

SERIES: LIVING THE GOOD LIFE
PART 11: NO NEED TO FEAR YOUR FUTURE

Welcome to CVCHURCH. We are a multicultural and an intergenerational church. If you are our guest we're so pleased that you are our guest today and trust you will feel like you are a part of our family—God's family. Today is week 11 in our 12 week verse by verse study of the most famous chapter in the entire Bible: Psalm 23. This psalm is really all about the good of God towards you. This psalm is all about God's commitment to you. God tells us the 12 actions He takes towards us based on how good of a God He is to us. If you have missed any part of this series, you can simply go on our website and listen to the service. I have more people telling me that, when they have to miss a service, they faithfully go back and catch the teaching. Since we only have two more weeks in this series I want you to read all six verses with me out loud. As we read this chapter emphasize with the 12 times it talks about God and what He does for you. Let's begin, "**The Lord is my Shepherd; I have all that I need. 2 He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams. 3 He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to His name. 4 Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for You are close beside me. Your rod and Your staff protect and comfort me. 5 You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. 6 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."** I want you to notice that the psalm begins with "the Lord is my Shepherd," and it ends with "I will live in the house of the Lord forever." This psalm, we having been looking at for 10 weeks so far, is all about God and about His goodness to you. Today, we're going to focus on 23:6a, "**Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life.**" On the 29th, we will finish this marvelous series by looking at the rest of this verse: "**I will live in the house of the Lord forever,**" and I will teach on "**Heaven: God's Eternal Goodness to You.**"

If you have difficulty with the future you can get anxious and fearful, because you realize that you really can't control every aspect of what will happen to you in the future. When you get nervous or anxious about your future you can quote this verse, because God gives you three reasons why you never need to fear the future, if you have committed your life to Jesus Christ and you have confessed Him as your Lord and Savior.

I. Why I don't need to fear the future

A. Because God's goodness is watching over me

I don't need to fear the future, because God is personally watching over me. Did you know because of God's goodness He is always paying attention to you? He doesn't miss a second of your life. He knows your highs and lows, the good and the bad, and the ups and downs of your life. He's paying attention to you right now. Psalm 145:20 says, "**The Lord watches over all who love Him.**" If you love Him, if you have surrendered your life to Him, you can have this personal awareness and confidence that God sees you; He knows what you're feeling and what you're going through so you don't have to fear your future. God's goodness is watching over you personally right now. You are protected from thousands of things you don't even know you missed, accidents that you could have gotten into, problems that you could've created, decisions that you made, and God said, "No, we're not going to let the consequences of that one happen right now."

How does God watch over and protect you? One of the ways, and this might shock you, is angels. Angels are real, and I don't have time to do an entire teaching on them today, but they exist. There are a lot of myths in our culture about angles. When you die, you do not become an angel. Angels are spiritual beings without true physical bodies. Though they don't have physical bodies, they do have personalities. They are created beings by God. The Bible says that angels possess intelligence, show emotion, and exercise will. Their knowledge is limited, but they do seem to have greater knowledge than us humans. The Bible says they praise God, they worship God. They serve God.

They appear before God. They are instruments of God's judgments. They bring answers to prayer. They aid in winning people to Christ. They encourage in times of danger. Hebrews 1:14 says, "**Angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.**" Angels not only care for us and lead us, but they have been given the assignment to protect us. In Daniel 6:22 when Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, King Darius ran to the pit to see what happened to Daniel, and Daniel says, "My God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions." In Psalm 91:9-11 says, "**If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, 10 no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. 11 For He will order His angels to protect you wherever you go.**" I just read a story recently that has really impacted me on how far God will go to demonstrate that, in His goodness, He is watching over us all of the time. Several years ago, a pastor friend of mine said a young woman, who was pregnant, came to him for some guidance. She had discovered that she was carrying a Downs Syndrome child. She was debating whether she should terminate her pregnancy and get an abortion, or was she going to keep the baby, or give the child up for adoption or should she raise the child? She was very fearful and frightened, and it was understandable. This pastor showed her some Scripture from Psalm 139 where God says, "I planned you before you were born." God planned every day of your life when you were in your mother's womb. Church, **Abortion short-circuits the will of God.** You are conceived because God wanted you created and wanted to show you to the world. You are a person, because He created you and thought you up from the moment He thought you up. She made the decision she was going to keep the baby.

So when the pastor went home, he thought he would write her a note of encouragement, so he took out a postcard and wrote some of the verses he had discussed with her and wrote a prayer with some encouragement restating some of the things he had said to her when he saw her. He put the woman's address on it and mailed it and the post office sent it to the wrong address so she didn't get it, but the woman who did get it read it because it was a postcard, and she decided to hand deliver it to the other woman. She looks up the address on the card, and she goes to the woman's house, knocks on the door

and said, “Your pastor wrote you a word of encouragement, but it came to me, and I’m going to give it to you right now, but I want you to know, I have a Downs Syndrome child, and I will help you with your child if you want.” This pastor writes that he thinks an angel rerouted that postcard because what are the chances that a card about a Downs Syndrome child went to another woman who has a child like this and can help this woman. You don’t even know, loved friend, how many times you’ve been helped by the goodness of God, but the Bible says, **“Surely Your goodness will pursue me all the days of my life.”** Hear me, loved ones—the Bible says God is the only one that can take the bad things that have happened and will happen to you and bring good out of it for you. Romans 8:28 says this **“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.”** When you’re going through a bad moment it is hard to see how anything good can come out of it, but hear me, church—God is working in ways you don’t see, but you don’t have to fear your future because the Bible says that God’s goodness is watching over you, and He is pursuing you with His goodness.

