**“My Host and His Feast**”Psalm 23:5

**Good Morning Beloved,**

1. James Montgomery…. 1825…
   1. 1 Shepherd of souls, refresh and bless  
      Your chosen pilgrim flock  
      With manna in the wilderness,  
      With water from the rock.
   2. 2 We would not live by bread alone,  
      But by your word of grace,  
      In strength of which we travel on  
      To our abiding place.
   3. 3 Be known to us in breaking bread,  
      But do not then depart;  
      Savior, abide with us, and spread  
      Your table in our heart.
   4. 4 Lord, sup with us in love divine;  
      Your body and your blood,  
      That living bread, that heav'nly wine,  
      Be our immortal food.
2. In the midst of a Satan raging… Beloved… always remember Christ reigns.
   1. Satan rages… But Christ reigns.
      1. This is the confidence of all those who are looking forward to the fellowship meal with the Lamb.

Reading of God’s Word

***23****A Psalm of David.*

***1*** *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. [[1]](#footnote-1)*

**Preaching God’s Word**

1. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
   1. King David walked through the “valley of the shadow of death” throughout his days.
      1. Young Shepherd… threats of wild animals
      2. Young Musician… demonic authority figure hurled spears at him
      3. Young Soldier… towering soldier from Gath
      4. Young king… in-fighting among his company (2 Sam. 3)
      5. Father… his son (Amnon) attacks his daughter… whose brother (Absalom) in turn murders David’s son (Amnon)
         1. That son (Absalom) then begins a conspiracy to “steal the hearts of the men of Israel” (2 Sam. 15:6)
         2. David flees Jerusalem.
            1. Then to add insult to injury… as his son steals his throne… a man named Shimei sees David’s company and hurls stones (reminding us of the battle with Goliath) and curses… continually on the man after God’s own heart.
      6. What could easily be said to this man…
         1. This is what you get for being a passive father…. 2 Sam. 14…
         2. This is what you get for Bathsheba… 2 Sam. 11…
            1. POINT: YOU deserve this!!
   2. In between fleeing for his life from Abaslom and hearing curses drop as stones fell from Shimei…
      1. A servant meets David with a couple of donkeys…
         1. 2 Sam. 16:1 - *a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine*
            1. In the midst of fleeing… David there is a full preparation.
            2. In a pause before hearing curses…. David receives a table full.
   3. As a sheep… who is lead by the Good Shepherd… the singer of this psalm celebrates that the LORD overcomes all situations.[[2]](#footnote-2)
      1. G. Campbell Morgan notes…
         1. All the circumstances of the pilgrimage, want, weariness, journeyings, wanderings, perplexities, the shadowed mystery of the valleys, the thronging enemies, and the infinite beyond, are present and the singer knows them. They are mentioned however, only to sing of their negation by the graciousness of the Shepherd.
            1. Want (“need”) is canceled.
            2. For weariness He has green pastures of rest.
            3. On journeys He leads by pleasant ways.
            4. From wanderings He restores.
            5. Through perplexities He guides and that by right ways.
            6. In the valleys of death's shadow His presence cancels fear.
            7. In the presence of enemies, He makes a feast and is a Host royal in bounty.
            8. And finally, the path runs on, not into a tangled wilderness but by the King's own palace.
   4. If you are being pursued by an enemy and cursed by a foe… the natural reaction is to RUN Scared (name of Ed Welch’s book on fear).
      1. What would compound that situation to make it even worse….
         1. To be detained.
            1. To be compelled to sit… pause… and ENJOY.
      2. Beloved, there is only ONE reason why we would ever be able to sit still long enough to enjoy this sentence…
   5. It is if THE LORD… the Shepherd… were to be our HOST.
      1. Commentators continues the shepherd imagery in the earlier verses and notes that…[[3]](#footnote-3)
         1. A table refers either to the plateau of a mountain often called a “table” for the sheep in the Fall season.
         2. The preparation by the shepherd at the table top of the mountain is the spreading of salt and other nutrients AND removing poisonous weeds and herbs for the season that the sheep will be there…
         3. Additionally…. The “table” may refer to the elevation of a feeding platform so that the “warble flies, bot flies, heel flies, nose flies, deer flies, black flies, mosquitos, gnats and other minute, winged parasites are not on the food.
      2. But the passage points to something even richer than how humans care for animal sheep… it points to how God cares for his people.
         1. Individually… David can say to others…
            1. Calvin – “God furnished (me) with sustenance without trouble or difficulty on his part, just as if a father should stretch out his hand to give food to his child.”[[4]](#footnote-4)
         2. Family of Faith… we can learn from those who tested God…
            1. Ps. 78 - ***18****They tested God in their heart  
                   by demanding the food they craved.****19****They spoke against God, saying,  
                   “Can God spread a table in the wilderness?*
   6. POINT: The Shepherd sets a table[[5]](#footnote-5)…. The LORD detains his people as a… HOST.
      1. Derek Kinder… “the well-set table… the festive oil… and the brimming cup witness to infinite resources in the worst of situations”[[6]](#footnote-6)
         1. Get it ready… set it out in order… arrange… a meal with a friend.
            1. While an attacker… an enemy… a vexer… a harasser plots.[[7]](#footnote-7)
         2. ESV Study Bible – “The enemies are powerless to prevent the enjoyment of God’s generous hospitality (perhaps they are there as captives at a victory celebration).”
   7. The LORD does something to me…
2. you anoint my head with oil;
   1. the passage is picturing God as the most lavish of hosts…
      1. anoint is “make fat”
         1. You spread this table to make me fat with goodness.
            1. The oil here points to the blessings that connect to the rod and the staff in last week’s passage.
         2. There we noted that in the book of Zechariah there were two broken staffs… FAVOR (noting the relationship with God) and UNITY (connected to the fellowship with other believers).
   2. In the psalms… the anointing of the head is connected to those same ideas.
      1. In Psalm 45, we read…
         1. *Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.  
                The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;****7****you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.  
            Therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
                with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;****8****your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.*
         2. Illustration: What was your favorite meal?
            1. Commander’s Palace in New Orleans…

