

My cup overflows. Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23:5-6)

The shepherd David viewed himself as a sheep in the care of the Great Shepherd. After considering all the care, provision, and protection of the Great Shepherd he could draw only one conclusion: *My cup overflows.*

While the word “cup” is often used in scripture to indicate trials, it is used here to describe the bountiful portion given by God. His cup was not merely filled with *enough*; his cup was not merely *full to the brim*; his cup *overflowed*, being unable to contain all the blessings being poured out by the Great Shepherd. Such was the condition of this sheep...for now.

The final verse in this beautiful psalm completes the picture by looking forward, even to eternity.

The word ‘follow’ more often describes the action of ‘falling in behind someone in order to go where they lead.’ Sheep *follow* their shepherd. However, in this verse it is not the sheep that is following. The sheep is being followed, or more accurately according to the Hebrew, it is being *pursued*.

Generally, this term was used in the Psalms in reference to the enemies of David as they pursued him. If you were to tell a shepherd that something or someone was in pursuit of his sheep, he would automatically think of the natural enemies of sheep: wolves, mountain lions, etc.

The greater danger is that the pursuit is continual. The enemy of the sheep will not give up until their hunger is satisfied.

An amazing contrast is seen in the life of the sheep in the flock of the Great Shepherd. The Psalmist describes a *pursuit*, but not by an enemy. Instead, the sheep of the Great Shepherd are chased by

goodness and lovingkindness. These two are in hot pursuit and will not give up until their hunger is satisfied. The scene in our minds is almost comical as we picture the embodiment of goodness in hot pursuit continually overflowing the cup of the sheep.

Lovingkindness describes the love of God that prompted him to make promises to Abraham. At the same time it is the guarantee that he will never break his promises. It is a steadfast love on which the sheep knows it can rely. And this love is in pursuit of the sheep!

As if that is not enough the final statement conveys a scene that transcends anything our minds can comprehend. Words like infinite, endless, eternal, everlasting, and forever are easily used, yet we cannot possibly understand beyond a trite acceptance of dictionary definitions. How can we truly understand endlessness!?

We can begin counting until we exhaust our language of words to name the next number. Yet the next number exists even if we cannot name it; it is one value beyond the last and there is always another. Eventually, we must simply turn our attention elsewhere having never reached the finality of endlessness. Perhaps as we consider this thought we would do well to leave off the period at the end of the psalm.

It is within this framework of endlessness that David describes his life in the presence of God. He will not live in a physical structure such as the earthly tabernacle where God’s presence came. Rather, he will go to have permanent residence in the true house of God...without end...eternal rest...eyes open...

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever...

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