

Following

In reading a few Psalms this morning, I came across the old familiar Psalm 23. As is often the case with reading the Bible, something stood out to me. We have studied this together looking primarily at the good shepherd through the eyes of a shepherd. I know this is a personal favorite psalm of many psalms, for many people. One thing I love about the word of God is that you cannot beat it to death or exhaust it. It is both personal and communal. There is always something new and fresh about it that gives you life and growth if you are open to understanding it and willing to receive it.

So, what stood out? It was the change in the Christian Standard Bible from how I'd read it before. Here it is from two versions, the sixth verse:

Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live. (CSB)

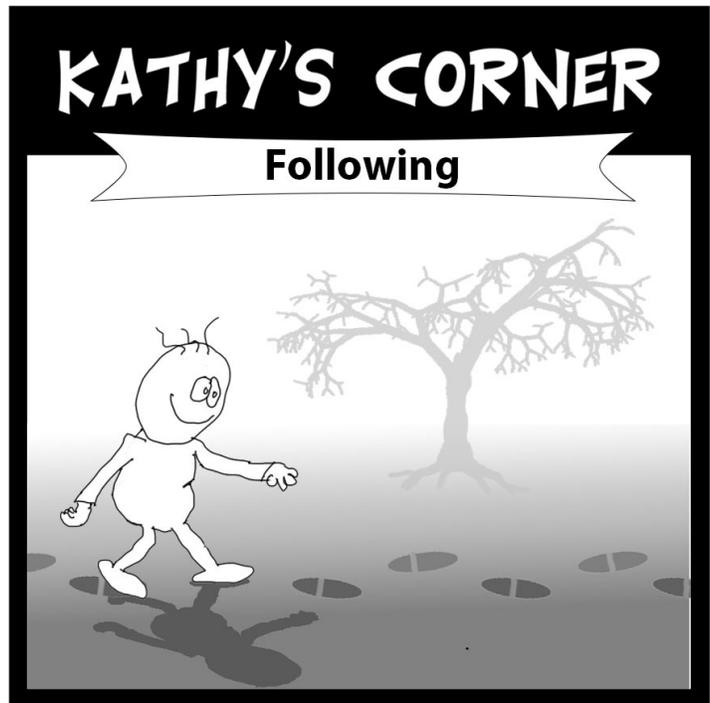
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. (KJV)

I know that in the past The Lord has pursued me, chased me down, until I finally realized and recognized Him and His pursuit, and surrendered my will to Him. Surrender wasn't painful, instead a blessing. I was elated to know the God of the universe wanted something to do with me! What's more, to think that it was not just in the past, but it is ongoing as long as I live, is just one more witness to how amazing God is.

I had been thinking this week about how worthy God is of praise. He is **always** worthy. Whether I *feel* like it or not, doesn't make Him any less worthy. When I start to get depressed, I have a choice. Will I go in the old familiar pattern of the flesh which can *feel* comfortable because it's familiar, or will I rise from that pattern choosing to praise the One who is always there, always worthy, and always pursuing us with goodness, mercy, and faithful love?

Thinking about *following* and what it is today. On social media we *follow or subscribe* to Pages, Sites and posts people make. What or whom we follow shows our values and interests. We also follow our family and friends. I like to encourage and support the efforts of all I follow whenever the causes, businesses, and efforts seem worthy to me. I have noticed, however, satan has people following to criticize, humiliate, and try to silence whatever is good. Satan's Pawns follow and pursue to discredit and ensnare—no surprise here!

I am thankful for His promise in the sixth verse above.



Some different words for follow are used in the subsequent verses. One used by the Lord is in Matthew 4:19 where Jesus said to His first disciples, “Follow Me.” **One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him.** (Matthew 4:18-20 NLT)

The first highlights the call of Christ. It is Strong’s Greek 1205 meaning *come, come away*; it’s used in many places in the New Testament as an invitation requiring a decision and a first step. (A few instances: “*Come*” for those weary and heavy laden; “*Come to the wedding banquet*;” “*Come and see...*,” were the words spoken by many concerning Christ.)

The second highlighted word for follow in the verses above is Strong’s Greek 190. In the Topical Lexicon section for this word on biblehub.com, under the heading Essential Idea, is this:

Strong’s Greek 190 (akoloutheō) pictures more than walking behind someone; it denotes a deliberate, whole-person response of attachment, obedience, and ongoing companionship. In the New Testament it serves as the primary verb for discipleship, encapsulating the life of one who hears Christ’s call, abandons competing allegiances, and continues in loyal fellowship with Him.

The same word is used in Matthew 10:38: **And whoever doesn’t take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.** (CSB)

Sheep follow blindly, but they do know His voice. Disciples follow knowing that there is a cost. The cost is insignificant to the joy of having a relationship with the One who calls us to follow. The One who pursues us with goodness and faithful love is the One I choose to thank, to praise and to follow.