

Psalm 23 - Goodness and Mercy Shall Follow Me

Both goodness and mercy frequently refer to covenant benefits. The Hebrew for this phrase means befriending. The appeal to God's "(unfailing) love, kindness, mercy" is frequent in the OT. It summarizes all that the Lord pledged to show to Israel as well as to David and his dynasty and to us.

The dictionary defines "goodness" as follows: The state or quality of being good; morally excellent and have great virtue; kindness; generosity; a substitute for God.

Study these passages and see how they describe goodness:

- Exodus 34:6 *"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."*
- Psalm 33:5 *"He loves righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD."*
- 1 Kings 8:66 *"On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the LORD had done for his servant David and his people Israel."*

To be merciful means to have pity. God has pity and compassion on us in our weakness and distress. He is not a cruel master as many heathen imagine Him to be. He is never cold or indifferent to us. Psalm 145:9 says, *"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made."* He has a warm heart for us and His mercies are new every morning" (Lam. 3:22-23).

Another word for "mercy" is "love." In 1 John 4:8 we find God as *"God is love."* The love God has for us is best exemplified in Jesus. Jesus loved us so much that He left the comforts of heaven to come to earth and live in our miserable sin-filled world. Jesus loved us so much that He suffered humiliating indignities by Pilate and his soldiers. Jesus loved us so much that He died an innocent death to take away our sins. Jesus loved us so much that He rose from the dead and constantly continues to intercede for us.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you for your never ending goodness and mercy. Never let me take for granted the great love that you shared in the person of Jesus. Help me to show your goodness and mercy to others as long I live. Amen.