't feel much goodness in this season of life. And I would say trust the shepherd. Trust the shepherd.
Even in the valley of the shadow of death, He is with you. Sometimes you are resting beside still waters sometimes the enemies are nearby.
But even in the imagery of verse 5, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. The picture is of a gracious host who is preparing a meal and you are being ministered to and nourished and sustained by this meal even though there are real enemies right outside.
And here's the reality of it. In that moment, which is true, that you are being nourished by the host or that there are enemies right outside, which is true.
[14:40] Well, both are true. The presence of one doesn't negate the other. And the reality that this life can be difficult and there are shadows and valleys we walk through never negates the goodness that the mercy and the love of God pursues you every single day.

So, if you wake up tomorrow, you've got a promise to claim that the Lord will be your shepherd and that it will be yet one more day that His goodness and His mercy is active in your life.
And if you don't wake up tomorrow, you will be at home with the Lord enjoying the fulfillment of that greater than you've ever known before.
either way, His goodness and His mercy are with you. That's the hope that we have for today.
The second aspect of verse 6 we'll call it the home for eternity. The hope for today is His goodness and mercy pursuing us but then let's look at the home for eternity.
[16:07] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. We've got to stop and say, well, what could be left? We've already got all the days of our life.

If the Lord is with you every single day, if He loves you every single day, if He provides for you every single day, what could be left? We've already made it to the end of our life and we remind ourselves that our life does not end just because our days on earth do.
This is where the promise of Psalm 23 is greater than our minds ever imagined. And, there's more. Not only is it every day of my life, and, I shall dwell.
I shall live in the house of the Lord. when all the journey of this life is over, I'm going to dwell in the house of the Lord.
In a Christian sense, according to John 10, we know that heaven is our home. Those who are in Christ will be in God's house. And this is the hope that we have for all eternity.

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[17:27] This is our home. We will dwell. We will reside. We will live in the house of the Lord.

Always under His shepherding care. this is what makes heaven, heaven, that you are with the Lord.
Some of you may have heard me tell us before, when I was brand new in ministry, probably close, right at 30, 29, 30 years ago, I was in a meeting with some people preparing a funeral.
I was just there to learn. And somebody said in that meeting, what will heaven be like? And the conversation got to what's in heaven, what's not in heaven.
And this lady who had just lost her husband, about to bury her husband, said, she's asking the pastor this, and my concern is, will there be golf courses in heaven?
[18:33] He was an avid golfer. The question didn't bother me, the answer did. The answer that was given was, if your husband needs golf to be happy in heaven, God will have to provide a golf course.

Now, I'm not telling you there's not golf in heaven. I don't know. What I am telling you is, you won't need a golf course in heaven to be happy.
Can you imagine the presence of the glorified Christ and saying, that's great, I need a driving range. But that's how we think, isn't it?
We think in terms of, I have Christ, that's great, what else you got? But the thing that makes heaven, heaven, the home that we have is that we are with the Lord.
I will dwell in the house of the Lord. That's our hope because that is our home. Let me see if I can show it to you in a more personal way.
[19:47] Through the years, Mars and I have been able to go on several vacations. We've enjoyed going on cruises with our boys when they were younger. We've enjoyed going on cruises without our kids when they're older.

Both have been good. We were, some of y'all didn't get that, that's alright. We got to go to London last year when I preached. We've gotten to go to New York for a conference I was preaching at. We've been able to go to several different places together. And whether we are on vacation with family or whether it's just us or whether we were up in New York where there was snow or whether we were in London or whether we were on a cruise ship somewhere, we always have a great time. We always have a lot of fun. Whatever we're doing together is always a thrill. But at the end of each vacation, no matter how good it's been, no matter how short or long it was, no matter what we did, at the end of every vacation there is always this feeling of we're ready to be home.
You know that feeling. hotels are nice and cruise ships are nice but they're not home. But in an even more true sense, what makes being at home home isn't the address.
[21:21] We've lived in three homes since we were married. married. It's not the address. Ultimately, it's who you're with.

That's what makes home home. Vacation's great but being home is being with her and being home is being with you each Lord's Day and being home is being surrounded by our family.
that's what makes home home. That's the promise. You've heard me say before that right before Marcy and I got married, we were driving around Edmond and I could take you today to the exact same stop sign assuming it's still there where we were having this conversation and Marcy said as long as we're together, that will be home to me.
Big house, small house, apartment, cardboard box. If we're together, that will be home to me. Why would she say that? Because it's not location that determines home, it's the company.
It's who you're with. That's what makes home, home. If you said to me, Michael, our church as a gift has purchased you a 50,000 square foot house, it's everything you could ever want, it's on 100 acres, people will be there to take care of the lawn for you and people will take care of the house for you and you'll never have to cook a meal again, as if that's ever happened, but you'll never have to worry about what you're going to eat, everything's done, the house is done, you've got the biggest, nicest, greatest house in the state.
[23:11] Great, I just got one question. Who's there? Because if Marcy's living and she's not with me, that's not home. And they say, well, Marcy will stay where she is, but she'll come visit you regularly.

That's not home. Home is not my location as much as it's the company, it's who's there. And so when you think about heaven, it's a real place, it's a real location, but what makes heaven, heaven, is who is there.

