

In God's House Forever

Psalm 23

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Dear congregation, we come this evening to verse 6, the last verse of Psalm 23.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

This Psalm began with a relationship. The Lord is my shepherd. And what blessings have flown, have come from this relationship. You have a summary of it in verse 1 when he says, "I shall not want." I shall not lack. Of course, he is not saying, "I will never feel lack." He's not saying, "I will never experience desolating times or experiences." But he is saying that the Lord will always give me what he sees is good for me. What a great comfort is here. With all the changing events of life God is ordering everything. He is working, as Romans 8:28 tells us, all things together for the good of his people, those who love him.

And the various things, as we have seen, that this Psalm continues to unpack from that pack. Verse 2 he says, "I will not lack rest. He makes me to lie down in green pasture. He leads me beside still waters. I shall not lack rest. I shall not lack guidance," verse 3. "He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness." Verse 4, "I shall not lack comfort. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. I shall not lack provision," he says in verse 5. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

And here in the end, he comes, as it were, back to what he had stated negatively in verse 1 and now states positively in verse 6. But yet he also says, "Really, I shall not lack a heavenly home." And how do you begin to explain what this is? How do you begin to describe and explain what it is to dwell in the house of the Lord forever? I suppose it is something like the spies going into the land of Canaan, the rest. What's it like? And how do you explain what it's like? You need to see the land. You need to see the grapes. You need to see what it's like. And really, they would have said, "You need to taste it for yourself." And they bring some grapes back, so they can taste a taste of the heavenly, of the Canaan. Well, may the Lord give us a taste of it this evening.

Well, what David is saying here in verse 6 is this. He is saying, “The goodness and the mercy of the shepherd brings Christ’s sheep all the way home. The goodness and mercy of the shepherd brings his sheep all the way home.” We have two points under that theme. Firstly, the relentless pursuit of goodness and mercy. The relentless pursuit of goodness and mercy. And secondly, the glorious prospect of the heavenly home. The glorious prospect of the heavenly home.

But firstly here, the relentless pursuit of goodness and mercy. We’re told here, when David says, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me,” we’re told that the good shepherd provides everything the sheep will ever need to bring them safely through this life. The good shepherd provides everything the sheep will ever need to bring them safely through this life. And really, it’s summed up in these two words goodness and mercy. The goodness, the goodwill of God, the lavish blessings that he gives to his people, giving me what I do not deserve. This strengthens God’s people. This strengthens the sheep. That’s what Psalm 27 says. “I would have fainted except I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” And we sang of it, didn’t we, in Psalm 65, Psalter 169, or 172 rather. “How blessed the man thou callest and bringest near to thee, that in thy courts forever his dwelling place may be. He shall within thy temple be satisfied with grace and filled with all the goodness of thy most holy place.”

And my dear friends, what goodness there is in the holy place. What goodness there is in the house of God. What goodness there is to you when the Word of God is opened, when you can sing it, and read it, and listen to it being preached, and preach it to others. What goodness is here. There is the one who is the good shepherd set before you who gave his life. There is all the goodness of God himself and his glorious gospel. And it is good because of the God who gives it. In the Belgic Confession, Article 1, Guido de Bres has a beautiful expression when he describes God. He says there, “We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual being which we call God, and that he is eternal and incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good.” And then he says, “And the overflowing fountain of all good.” It’s not just that he is good, but he is the overflowing fountain of all good. And when the Holy Spirit comes and convicts the world of sin, and convicts you and me of our badness, oh, what a blessing it is to see his goodness. “Goodness,” David says, “follows me.”

