

# The House of God Forever

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[ 0 : 00 ] we're going to begin our service and we're going to hear the words of Psalm 122 sung in Gaelic Psalm 122 and the last verses of that psalm you can read them therefore I wish that peace may still within thy walls remain and ever may thy palaces prosperity retain now for my friends and brethren sakes peace be in thee I say and for the house of God our Lord I'll seek thy good all way can read these verses in Gaelic how was the earth at the falachan be she is sonnish my jihidda was force gruggled braach at the local start history so

And live as I lead from thou art, O whir, What does it mean to you, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 3 : 52 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 7 : 05 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 11 : 15 ] is now closed and all have found a rest in Christ so we pray your blessing upon the preaching of the word and that in whatever situation you have placed your servants that they may be free to proclaim Christ that they may be given an unction from on high that their mouth will speak the truth in love and that young and old whoever they may be that they may hear of Christ and believe in him to the saving of their soul we pray for your blessing to be our portion at this time remembering all who are in need those who are unwell be they in hospital or at home those cared for by others we pray especially for those who have succumbed to COVID-19 and those whose role it is to be with them in ministering to them keep them safe we pray we remember all who have suffered bereavement and we pray that you would sanctify such loss to them we see the wisdom of this world and it doesn't penetrate the true reality of the darkness that death is about may the light of your countenance may the light of your countenance be amongst us shining so that we might see in the light of your countenance the way of salvation in Christ so bless your word to us now as we read it remembering your praying people encourage them to pray encourage them to build one another up in their faith and to be mindful of the needs that they have especially ministering to the needs of one another for before us now pardoning sin in Jesus name we ask it with the forgiveness of sin in Christ

Amen we're going to read from the New Testament scriptures and we're reading from the first book of Peter and the last chapter of that epistle the first epistle of Peter chapter 5 reading the whole chapter the elders which are among you I exhort who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed feed the flock of Christ which is among you taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind neither as being lords over God's heritage but being examples to the flock and when the chief shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elders yea all of you be subject one to the other and be clothed with humility for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble humble yourselves therefore unto the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time casting all your care upon him for he careth for you be sober be vigilant because you are adversary the devil as the roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour whom resist steadfast in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world but the God of all grace who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after that ye have suffered a while make you perfect establish strengthen settle you to him be glory and dominion forever and ever by Silvanus a faithful brother and to you as I suppose

I have written briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand the church that is at Babylon elected together with you saluteth you and so doth Marcus my son greet ye one another with a kiss of charity peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus Amen and may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise I want us now to turn to the book of Psalms on Psalm 23 Psalm 23 we can read the whole Psalm The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want He maketh me to lie down in green pastures He leadeth me beside the still water

He restoreth my soul He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me thy rod and thy staff they comfort me thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies thou anointest my head with oil my cup runneth over surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever Amen We're going to consider this evening the words of verse 6 the last verse of Psalm 23 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever as we've noticed the last evenings that we've been looking together at this psalm this is a psalm that is much loved for all sorts of reasons most of all it is loved for the uplifting nature of the truths it contains and this final verse we want to consider this evening first of all looking at the certainty that accompanies the experience of the shepherd's care secondly the enduring nature of that care and thirdly the ultimate end of that care the first thing the certainty that accompanies the experience of the shepherd's care surely that word surely is all important sometimes we can use it with a quizzical expression on our face or as we speak it we can make known that there's a question mark as it is written with a question mark surely for example surely you're not going to eat that or surely you're not going to go there here however it is the surely of certainty the sheep of this shepherd will know of the continual care that he as shepherd gives to his sheep there is no question about that care there is no question in the mind of the sheep about the care that is given to them this is not going to change no matter the circumstances in Hebrew the word is emphatic and focus wholly falls on the shepherd not the sheep as I have said before the metaphor is preserved throughout the psalm

[ 20 : 32 ] I know there are some who choose to understand the psalm in a different way and who see a serious or different metaphor but I believe with others that the psalmist maintains the same metaphor of shepherd and sheep throughout he began with the Lord as shepherd and concludes with a truth that can only be true because the Lord is his shepherd the words that are before us that are familiar to many and goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me closely to us the particular nature of that care that makes it certain it is the care of the good shepherd the covenant

God some other translations hint at this we have for example in sing psalms so surely your covenant mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my days or in the new English translation surely your goodness and your faithfulness will pursue me Derek Kidner says that the Hebrew word for mercy is the covenant word rendered steadfast love in other places and this describes for us the nature of the love of God for his people the good shepherd caring for his sheep the late Douglas Macmillan borrows a picture from a sermon he heard preached by an old elder who was himself a shepherd in it he describes the two sheepdogs used by a shepherd bringing his sheep home and he calls them goodness and mercy each in turn even without commands turns the straying sheep back into the flock whenever they stray to the left or to the right without overstating the point