B. Because God’s mercy is working in me

Psalm 23:6b says, **“Surely Your mercy (unfailing love) will pursue me all the days of my life.”** This is incredible, church. While goodness is watching over me and working around me, Mercy, God’s grace and unfailing love, is working in me at that moment. The Bible says surely not just goodness, but His mercy and unfailing love will follow me all the days of my life. What is mercy? One definition of mercy is grace, God’s unmerited favor in action in my life. When I say God’s grace is working in me, I am really talking about His mercy. Isaiah 60:10 says, “I will now have mercy on you through my grace.” Goodness is when God gives me what I don’t deserve. Mercy is when God doesn’t give me what I deserve. Why do I need mercy? I need mercy because I am fatally wounded and broken. We all make mistakes. We all sin. I need forgiveness all the time. You need forgiveness all the time. This is why Psalm 23 is Good News to us. David writes, “Surely God’s goodness and unfailing love and mercy pursue me all the days of my life.” God doesn’t just hang around, or He is in

your neighborhood, but He's pursuing you every moment of every day. His pursuit is purposeful and intentional. He pursues you with His goodness, His grace, His mercy, and His unfailing love. Just what are the results of having God pursue you daily with His goodness and unfailing love and mercy? I'm glad you asked. Psalm 103:2-11 lays it out very clearly. **"Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things He does for me. 3 He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. 4 He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. 5 He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagles! 6 The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly.... 8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. 9 He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. 10 He does not punish us for all our sins; He does not deal harshly with us as we deserve. For His unfailing love (grace) toward those who fear Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. 12 He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. 13 The Lord is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him."** This is what it means that your Good God, your gracious and loving Father pursues you with the intent of blessing you. He desires to give your life meaning, value, strength, hope, anticipation, and excitement for your life. Since this is true that God's mercy is following you every day, it means you can come to God with any problem, fault, flaw, or failure because He is available to you 24/7. Hebrews 4:16 says, **"So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."** Come on, somebody. It doesn't get any better than this. You don't need to fear the future, because God's goodness is watching over you, and God's mercy is working in you. The third reason I don't need to fear my future is...

C. Because God's glory is waiting for me

We will look at this verse in more detail on the 29th when I teach on **"Heaven: God's Eternal Goodness to You."** David writes, **"And I will live in the house of the Lord forever."** If you're taking notes, please circle the "and." "And" is

used mostly as a conjunction; it connects words, phrases, clauses and ideas. This little word connects today with tomorrow. In other words, even after you've lived a life of blessing, goodness and mercy, this life is not the end. Friends, this psalm is building to a crescendo. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." This is a huge ending. This means I don't have to fear death, and that's the number one fear that most people have, because death is not the end. It's a transition. It's a transfer. If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, and you're living for His purposes and His plans, you're going to live the rest of your life in heaven with God. God saves the best for last. If you love and know Jesus, if the Lord is your Shepherd, it just gets better and better, because even if I have a tough life here on earth, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever, where Revelation 21:3-5 says, **"Look, God's home is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."**

II. How to live fully and fearlessly into your future

I want to detail for you now with the time we have left the three implications that are true and real for us, because God's goodness is watching over us, and His mercy is working in us, and we have God's glory waiting for us. Here is how living fearless about our future can change how we live now and the kind of impact we can have on our families, neighborhood and our culture.

A. I choose to be grateful and generous, BECAUSE GOD IS SO GOOD TO ME

God is generous with me, so God desires that I am grateful and generous with others the rest of my life. My first response to God's goodness and God's mercy is to be one of gratitude, which is to lead to generosity. Let's look at some Scriptures that drive this point home. Psalm 118:29 says, **"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His faithful love endures forever."** The Psalmist says, because God's goodness and mercy will never run out, He deserves our continual praises and thanks. It is our loving response to God's goodness and

mercy that will cause us to develop an attitude of gratitude. When I ignore God's goodness, patience, mercy and grace this is where my selfishness takes over. To praise God with thanksgiving means I am simply humbly acknowledging all that God is and what He has done and does for me, and my natural response is to be thankful. Loved ones, if people do things for you and you're not thanking them, your heart is getting hard, and you're in trouble. Do you have panic attacks? Do you have fear? Do you have anxiety in your life? Do you fear the future? Do you worry? Please hear me. You cannot be grateful and fearful at the same time. It's impossible. Where you're grateful and praising God, you can't feel fearful. When you're fearful or anxious, you're not being grateful at that moment. They oppose each other.