But then there is also mercy. Goodness and mercy. And if goodness is giving us what we do not deserve, then mercy is keeping us from what we do deserve. But the word here for mercy is the word that is translated often lovingkindness. It’s a hard word to translate, because it’s so packed with wonder and with glory, but lovingkindness seems to get close. That’s the word here for mercy. It’s what rescues me from all my sinfulness, from all my misery that that sinfulness brings. It’s what picks me up. Psalm 94:18, the psalmist says, “When my foot slipped, thy mercy, Oh Lord, held me up.” How does and what does that tell us but that this mercy is always close. How quickly do you fall? How quickly do you slip? When my foot slipped, not after. When my foot slipped. When I was on my way down, mercy was there, and mercy held me up. Mercy was close. Mercy was beside me. Mercy was already there. Mercy that does not depart. “The mountains shall depart,”

Isaiah says in chapter 54. “The hills will be removed, but my mercy, my lovingkindness, my chesed, shall not depart from you. Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed,’ saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” What a glorious thing this mercy of the Lord is, and how thankful God’s people are. How increasingly thankful they become through all their days for goodness and for mercy.

How could you ever come before God without mercy? How would you do? How would you fare if you had to approach God without mercy? What would you plead? What would you say? Without the unmerited, undeserved free grace of God to sinners, we sin every day. We break God’s law every day. We never love the Lord with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our strength, and all our mind. Every day we have to say, don’t we, “Lord, who will stand if you will mark iniquity?” Every day we have to say, “Lord, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Every day we have to say, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” But every day in the experience of God’s people, every day the Lord is coming saying, “There is forgiveness with me that I may be feared.” Every day he is coming and he is saying, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. And their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more forever.”

And so, the Christian life is a life of depending upon mercy, trusting in mercy, hoping in mercy, relying upon mercy, loving mercy. Psalm 13:5, at least in the version I grew up with, put it this way, “I have all my confidence, thy mercy set upon.” All my confidence is in mercy. And the Christian finds then that God is a God of mercy to me. That that mercy never turns the sinner away. This mercy never fails. It is never frustrated. It never disappoints. And then you see then these two things working together, goodness and mercy.

Douglas Macmillan, we have quoted him several times in this study, speaks of an old elder who was a shepherd and was trying to describe what this goodness and mercy was, and the old elder said something like this, “Well, this is what it’s like. You see these men, and they’re coming down from the mountain, and there are all these sheep behind them, and they are leading the sheep, the shepherds. And there are two sheep dogs,” he said, “and the names of the sheep dogs are Goodness and Mercy. And the sheep, a lot like sheep do, the sheep stray. And the sheep, the moment they think the shepherd’s not watching, off they go. The moment they are not looking at the shepherd, off they go. The moment they stop listening to the shepherd’s voice, off they go. And when one of them goes in this direction, Goodness comes round, circles around, and brings them in again. And when they go off in this direction, there is Mercy. And Mercy circles around, and brings them, and keeps them in the fold, keeps them close to the shepherd.” Goodness and mercy. Is it not the beautiful picture? That when you stray this way, there is goodness. When you stray that way, there is mercy working together. And you need both. The goodness of God bringing you back, leading you to repentance. The mercy of God holding you up, keeping you in the right path. Goodness following to provide. Mercy following to pardon.

You notice that’s the word it uses. “Goodness and mercy shall follow me.” Now, that word has a very military content. It’s the word that’s often used of a pursuit, or a chase,

or even a persecution. So, Joshua 8:24, you have Israel chasing Ai. They destroy them, and they chase them, it says, until they were consumed. That's the same word. Chasing the enemy. You read throughout the whole book of 1 Samuel of Saul pursuing David. Same word. It's the enemy looking to overtake, looking to destroy the enemy. There is a very military context with this word. It has even an aggressive idea. So, goodness and mercy are not tip toeing behind. They're not lagging behind. They're not inattentive. They're focused. They're alert. They're pursuing. They're chasing. They're doing everything they need to keep the sheep in. At times it may seem very rough with the sheep, but all to bring them in. But the wonderful thing here is you are not chased by an enemy. You are pursued by goodness and by mercy. They are around you. The good shepherd is ahead of you. Goodness and mercy are following behind and coming alongside. You're shut in. There is no way of escape, as it were. You are shut in by goodness and mercy to the good shepherd.

