

“You’re Being Followed”

Easter Sunday

Psalm 23:6

John 20: 1-2, 11-20

April 16, 2017

Sermon Series: The Guided Tour: A Walk Through the 23rd Psalm

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THE BIG IDEA

The conclusion of this series focused on the final verse of the Psalm which brought our attention to the message of Easter. God pursues our lives with “goodness and mercy” that follow us. God is also intent on delivering and leading us into the “house of the Lord forever.” The goodness and mercy we receive today are foretastes of the kingdom of God to come. Pastor Henry finalized his message by having us dwell on the resurrection appearance in John 20: 1-2, 11-20 where Jesus rises from the grave and pursues his disciples with the message that he delivered on his promise that he will rise again. Pastor Henry also repeated the following quote by Tim Keller who famously paraphrases these words by the theologian Jonathan Edwards, “(Because of Christ), our bad things turn out for good. Our good things can never be lost. And the best is yet to come.” This captures the essence of Christian hope. It punctuates that this life (filled with goodness and mercy as well as disappointment and heartache) does not have the final word. Jesus’s triumph over the grave means evil has been defeated and that those who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, receive eternal life. In the meantime, God’s kingdom is breaking in through Jesus Christ in this life and by his Spirit we are led into the life eternal.

GETTING STARTED

Share a favorite memory you have of Easter growing up. It could draw upon the more secular aspect of the holiday (the Easter Bunny, egg hunts and celebrations with family) or something you took away from a worship experience. Tell people in your group why it impacted you and how it was meaningful.

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, read **all of Psalm 23**, giving special attention to verse 6 as the conclusion of the Psalm's meaning.

1. Based on the entire reading of the Psalm, share your thoughts on the idea that life is both "the journey and the destination." How is this captured in this passage start to finish? Why are both important? Consider how the 6th verse drives this home where it says "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life AND I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

There are some secular notions such as in pop songs that say "life's a journey, not a destination." Why is believing that solely not a Christian ideal. On the other hand, what's the hazard of being too future oriented and not dwelling on how God is at work in the present?

Take time discussing this point.

2. What's the difference between "goodness and mercy" and why do we need both in our lives?

Consider Pastor Henry's example of his trip to Disneyland with family and the "good" of some moments shared and how such times can be viewed as "invitations toward knowing better the grace of God."

Reflect also on the illustration of the evolution of the "old green coat" and how it was passed on from Elizabeth Henson in 1955 to her son Jim who would then take this throwaway and shape and create it into what would become the cultural icon Kermit the Frog. God's mercy brings to life that which is old by his compassion and grace.

3. The final phrase "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" describes our destination and it highlights the primary origin of our joy and hope in Christ. There's joy because life in Christ is eternal. There's hope because this life does not have the final word.

What does that mean to you? What is your experience of joy and hope in the Christian faith? Consider that joy means more than mere elation but rather it gets to the deep contentment we have in Christ.

4. Between John 20: 1-15 and Psalm 23: 6 we witness that Jesus Christ delivers on his promises for "goodness and mercy" as well as eternal life." Share any thoughts you have on the promises of God and how you've experienced all three of this in one way or another.

In your answer, think on what was said in the message about goodness, mercy and eternal life as all having their origins in the kingdom of heaven and that God's kingdom is breaking in through Jesus.

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

5. Celebrate Easter again this week. There is not higher point in the Christian year than our proclamation and celebration that Jesus Christ rose from the grave and is therefore Lord and Savior. As the biblical scholar N.T. Wright as well as other credible authors of the Christian faith have said “The resurrection IS Christianity.”

Christ is risen. Celebrate his victory over death and reign over this life by doing something meaningful and fun that brings joy.

THE “EXTRA-MILE”

See # 5 and repeat!

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

To whom do you wish to pray for to know the good news of the resurrection of Christ? Share a name or two of a person whom you’d like to experience greater hope and joy by knowing Christ.