



June 28, 2026
Series: Week 4
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Connecting to the LORD My Shepherd... Forever (NS-1)

We've been on a journey with the LORD our Shepherd that has taken us to green meadows, by peaceful streams, and through dark valleys. He's nurtured and protected us each step of the way.

- Tough Reality: There are times our Shepherd's provision and comfort can seem quite distant. (NS-2)

Connecting to God's Provision... Under Fire

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies..." Psalm 23:5

Choosing to follow Jesus automatically places us under enemy fire. John 15:18-19; 2 Timothy 3:12

1. The World: Marred by man's sin – No longer our home – A system driven by satan.
2. The Flesh: We're born with sinful natures that seek to satisfy lustful desires - Can't be reformed.
3. The devil: The god of this age – Hates all things God – Blinds mankind to truth. 2 Cor. 4:4 (NS-3)

Surrounded by enemies, David connects to a table prepared for him by the LORD his Shepherd.

- Key Theme: The LORD our Shepherd possesses everything, so we'll never lack in anything we need. Enemies and dark valleys can make it difficult for us to connect to our Shepherd's "table" of provision.

- Only Jesus, the Bread of Life, can and will satisfy the deepest hungers of our soul. John 6:35

Consider: Has God been providing a "table" for you that you've been failing to see and connect to? (NS-4)

- Take time to shift your focus from the enemy onto all the provisions God has faithfully provided.
- God purposes to use the enemies' attacks, and your dark valleys, to make you more like Jesus.

The more personal our relationship with Jesus becomes, the more we're able to connect to His "table."

Connecting to God's Extravagant Love... Though I'm Imperfect

"... You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life..." Psalm 23:5-6

Our Shepherd possesses everything so we can trust Him to fill our lives generously with all we need.

Cultural Context: (1.) Sheep – Oil often applied to protect them from insects that could infiltrate their ears and nose and cause great/even deadly distress. (2.) People – In Biblical times, oil was applied to honor people. David was anointed by Samuel to designate him as Israel's next king. 1 Samuel 16:13

Surely goodness and mercy – "Surely" – No matter how dark the valley, we can count on this. (NS-5)

- **goodness** – This is God actively seeking our wellbeing. His goodness doesn't always deliver the things this world places high value on. He will always meet the deepest needs of our soul. Psalm 4:7
- **mercy** – God's steadfast love – His loving kindness. God is always orchestrating our lives in ways that are ultimately best for us and for accomplishing His Kingdom purposes.

Shall follow me all the days of my life – "pursue me" (NIV) – Even though enemies are ever present, our Shepherd, every moment of our lives, is pursuing us with His *goodness* and *steadfast love*.

- David's life had many factors that could make it hard for him to see God's love pursuing him: Huge moral failure - The taking of an innocent life - The death of 3 children - Tragic family dysfunction. (NS-6)

Connecting to God's extravagant love: (1.) Solidarity with Jesus - Align yourself with Him in every way. (2.) Take every dissenting voice/thought captive. 2 Cor. 10:5 (3.) Remember God's past presence and faithfulness. Ps. 63:2 - Make a list. (4.) Pursue intimacy with Jesus over what you can get from Him. (NS-7)

- Every day God leaves you on this planet, count on Him to pursue you with His goodness and mercy.

Connecting to the LORD My Shepherd... Forever

"... and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23:6

At times, our present realities can seem out of sync with God's stated plan and promises for us.

- When life gets really hard we must remember the why: **(1.)** We live in a fallen world. **(2.)** We have a sinful nature. **(3.)** Other people's sin **(4.)** Satan is the god of this age and he hates God and us.

Remember: This isn't our home – Just passing through – Life is a vapor – We have a certain future.

- We will *"dwell in the house of the LORD forever"*: No sin – No sickness – No Satan – No death – No pain – In a perfect environment – In the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit... Forever!

No matter your age, live your life with a sense of expectancy and longing for the return of Jesus. **(NS-8)**

Let God's Promises and Presence shape everything about you. Look over your shoulder and see only His goodness and mercy. Look forward and see your amazing forever future. (NS-9)

Next Steps –

1. Watch any sermon series and work through our helpful sermon guides at www.lebefree.org
2. Explain a time when God's provision and comfort seemed quite distant. How did this feel to you?
3. Further Study: The World/Flesh/devil - Luke 8:11-18; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4-10; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; John 17:15-19; Romans 6:1-14
4. It's great to shift our focus from our dark valley experience to the *"table"* God has provided for us. Take time to list the many wonderful blessings God has placed on your *"table"* – Praise Him.
5. Further Study: God's Goodness Toward Us - Psalm 27:13-14; 31:19; 69:16; 109:21; 145:7
6. What parts of your story make it difficult to believe God is pursuing you with *"goodness and mercy"*?
7. Study and apply these four steps to your daily rhythms of life. Connect to the love God has for you.
8. Further Study: Our Forever Future - John 14:1-4,19; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Romans 8:35-39; Rev. 21:1-7
9. Spend extended time with God, asking Him to help you live out this focus for your remaining years.

Key Passages – (ESV)

Psalm 23:1-6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst."

Psalm 4:7

You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

Psalm 73:24-26

You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me to glory. ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You.

²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Connect to the LORD Your Shepherd... Forever!