One person paraphrases it this way, "Your beauty and your love chase after me every day of my life." That's the right idea. But there is another difference between the pursuit of goodness and mercy and the pursuit of the likes of Saul after David and it's this: goodness and mercy never lose sight of the sheep. Saul lost sight of David. Saul couldn't find David. The enemy pursued, but he couldn't find. But goodness and mercy never lose sight of the sheep. You can't hide away in a cave and for goodness and mercy will not find you. Goodness and mercy never lose sight of the sheep. They watch over. They guard. They keep.

And I think there is something else that is suggested here that's very fitting to the life and to the experience of the child of God. It's this: the sheep are not following goodness and mercy. Goodness and mercy are following the sheep. The sheep are following the good shepherd. The sheep have their eyes, not on goodness and mercy, but on the good shepherd. They follow him. He leads them. We get ourselves into all kinds of trouble when we try to follow goodness and mercy, when we try to reverse the order. And people want to fill their lives perhaps with goodness and perhaps with mercy too, but doing it in a way that doesn't look to the shepherd. You can't reverse this order. Jesus says to his sheep, "Follow thou me." Goodness and mercy follow us when we follow the good shepherd.

The assurance of God's love does not come from seeking the assurance of God's love, at least not directly, but from seeking the shepherd. Peace of conscience does not come from pursuing peace of conscience, at least firstly, but from pursuing and looking to Christ. Goodness and mercy follow me. But then it says, "All the days of my life." And really, I think there is something incredibly beautiful and precious in these words. "All the days of my life." I think it suggests something of the shortness of life. You can speak about it in terms of not years or even months or weeks, but days. Short. I think it speaks too to the variety. There are different kinds of days, aren't there. There are sad days, and there are happy days. There are days where you are in the valley, and there are days when you are on the mountain top. There are days when you walk in the shadow of death. There are days when you are beside the still waters. But what this is telling you when he says, "All the days of my life," is telling you that the goodness and the mercy of God are

not temporary. They don't come and go. They're not there one moment and gone the next. They're not there on good days but gone on the bad. They're not fair weather friends. Not the goodness and mercy of God. They are there with you all the days of your life it says.

We don't know how long our days will be. We don't know what our days will be like. There may be much joy, and we hope that there is much joy in them for you. That's the first commandment with promise, children, that you would honor your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, that you may dwell in the land, that you may have long and happy days in the house of God. And that's our desire for you. But the Bible tells us that there are difficult days, and there are days where there can be great devastation for God's people, and great sadness for God's people. But what this is saying is that whatever the days are like, whatever the future holds, whatever the joy, whatever the sorrow, whatever the trial and temptation, or the triumph of the faith of God's people, this is the one eternal constant: goodness and mercy follow all the days of my life. It is a relentless pursuit.

And you see the confidence David has in that word surely. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." And he says, "I will dwell." What confidence he has. No, he doesn't get this confidence from looking at himself. He gets this confidence from looking at the good shepherd. This is who he is. This is what he's like. This is what he has done for me. He is the one who has led me by the still waters and the green pasture. He is the one who is with me in all these valleys and all these difficulties. He's the one who prepared for me time after time a table in the presence of mine enemies. He's the one who was faithful to me when I strayed from him. This is who he is. This is what he's like. And so, this is the confidence he gets from looking at the good shepherd. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. What a glorious confidence to have. What a blessed assurance to have. To be able to say, looking to the shepherd, "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me."

But the word surely, some very reliable commentators tell us, can also mean only. Only goodness and mercy. And that is true as well. And really, it would amount to the same thing. But really, you could see David here saying, you can hear the believer saying, "Only goodness and mercy." It seems to me something incredibly beautiful to be able to say at the end of your days and through your days. Only goodness and mercy. What's your confidence? What's your hope? What are you going to say when you pass through that final Jordan, that final valley of the Shadow of Death. Where is your hope? What's your confidence? What's your hope for the future? What's your expectation for a never ending eternity? Only goodness and mercy. Only goodness and mercy. "This explains everything," the Psalmist says. "This explains my life."

