



Someone is Chasing You!

The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost' sermon notes

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✚ When I was a boy, like many kids, I went through a time that I was afraid of the dark. I would lay in bed imagining that something was in my room... I would hide under the blankets and peak out... the shadows looked like someone or something was staring at me...

One night, as I was peaking out from the blankets, I heard something moving in the room... sounded like someone creaking towards me. It got louder... I was soooo afraid! I could not take it anymore, I had to turn on the light... it was a strange bug tearing the tinfoil of my chocolate bar on the counter!

✚ After we grow up and become adults, we also have fears. To often, voices from the past chase us. Failures, regrets, disappointments, words powerful people said to us haunt us and pursue our daily actions as if someone were stalking our every move.

Today I want us to look at someone else that is chasing us relentlessly! We will find it in **Psalm 23**, a passage we were looking at a couple/three Sundays ago...

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

If He is my shepherd, I will have all I need! Sometimes the future causes us concern and worry: "What if I lose my job?" "What will happen to me after I retire?" "Will I have enough to live on?"

If the LORD is my shepherd, I will have what I need!

"I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor their descendants begging bread." Psalm 37:25

That's God's promise!

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.

He brings me to times of rest, quietness and restores my soul (my breath) – He removes that anxiety and stress so I can breathe again!

I like how the Message Bible reads in **Psalm 62:1-2**

"He's solid rock under my feet, breathing room for my soul" psalm 62:1-2 (MSG)

He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Out of those moments of quiet and inner peace He is able to guide me to take the right paths. We make wrong decisions when we are driven by fear and anxiety!

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.

Once I get to that place where I am guided by His inner peace, then I can face ANYTHING! **"Even though!"** → But there is a process that prepares you! BEFORE the dark valleys come!

If you are filled with anxiety and fear, if you don't let the Shepherd makes you lie down in green restful pastures beside quiet waters, if you don't take time for Him to restore your soul so you can breathe freely again, if you don't know what it is to be guided by His gentle inner voice, you will be unprepared for the storms of life!

- Like a firefighter who responds to a crisis unprepared physically, emotionally or mentally, filled with anxiety, fears, stress, with gear that isn't up to code... **that spells trouble!**
- **THE SHEPHERD PREPARES US TO BE ABLE TO FACE ANYTHING!**

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for **You** are with me.

Notice the movement in the nominative pronoun... Up to this point the psalmist is talking about "Him" ("He makes me lie" "He leads me beside" "He restores me" "He leads me in the paths..." but when you get to the dark valley it becomes intimate: "**You** are with me!" **Dark valleys, trying times, bring us closer to the Shepherd!**

Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.

The rod & the staff are the tools the Shepherd uses to protect the sheep!

Now the analogy changes from the Shepherd caring for the sheep... **to that of an honoured guest by His host... at Him home for dinner... We are the guest; He is the host!**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.
Psalm 23

✚ For the next few minutes I want us to focus on this line:

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

✚ Little Marina was extremely afraid of the dark. When the lights went out, every shadow appeared to her as a terrifying monster. Her parents explained to her, everyday and with great patience, that these things were not monsters. Marina understood her parents, but she could not stop feeling an awful fear whenever it was dark. One day her Aunt Valerie came to visit. Valerie was an incredible woman. She was famous for her courage, and for having gone on many journeys of adventure, some of which had been made into books and movies. Marina wanted to conquer her fear of the dark, so she asked her Aunt how she became so brave, and whether she had ever been frightened of the dark.

"A great many times, Marina," answered her Aunt, "I remember when I was small, and I was terribly afraid of the dark." Marina became very excited. How was it possible that someone so courageous could have been afraid of the dark?

"I'll tell you a secret, Marina. It was some blind children who taught me how to be brave. They can't see, so if they had never discovered the secret of how not to be afraid of the dark, they would have been forever frightened".

"that's true!" said Marina, fascinated, "Can you tell me that secret?" "Of course! The secret is to change your eyes. Since blind children can't see, their hands are their eyes.

All you have to do to conquer your fear is what they do. Shut the eyes of your face and open the eyes of your hands. Let's make a deal: tonight, when you go to bed and put out the light, if anything makes you afraid, close your eyes, carefully get out of bed, and try to see what it is that's making you scared. But do it using your hands as eyes... and tomorrow tell me how you made out with your fear".

Marina accepted, but she was rather worried. She knew she would need to be brave to close her eyes and go and touch whatever it was that was frightening her; but she was willing to try, after all, she was already too old for this. When her parents took her to bed, she put out the light herself. After a little while, she felt afraid of one of the shadows in the bedroom. Following the advice of Aunt Valerie, she closed the eyes of her face and opened the eyes of her hands. And, summoning up all her courage, she went over to touch that mysterious shadow...

