

MESSAGE

SUSTAINING THE GOOD LIFE

JULY 26/27, 2014 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON | PSALM 23:4-6 | THE GOOD LIFE SERIES

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." (Psalm 23:6a)

With God in the Darkness

- The reality of darkness
- The reality of God's present comfort
- The possibility of fearlessness

With God Before Enemies

- The table of victory
- The table of abundance

The Pursuing Glory of God

- Goodness and mercy in hot pursuit
- God's unending commitment to His sheep
- Eternal belonging in the household of God

STUDY GUIDE

1. What was one of your most challenging times in life? What did it feel like to endure it? How did you make it through that time?
2. This week we continue our journey into "The Good Life" from Psalm 23. As we explore what it means to live a Psalm 23 type of life all the time, this week we look at the challenging times of life. Psalm 23 is built around two strong images: God as our shepherd (verses 1-4) and God as our host or friend (verses 5-6). We will bring those two images together in our study this week. Whether you are alone or with a small group, begin by asking God to speak to you and then read Psalm 23 aloud.
3. Verse 4 highlights the reality that even though God is our shepherd, we will still face dangers and hardship. What is the source of hope for the psalmist in the midst of hardship?
4. The shepherd's rod was a club of sorts for fighting off enemies. The shepherd's staff was used for keeping sheep on the path or prying them out of crags or holes. What might these metaphors convey about our life with God?
5. To be in the presence of enemies usually means to be fear-filled and hasty, but verse 5 offers a quite different situation. What does this verse tell us about God's presence and power as our friend in the face of enemies?
6. What enemies are surrounding you right now? How might your perspective or approach be changed by the truths of verse 5?
7. In verse 6 we encounter the unending commitment of God ("all the days of my life") and the pursuing kindness of God ("shall follow me"). What hope do these words bring you about your daily life and eternal life?
8. What is one specific truth or point of application that God is speaking to you through this study, and how will you live that out this week? Write it down. If you are in a small group, share your thoughts with one another.