My dear friend, this evening let me ask you what explains your life? What explains where you have come from? What explains where you are now? What explains where you are going? What explains the deepest longing, and the deepest hopes, and the deepest desires of your soul? What explains you? Would you say, "Only goodness and mercy?" That's

what David says. This is how I am still here. That's why I'm still standing after a life of slipping. That's my hope. This explains everything. Only goodness and mercy.

Ask it this way. Where would you be without it? You look back at your life. If you were to remove goodness and mercy from your life, what would be left? What would you see? Would you see, would you not see one long trail of hopelessness, and sin, and misery, and helplessness? But what would you see as you look forward? That from your future you would remove goodness and mercy? What would you see but hopelessness and hell at last? Oh, what a blessed thing to say, "Surely, only goodness and mercy." No other explanation. No other hope.

The good shepherd provides everything the sheep ever need in this life. What do you need this evening? Why don't you prove the good shepherd? We sang that verse last Lord's day from 431. "Most abundant good if thou wouldst but prove me. Even the choicest food, honey from the comb, wheat the finest known, I would pour upon thee." Guido de Bres was right. He is the overflowing fountain of all good. I would pour it upon you if you would prove me. Young people, won't you go to him this evening and prove him? The great promises that he has. Are you afraid here this evening? Do you have a sense of danger? Prove him. Because he is the one who said in Isaiah 43, "Fear not, for I am with thee. I have called thee by thy name. I have redeemed thee. I have called by thy name. Thou art mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you go through the floods, they won't overwhelm you. And through the fire it, it won't burn you." Do you need direction? Do you need guidance? Prove him. Prove what Proverbs 3:6 says. "In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct your path." Prove him. Do you feel lonely? Have you lost a loved one? Lost one near and dear to you? Prove him. He says in Psalm 9:18, "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish." He says in Jeremiah 49:11, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." Prove him.

Are you here mourning over sin saying, "Sin is so hard. Sin is so strong." Prove him. "Come now, let us reason together," saith the Lord. "Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool." Prove him. Are you worried about the future? Prove him. Zion said, Isaiah 49:14. "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" the Lord says. "They may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Do you fear your prayers are not heard and answered? Well, prove him. Psalm 50:15. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." So, prove him. Most abundant good if thou wouldst but prove me. Prove him.

Let's move here secondly though to see this glorious prospect of the heavenly home. We've seen here in the first point that the good shepherd provides everything the sheep ever need in this life. But here, the good shepherd also provides an eternal home for me in heaven. We said right at the beginning of this series in Psalm 23 that we often

associate this Psalm with youth, because children learn it. Children know it. But we also associate it with weddings and times of happiness, but we also associate it, at least we certainly used to associate it, with funerals, the time when somebody would die. People would know it. It's a very comforting Psalm, and so it would often be sung at funerals. But we often said that this Psalm, we ought not simply to associate it with youth, with happiness of life, with death at a funeral. We also ought to associate it with God's house forevermore. This is a Psalm that stretches far far beyond the song of a funeral. God's house forevermore.

Now, that's a very beautiful phrase. It's certainly beautiful to the people of God. The house of God. The house of the Lord. It's the place where the Lord is to be found. Now, if you look at these Psalms from Psalm 23 to 27, we don't have time to look at them all, but you see these, if not references, then at least allusions to the house of the Lord. It's there in Psalm 23. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 24 speaks about the character of those who, of the one who will ascend into the house of the Lord. "Who will ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who will stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart and has not lifted up his soul nor sworn deceitfully." Psalm 26:8 says, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house." This is a mark of grace. This is what characterizes the sheep. They love, they love the habitation of the house of the Lord, the "place where thine honor dwelleth."

And as we sang in Psalm 27, Psalm 27:4 speaks about the desire, the hope that's there. It's not just coming into a building. It's not even coming into the gathering of God's people, as wonderful as that is, and that indeed is what church is, but it's to get the presence of the Lord. Psalm 27 says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life," it doesn't stop there. It says, "To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple."

