



WINTER-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

December 7, 2022



Photo: Our Daily Bread

## GOD'S SURE PURSUIT

*Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.*

Psalm 23:6

### READ Psalm 23

Some years ago, a man walked about a block ahead of me. I could clearly see that his arms were full of packages. All of a sudden, he tripped, dropping everything. A couple of people helped him to his feet, assisting him in collecting what he'd dropped. But they missed something—his wallet. I picked it up and took off in hot pursuit of the stranger, hoping to return that important item. I yelled "Sir, sir!" and finally got his attention. He turned just as I reached him. As I held out the wallet, I'll never forget his look of surprised relief and immense gratitude.

What began as following after that man turned into something quite different. Most English translations use the word follow in the final verse of the familiar Psalm 23—"Surely your goodness and love will follow me" (v. 6). And while "follow" fits, the actual Hebrew word used is more forceful, aggressive even. The word literally means "to pursue or chase," much like a predator pursues his prey (think of a wolf pursuing sheep).

God's goodness and love don't merely follow along after us at a casual pace, in no real hurry, like a pet might leisurely follow you home. No, "surely" we are being pursued—chased even—with intention. Much like pursuing a man to return his wallet, we're pursued by the Good Shepherd who loves us with an everlasting love (vv. 1, 6).

By **John Blase**

### PRAY & REFLECT

**Good Shepherd, thank You that Your goodness and love pursue me always. Amen.**

Do you believe God's goodness is actually pursuing you? If not, why not, since Scripture includes the word surely?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Although Psalm 23 is the best-known Scripture passage that employs the shepherd metaphor to speak of God, this figure of speech appears throughout the Bible. In Genesis 48:15, Jacob (Israel) referred to God as his shepherd. The prophet Isaiah said, "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (40:11). The Shepherd gets a name and a face in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Hebrews 13:20 speaks of Jesus as "that great Shepherd of the sheep." Peter called Him "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4), and Revelation 7:17 says, "the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd." – By **Arthur Jackson**

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