Reverend Macmillan sees the many occasions it may be true of the believer that they wandered out of the ways of God but he mercy fully and tenderly brings them back now some think the psalm is saying to us if you're a believer nothing will ever happen to you but no that is not what this psalm is saying that is not what David is saying because if he would be saying that he would be saying something that was not true of himself he is saying no matter what will happen God will not let that spoil the relationship that he has with you if you could you would spoil it but because he is your God he is your covenant keeping God he will not allow what you do to spoil that relationship Gerald

H Lewis in a collection of spiritual truths from the psalm's rites we have a tendency to think of goodness and mercy in very worldly terms some would argue that an eventful Christian life is a good Christian life to have everything you desire no temporal problems and a full bank account is God's goodness to the believer but David is taking stock of his life and as he assesses it he is not measuring the quality of his life by temporal blessings but by inward graces it is so very easy for us to believe this of our lives when we have fair weather but the truth does not change though the weather may we may experience storm but

God is still the God of mercy and goodness it was last week I was reading a small book written by Vernon Hyen and he tells of an occasion when he was on holiday during the summer somewhere on the coast and he and his wife went out on an excursion boat trip along the coast however the weather changed dramatically and they got into difficulty so much so that it was a lifeboat that took the boat to port it was more excitement than they had bargained for but it was an exceptional occurrence so much so that many of the locals had gathered on the quayside to see them safely brought home but it was not the occurrence itself that remained within but a conversation he and his wife had with an elderly couple they shared with them a bit about themselves and in process of doing so they told them that they had lost two sons at sea but as the old man looked at his wife he said we have had our ups and downs but the

[ 26 : 41 ] Lord he has been more than good I do not know what we would have done without him not everybody could say that and only the grace of God can allow a person to say that and an eye upon the covenant God of mercy and goodness at the same time notice David says they shall follow me all the days of my life it reminds us of the enduring nature of the care that God gives to his sheep the word follow according to some writers means more than just trail along behind it is according to Derek Kittner just like the goodness and kindness it is more vigorous it is to pursue or as some have it chase after our imagery may be affected by our experience of dealing with sheep the shepherd we know drives his sheep with his dogs to encourage the

Bible shepherd walks in front and no dog is mentioned the thing to note is the metaphor requires us to be assured of God's continued protection regardless of the events that result and the events that required mercy and goodness of God to bring again to walk with the flock all the days of my life this is ongoing my grace the scripture says is sufficient and again his mercy is an enduring mercy glory I believe I believe that many a Christian began their Christian lives believing that if they managed to live long in the Christian life they would manage to accrue sufficient merit to guarantee them a place in glory if there are any who had such thoughts who would dare confess then what they would say now after 30 or 40 or 50 years following the

Lord is that they are in deficit if they are able to rejoice they rejoice in this that God is a God of grace George Henderson writes about an ancient Christian woman who after 50 years of experience of the goodness of God said if she had raised her stone of remembrance every time the Lord had helped her she would have built a solid wall 50 years in length the final thing we have here in the psalmises the ultimate end of that care the psalmist writes various opinions are expressed about the duration that the psalmist is speaking of here

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever you know some translations have it all my days or the rest of my life some do not want the psalm to say too much well is it too much to believe that the sheep will never not know the care of the shepherd some say God's house for David meant the tabernacle and no doubt that is true he could have meant the palace not the temple for it had not been built but David knows that God is not confined to a temple made with hands God is not bound by walls indeed many times David worshipped God in the open and like the ancient fathers it became the very gates of heaven as at

Bethel if you remember how it was for Jacob how dreadful is this place he said this is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven but David had one eye on future glory like all saints as they experience the tutelage of the Holy Spirit they learn that this world is but a place of tent dwellers there is a house of many mansions many of the preachers are drawn to the words of psalm 27 one thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple many think of heaven as a place they want to go to but what makes heaven heaven does not make heaven for them what do

[ 32 : 14 ] I mean I mean simply that for the believer for the sheep of the good shepherd for heaven to be heaven he must be there because he means everything to them without him they could not get there did I say without him they would not want to be there they wouldn't want to stay there whoever else was there Jesus said in my father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am there he may be also David concludes this psalm with these words surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever wonderful words precious words to every child of God perhaps at times they can only dare presume that this will be true of them at other times they are assured that this indeed is where they will be when their life in this world is at an end may God ensure that you're one of that number and may you look to that

God that you may have that assurance and confidence place it in the one who is this shepherd of the sheep let us pray O Lord may it be true of us that we could see and say with an assurance the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want he makes me down to lie in pasture green he leadeth me the quiet waters by help us to trust in his keeping and his guiding and his provision for us and to have this assurance that the ultimate end of our life here in this world is not only to be kept by him but to be brought by him to be with him for all eternity cleanse from sin continue with us we pray and now may grace mercy and peace from God the Father the Son and the Holy

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him the Henry