So, this house of the Lord is certainly a reference to the place of the worship, the place God's people love, the place of which they say, "One day in your courts is better than a thousand in the tents of sin." But it's the place where they seek and they desire communion with God. They're not simply gathering as a custom. They want to enter in, like Hebrews says. They want to enter in to the reality. They want to get into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. They come to this place in their desire. They come in their prayers, and they desire to see the beauty of the Lord. They desire to fellowship with God.

Remember Nathaniel sitting under that tree, and Jesus comes to him at the end of John 1, and he says, "Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." And, "I saw you," he says, "Nathaniel. I saw you when you were under the tree." And he says, "And you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." And whatever else that tells us, it tells us that there is an open heaven in the person of Jesus Christ to sinners." That there is an ascending and a descending, a going up and a coming down, an interaction. We speak of the dialogical nature of worship, the back and forth. We offer praises to God. He comes and speaks his word to us. We reply to him in praise. He speaks peace and mercy to us. There is this coming and going, this up and

down from heaven to earth so that you can sit under a fig tree, so that you can sit in your own home, in your own house, and our dear shut-ins too can be there, and there can be an ascending and a descending from heaven itself. This is the house of the Lord in reality. It's not in a building. It's in communion with the living God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in generations all.

And this is the purpose of salvation. This is the reason God redeems. This is why he took the people of Israel out of Egypt in that great act of redemption in the Old Testament, the exodus. That's why he did it. To bring a people to worship him, so that he would dwell with them, and they would dwell with him. And that's the song that Moses gives in Exodus 15. Exodus 15:13, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." That's why I took you out of Egypt. That's why I sent the plagues. That's why I gave the blood on that final night. That's why I took you out. That's why I opened up the Red Sea. To bring you to my holy habitation, to bring you into my house. And verse 17 of the same chapter, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord." That's where they're coming. To the place where God is.

And yet, there is something more wonderful, it seems to me at least, than the fact that they will dwell with God. It's the fact that God desires to dwell with them. I didn't redeem you simply to bring you to myself. It was so that I would come and dwell with you! And so, when Moses is about to make the tabernacle and God is giving all these instructions beginning in Exodus 25, this is what the Lord says, "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell with them." That's why the Lord redeems.

And then you have this picture of God's house in this Psalm that really pictures, yes, the worship here, yes, the ascending and descending in worship here, but ultimately heaven above. And so, in such a wonderful way, the end of this Psalm is not the end. The end of this Psalm is really the beginning. The end of this Psalm is the arrival. The end of this Psalm is the beginning of the everlasting journey. You taste it here below, but there you have a fullness. There is the place where there is no more wandering. There is the place where there are no more valleys, and no more temptations, and no more wolf that seeks to destroy and to scatter the sheep. There is the place where there is no more feeding in the presence of your enemies. There is the place where there is no more slipping, and there is no more falling, and there is no more straying, and there is no more journeying, and there is no more need for the relentless pursuit of goodness and mercy.

There is the place that Revelation so beautifully tells us when it says, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" Revelation 7:13 "Whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them." He's still the good shepherd. "He

shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

There’s a sense, isn’t there, in which it is true that the sheep all their days are looking at the good shepherd. And there is a sense in which at least they’re looking at the back of the good shepherd. They’re following him. They’re following his voice. He’s leading them towards heaven. And the sheep are following behind, and they see him, yes, by faith darkly it seems. But here is the place where it’s as though the shepherd turns around. “When I in righteousness at last thy glorious face shall see. When all the weary night is passed, and I awake with thee.” And what’s interesting is when you continue in Revelation and come to chapter 21 verse 22 after reading here in Psalm 23 that we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever that Revelation 21:22 says, John says, “I saw no temple there.” It’s almost like he’s saying, “I saw no house of the Lord there. I saw no temple there.” How do you make sense of this? Well, the reason is the Lamb is the temple. The reason is it’s not a place so much as it is a person. The Lamb is the temple. “I saw no temple therein,” no physical temple, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” No death’s dark veil here! No darkness here. The Lamb is the light of it.