B. I choose to be gracious and forgiving, BECAUSE GOD IS SO GRACIOUS WITH ME

The more gracious you are with other people the less fearful you're going to be in life. Grace and fear don't reside in the same brain. God desires you to pass on the good things. Here's what the Bible says in Ephesians 4:31-32, **“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”** God is so forgiving of you and me—who are we to hold back forgiveness from others? Who do you refuse to forgive? Who do you refuse to let off the hook? Who do you refuse to cancel the debt they owe you? To be gracious to another person means to truly love them by forgiving them. The more gracious you are, the more you're learning to love them, and the Bible says that love is an antidote to fear. 1 John 4:18-19 says, **“Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love. 19 We love each other because He loved us first.”** Fear means I don't think God will be merciful or graceful. He's going to punish me. Fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears has not matured in love. Every time you invite God's love in the front door of your life, fear goes out the back door. Why? Because fear is focused on you, and love is focused on God and others. How

do you know when someone doesn't understand the grace of God? They're not gracious with other people. Ungracious people are ungraced people. They don't realize how much they've been forgiven. So they want to hold it over others. If I don't feel forgiven, if I feel guilty, and ashamed I will be more prone to wanting you to feel those same emotions I am feeling. But if I remember how much God has forgiven me, and how much God has washed away my guilt and shame, I can be gentler with you. I can give you room and cut you some slack. Any time you see someone who's ungracious, they're walking around with a ton of guilt. I get to stay grateful and generous because God is so good, and I get the privilege of being gracious to everyone because God is gracious to me.

C. I choose to live my life for God's glory, BECAUSE HE WILL SHARE HIS GLORY WITH ME

If you have surrendered your life to Jesus, one of your greatest purposes in life is to live your life for the glory of God. One day, the Bible says when Jesus returns for His Bride, His Church, His family, He will share His glory with you. Jesus says it this way in Matthew 5:14-16 **“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”** As we do the works of Jesus in our neighborhoods, cities, schools, and our sphere of influence, those around us will give glory to our Father. You do your best living for God, and He says that brings glory to God. What happens when you do that? What happens when you live for God's glory? It opens up your life to more of God's goodness, to more of God's mercy and to more of God's grace. 2 Peter 1:3 says it this way, **“By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the One who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence.”** Because of God's goodness and mercy, He gives you everything you need—you have it all to live a godly life. One day, you will share in God's goodness and God's glory. As I close this morning (this afternoon), when you think about the future, when you think about the next six

months, the next year or the next 10 years and the rest of your life, how do you see it? Is your mind filled with doubt, confusion, anxiety, fear, or worry? If it is, that simply means you're not focused on the last verse of Psalm 23 which says, **“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.”** It is your antidote to the three biggest fears about the future. You truly do have a choice when it comes to your future. You don't get to choose what's going to happen to you the rest of your life, but you do get to choose how you will respond. You can face the future as a cynic, as a critic, as a pessimist or as a doubter. You can face the future experiencing the worst and expecting the worst. You can face it being ungrateful. You can face it being stingy. You can face your future being ungracious to other people, and you can live for the glory of yourself. Or you can face the future with gratitude, generosity, graciousness, and for the glory of God. Which one do you think will make you happier? Which one do you think will make you more successful? Which one do you think will bring the smile of God and the reward of heaven? It's amazing how different you think, feel and act about life when you begin to live in and through the goodness of God, and you begin to live for the goodness of God. I would encourage you to go back and listen to all 12 of these teachings so you can identify strongly with these 12 expressions of God's goodness for you. But they're not for everyone. Goodness and mercy don't follow everyone. They only follow the person who can say, “The Lord (Jesus) is my Shepherd.” So who's your shepherd? This is the question of the hour. Who's your shepherd? Are you your own shepherd? Who's leading your life? Who's managing your life? Who's the boss of your life? Who is your shepherd? If you're saying, “I'm my shepherd,” goodness and mercy aren't following you, and you will not dwell in the house of the Lord forever. This is only for people who say, “I'm in Jesus' flock. I'm a sheep in God's family. The Lord is my Shepherd because I have surrender and given my life to Jesus Christ. He is My Lord. He is My Savior. He is my Shepherd.

Some of you have been attending CVCHURCH for weeks, months, maybe even years. Some of you have been listening to me online, but you have never stopped and acknowledged your sins and confessed them to Jesus. You have not stepped over the line yet and believed that Jesus Christ is God's Son, and it

is the Father that raised Him from the dead so your sins could be forgiven, and you could have a relationship with Father God. You haven't claimed His gift of salvation, yet. Loved friends, I want to encourage you to do that right now. You simply need to say, "Jesus I acknowledge my sins and rebellion to you. I believe that You are God's Son and that You died for me so that I could respond to your love, forgiveness and acceptance of who I am. I claim Your salvation now. I dedicate myself to start living my life for You, Your purposes, plan and glory for my life." Then you say, "God, I humbly ask You to reserve a home for me in heaven, because Jesus died to make that possible. As much as I know how, I ask You, Jesus, to come into my life and transform me now. I want to be a person who's grateful, generous, gracious and lives my life for Your glory and honor. Thank You for loving me. In Jesus name."