The next morning Marina came running into the kitchen, a big smile on her face, and cried out, "**The monster is so soft and smooth!**" she said, "**The monster is my teddy bear!**"

✚ In **Mark 6** the disciples are in a boat struggling in the middle of the night, facing a storm... the wind and the waves are overtaking their boat. Fear grips their hearts! "We are going to sink!". Suddenly they see the shape of something, someone coming towards them in the night... "It's a ghost!" (Being raised in a fishing community maybe they had heard stories of ghost or spirit in the night on the waters)... But Jesus calls out to them, "**Do not be afraid, it is I**" (**Mark 6:50**)

"**The monster is my teddy bear!**"

Someone IS chasing you! Chasing you relentlessly! Chasing you day & night since you were born...

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...

The traditional version of Psalms 23 says "shall follow me" but the Hebrew word "raw-dáf" has a much stronger connotation: It means to chase, pursue, hunt, run after...

Surely goodness and mercy shall **PURSUE** me (chase me, run after me, relentlessly!) all the days of my life...

✚ In **Luke 15**, Jesus tells a story about a shepherd who had 100 sheep. One of those sheep got lost. So, he went looking for that one lost sheep... This is what **Luke 15:4** says,

"He goes after the one which is lost **UNTIL** he finds it?"

He is relentless, persistent, He goes after the one who is lost UNTIL

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing".

Jesus is that Shepherd and you are that sheep! When you get off track, when you lose your way, He will chase you, UNTIL he finds you!

✚ **There are two attributes that God uses to chase us with:**

- 1) The first one is the Hebrew word "tov" טוב
- 2) The second one is the Hebrew word "hé-sed" חֶסֶד

Let's take a second to look at these two tools God uses to chase us:

- The first one “tov” is usually translated into English as: good or goodness

“You are good (tov) and do good (tov).” Psalm 119:68a

- **“You are good”** God is good! (Jesus said, “No one is good except God alone” Mark 10:18).

When it says that God **IS** good. It’s not referring to just what He does; it’s who he is! **And who He is never changes. He is ALWAYS good!** “God is good, all the time!”

Illustration: You’re going down the highway at 100 Klm/h and a car coming in the opposite direction loses control spinning into your lane and misses you by a few inches. Your heart is pumping, your adrenalin kicks in, your shacking, you pull over and stop, and say, “Praise God, God is good!”

Why is He good? Because the car missed you? God would still be good if it had hit you and sent you to emerge.

- But, because He is good, He does good... **“You are good, and do good”**

And it’s with that goodness that He pursues you to do good, to you... **His GOODNESS is chasing you!**

God isn’t chasing you with His anger, He’s not trying to frighten you with fear, or condemnation, or shame, **He longs to show you His goodness!**

- The second word is (in my opinion) by far one of the most beautiful words in the Bible (hé-sed).

The issue is: **There is no equivalent English word for HÉ·SED.**

- **If you take the words faithfulness, love, kindness, lovingkindness, mercy, loyalty and weave them all into one magnificent Hebrew word, that word would be HÉ·SED.**

- Illustration: Apple pie... flower, sugar, apples, salt, butter, cinnamon, lemon, nutmeg, egg...

- Different Bible translations translated it into English in different ways, all of which are mere attempts to describe this amazing word into our English language:

- King James Version = mercy and often lovingkindness

- NIV = love

- Perhaps, the best option is how the English Standard Version (& RSV) translates it: **Steadfast Love**

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; (The HÉ·SED of the Lord never ceases) His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

- The Bible says that **“God is Love”**... **That’s His very core nature!** But not just any kind of LOVE, HÉ·SED love (Steadfast love – faithful love – loyal love - covenant love)

The steadfast love of the Lord NEVER CEASES (The HÉ·SED of the Lord never ceases). It NEVER comes to an end!

It's referring to a deep and lasting faithful love, like the one we are to have in our marriage vows - "Until death do us part"

HÉ·SED is not a feeling-based love, **it is love + loyalty** (the love that keeps loving even when the feeling is not there).

HÉ·SED is that unconditional love that doesn't depend on how the other person responds!

HÉ·SED is that unconditional love that loves you even when you mess up!

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16 (NKJV)

We were ALL sinners when He loved us!

That's the HÉ·SED love of God expressed by giving to us something we desperately need: Giving us His Son to die for our sins; giving us forgiveness and salvation.

Jesus coming to the world is the HÉ·SED love of God relentlessly CHASING us UNTIL he finds us!

He longs to show you His grace, His favour, His compassion, His mercy, His forgiveness!

Someone is chasing you with His Goodness and with His steadfast love!

The fear and anxiety are just ghosts in the night, if you use your "heart eyes" you will see His Goodness and His steadfast Love chasing you.

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" Isaiah 49:15 (NIV)