And there in heaven, all the glory of God that is shining in the face of Jesus Christ, the face of the good shepherd. He is all the glory of Emmanuel’s land. That’s the most glorious, that’s the most wonderful, that’s the most attractive thing about heaven. Like Rutherford says, “Take Christ out of heaven, and it will become the direful land of death to me.” But the presence of God, the presence of the Lamb, the good shepherd leading and feeding forever.

And you see how it says, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” There is so much movement in Psalm 23. There is lying down. There is rising up. There is moving again, and then sitting down, and then going again. There is journeys down through the valley, back up the countryside. There is feeding here, feeding there. There is leading in green pasture. Then there is valleys of the shadow of death again. But here it says, “I will dwell.” There is no shadow here. There is no separation here. I will dwell here. No one will say, “Rise, let us go somewhere else.” I will dwell here. I will dwell with the good shepherd who loved me and gave himself for me.

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. That’s a word we have to think about. There is a forever. That Psalm that I quoted from Psalter 31, Psalm 17, before it says, “But I in righteousness at last thy glorious face will see.” The stanza before it says this, “Defend me from the men of pride whose portion is below, who with life’s treasures satisfied no better portion, no. They with earth’s joys and wealth contend, must leave them all when life is spent.” But here the psalmist says, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Literally, it’s to the length of days. He said already, “Goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.” Few days. Trouble in these days. But here, I will dwell in the glorious house of God to length of days, an unending day, a nightless day. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Now, that implies too this, I think. It implies a full understanding of what it means to be a son of God in Christ. That's something God's people learn a little of here. But to understand what it means to be a son of God is, as John Murray says, "the apex of redemption." It doesn't get higher than that. And the reason we say that here is because there is the permanence that's implied here. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Remember recently we looked at John 8:35 where Jesus says, "The servant does not abide in the house forever." The Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, he abides forever. And if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. You will abide forever. That's sonship. A permanent place in the Father's home, and family, and love.

Well, what a confession of faith Psalm 23 is. What rest it brings to the soul when it can look forward to an eternity in the presence of God, an eternity in that place of worship. And in conclusion here, does it not make all the difference in the world which side of the door you are on? Which side of Christ you are on? He says, "I am the door. By me if anyone enters in he will go in and out and find pasture." It makes all the difference in the world what side of that door you are on. If you would be happy, you must set your hope in this shepherd. You must be able to, like that little boy we heard about recently, put your hand on the fourth finger and the word my. The Lord is my shepherd. That's where happiness, that's where blessedness is. And we say then, how blessed the believer in Christ is. How blessed are the sheep. God is for him. Christ is the Savior. The Holy Spirit is the comforter. The world is his. Heaven is his. Death is his. All things are theirs.

When we conclude here, we can say too that love for God's house is a sure sign of grace, while indifference to God's house is a sure sign of the goat. "One thing I have desired of the Lord. That I will seek after. That I would dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." You will not, you cannot dwell in the house of the Lord forever if you don't understand what it is to dwell here, to love the worship here.

As we conclude, we also have to say, "What a great difference there is between the sheep and the goats." God has made the difference. Is it not the great difference to be led by Christ and to be led by Satan at his will? If you are unconverted here, will you not be saved? Will you not have this shepherd. If you're here this evening, and you've been listening to these sermons of Christ as the good shepherd, and you are yet wandering on the mountains of vanity, will you not look to, will you not take the Lord as your shepherd? What need you have, and what increasing needs you have, but will you not turn to him? Will you not listen to him? Listen to him! "Follow thou me. I am the good shepherd. I am the door. There is goodness and mercy for you."

What a Savior Jesus is. There is no shepherd like him. This ought to make us worship. How worthy he is of praise! The goodness and mercy of the shepherd brings Christ's people all the way home. It means he provides everything they need in this life. It means that there is an eternal home for them in heaven, and David has as much confidence in the one as the other. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and surely I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.

Let us pray.