

“Hope”

Psalm 23:6

Which of these would you purchase for \$100?

- Bottle of “Wealth”
- Bottle of “Health”
- Bottle of “Hope”

What if I offered you the bottle of Hope for the super low price of FREE FOREVER?

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 Forever.

Let’s stand together and say the Shepherd’s Psalm together today:

Psalm 23:1-6 (NKJV)

- 1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2] He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.
- 3] He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.
- 4] Yea, 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.
- 5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.
- 6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Thank you, be seated.

So far we’ve seen in Psalm 23 some amazing facts:

- God shepherds me. (v. 1)
- God settles me. (v. 2)
- God leads me. (v. 2-3)
- God restores me. (v. 3)
- God comforts me. (v. 4)
- God celebrates with me. (v. 5)

Today, we see that God offers me hope, forever, for free!

Four Ways to Experience a Hope that Lasts Forever

1. Be certain.

“Surely.” Hope is easier when we’re certain in our faith.

Mark 9:21-24, (a demon-possessed boy is brought to Jesus) ²¹ “How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father. He replied, “Since he was a little boy. ²² The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, **if you can.**” ²³ “What do you mean, ‘**If I can**’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” ²⁴ The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”

PROMO: Jason is going to be leading a class that will help those of us who want help overcoming our unbelief ... Evidence that Demands a Verdict is available in the foyer for \$10, and you may sign up for the class on the information table. More details are to come, but it’s going to be a great opportunity to discuss some ways to become more certain in our faith.

More certain = more hope! “SURELY goodness and mercy will follow me ...”

2. Be good.

“Goodness ... shall follow me.”

Could this “Goodness and mercy” be a reference to the Good Shepherd? The Shepherd leads and follows the sheep. You’ll never be away from Jesus’ GOOD and MERCIFUL influence.

But, I think this goes beyond Jesus’ presence in our lives ... for goodness to produce *hope* in my life I need to be *personally* good, acting with kindness and civility toward others.

Matthew 12:33, 35, Jesus said, “A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad ... ³⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.”

Psalm 1 talks about the person who pursues God with his whole heart. Verse 3 interests me: Psalm 1:3, “They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.”

Compare that with Psalm 23:2, “He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.”

Goodness flows from the relationship we have with the Good Shepherd. It’s not rocket science people!

3. Be merciful.

“... Mercy shall follow me.”

Matthew 5:7, Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

MERCY: “To have compassion for the miserable.” Mercy finds its root in how God responds to peoples’ hurt and ineptitude. We stumble and fall, and God doesn’t “kick us while we’re down” ... instead, He offers a hand up. The opposite of mercy is judgment. If you want more hope in your life, choose mercy.

NOTE: How long does the goodness and mercy last? “... all the days of my life.” For the believer in Jesus there are no gaps in God’s goodness and mercy. ALL THE DAYS. It’s not like cell phone service that drops in and out ... God is always “in.”

4. Be Ready.

“And I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.”

Are you CERTAIN that you will go to Heaven when you die? The key is the first phrase of this Psalm, “The Lord is my shepherd.”

John 20:30-31, And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

A closing prayer ... “Dear God, be merciful and good to us, your flock so that we might have hope. In Jesus’ name, amen.”