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And you see it in Psalm 23, verse 6, I will dwell in the house of the Lord. It's His house, He's there, I'm with Him, He's my shepherd.
It's as if His goodness and mercy has been on hot pursuit of me all the days of my life, and finally, when I take my last breath, and I'm home with the Lord, then I realize just how great the shepherd is.
I'm grateful for my salvation today, I'm not as thankful as I will be the day I meet Him face to face. You'll love Him even more. You'll be more grateful for the cross on that day than you are on this day.
[24:30] Because today, though you see what's true, we're looking through a glass dimly on that day face to face. what makes heaven our home is who is there.

That's the greatest part of heaven. My guess is everybody in this room has people that you're excited to see when you get to heaven.
Believers who have preceded us in death, for some, it will be the thrill of seeing a spouse or a parent or a child.
Part of the thrill of heaven will be meeting your spiritual heroes that you only knew from a distance. Meeting biblical heroes that we've read about so many times.
but I assure you an eternity with all of your loved ones if not for the presence of Christ would not be heaven and it would not be home.
[25:59] Only one laid down his life that we who were deserving of death would be saved.

Only one is worthy of falling on your knees in worship. In the New Testament you see examples where people in front of a person or in front of an angelic being are stunned and fall down in worship and the answer is get up!
Don't worship me! but in heaven when we see our shepherd face to face 10,000 years will just be the beginning because the reality of his grace and his goodness is inexhaustible.
It would never end. Don't worry about getting bored in heaven. It's kind of the unspoken thing people worry about. They don't say it out loud in Sunday school but you kind of think it.
Will heaven get boring? Only if Christ ever diminishes his own glory. It would be impossible. He has eternal glory.
[27:32] You would never never run out of reasons to give him praise and to glorify his name. You see all the days of your life his goodness and his mercy pursued you and at the cross it caught you and in heaven it overwhelms you and you are at home with the Lord.

How does it end? Forever. Forever. forever. Philippians 3.20 says our citizenship is in heaven. This earth is not our home. We understand that. While we're on this earth we have a shepherd to lead us to feed us to guide us to restore us to protect us to discipline us to feed us but this isn't home.
Home is in the house of the Lord. Home is where we are uniquely with the Lord forever. I've heard it said that you don't hang pictures on the walls of a greyhound bus for the same reason you don't let your heart settle for the things of this world.
It's just a temporary journey. So the shepherd leads the sheep and there's seasons of quiet rest and there's times of feeding and there's seasons of discipline and there's times of feeding there in the table land and there's time of having to go down into the valley so that you can go up on the high places and there's seasons of life just like you would understand the life of a shepherd and sheep.
[29:39] But the journey leads us to dwell in the house of the Lord forever. like a returning soldier drops his duffel bag when he sees his wife.

So when you see your shepherd it will be your only thought. I've got a bit of a strange habit.
I love to watch videos of surprise soldiers coming home. I love it. I just watch it and cry.
I just watch it and when my boys were growing up and Marcy was there I'd be in the kitchen in the office and they'd hear me watching videos and probably hear me sniff like are you watching videos of soldiers coming home again?
Yes. I just love it. And there's a lot of things I love about it but one of the things I love about it is when and there's one in particular that when this father soldier comes home into the classroom and his son stands up and he sees his dad and he just takes off and runs right into his arms.
[31:13] That little boy doesn't care about the clothes he's wearing or the nicer tennis shoes the buddy over here is wearing.

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He doesn't care about what gaming system he has at home. He's not worried about if he has a girlfriend or not. He's not worried about what grade he got in his math tests and what grade somebody else got.
He's not thinking about what's for lunch and how come somebody else got a bigger portion. In that moment he's got one singular focus and there is nothing of this world that means more to him. man. And when that soldier walks in the door and this little boy's father comes in and that little boy stands up and sees his dad if you said to that boy I'll give you ten thousand dollars to stay in your seat.
He ain't taking it. I'd show it to you on a video but we'd all be crying. The boy's not taking the money. he wants his father.
[32:33] And when you are home with the Lord you won't have any worries about things in this life that were light and momentary.

you will metaphorically drop your bag. And you will run to your shepherd.
And more in that moment than ever before you will say I'm finally home.
because the Lord is my home. He himself.
The shepherd he is my home because if I'm with him I'm home. home. If Marcy and I were to be on vacation and come home and find that our physical structure was wrecked by a tornado and destroyed in one sense you could say Michael and Marcy lost their home.
[34:05] I'd know what you meant. But it wouldn't be accurate. because if she's living and she's with me I have a home.

And as the Lord with my shepherd when we go to be with him you'll be at home because you'll be with him and the shepherd himself will be your home.
Until then all the days of your life the goodness and the mercy of God pursues you. That's your hope for today.
But on that day your home for all eternity will be the presence of the Savior himself.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and as if that's not enough and I will dwell in the house of the Lord not for a moment not for a season not for one million years forever forever so maybe you are in the valley today we don't take that lightly because it hurts to be in the valley but lift up your head our redemption draws nigh and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever because the
[36:15] Lord is our home Lord we are grateful for your word tonight and pray that it would bring encouragement to our hearts Lord I pray that tonight as we have sung of your mercy and read scripture together and heard our friends recite the stories of your faithfulness and your goodness and we have read from your word of the promise that we have both today and forever may we go forth from here rejoicing with our spirits lifted hopeful knowing that you are good and you are pursuing us with your mercy and you will one day welcome us home where we will be with you forever and forever you are truly worthy of all praise it's in the name of your son the Lord

Jesus we pray amen God bless your friends

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