They thought of every detail…. Even down to the man with utensil to clear ways the bread crumbles after a course…

But what set it apart from any other experience was the joy of the servers… even those who simply poured water… we are so excited for you to be at this meal… we are excited FOR you.

* + - 1. Psalm 45 pictures the intimacy not a sheep needing direction from a shepherd… not even a guest needing nourishment from a host…
         1. It is the picture of a Bride-groom delighting in his BELOVED.

Beloved, your God does not designate your well-being to another server…

YOUR HOST… YOUR God super-adorns you… HE detains you in the lavishness of HIS LOVE.[[8]](#footnote-8)

* + - 1. ***13****All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.****14****In many-colored robes she is led to the king,  
             with her virgin companions following behind her.****15****With joy and gladness they are led along  
             as they enter the palace of the king.*
         1. POINT: Anointing my head with oil connects to a loving relationship with GOD
    1. In Psalm 133, we read…
       1. *Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
              when brothers dwell in unity!****2****It is like the precious oil on the head,  
              running down on the beard,  
          on the beard of Aaron,  
              running down on the collar of his robes!****3****It is like the dew of Hermon,  
              which falls on the mountains of Zion!  
          For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,  
              life forevermore.*
          1. The dew of Hermon is so far away from the mountains of Zion that there is no way… physics… that this physical reality could ever occur.

Due to the sinfulness of men… there is no way that brothers would dwell in unity… it is more likely that gravity is defied by floating mosture than that men like in peace with one another.

* + - 1. Yet, unity of believers is as a supernatural miracle that displays the vibrancy of God’s grace to a world hostile to the Host.

1. my cup overflows.
   1. The fame of a man in David’s day was connected to his table.
      1. George Lamsa – “In the East, a man’s fame is spread by means of his table and lavish hospitality rather than his possessions, Strangers and neighbors alike discuss tables where they have been guests. Such tales spread from one town to another and are handed down from one generation to another. There is considerable gossip as to how guest and strangers are entertained.”[[9]](#footnote-9)
         1. When David says… my cup[[10]](#footnote-10)…
            1. It could mean… a skin from which to drink (Isa. 21:5)
            2. Or it could mean… my fate or destiny (Ps. 11:6; 16:5-6).[[11]](#footnote-11)
      2. POINT: My portion is “well-filled… at the saturation point… super fluidity”.
         1. All the days of your life… the Christian says… my cup overflows.
            1. Tim and Kathy Keller – “God has a celebration meal with us not after we finally get out of the dark valley but in the middle of it, in the presence of our enemies. He wants us to rejoice in him in the midst of our troubles.”[[12]](#footnote-12)
         2. As Psalm 66 says…
            1. ***8****Bless our God, O peoples;  
                   let the sound of his praise be heard,****12****you let men ride over our heads;  
                   we went through fire and through water;  
               yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.*
            2. ***20****Blessed be God,  
                   because he has not rejected my prayer  
                   or removed his steadfast love from me!*
   2. POINT: Every moment of my life… God cares for me.
2. Conclusion
   1. So… when would this Psalm have been celebrated?
      1. Psalm 23 - journey imagery is characteristic, through three stages:
         1. 1. Verse 2 “is set (metaphorically) in the semi-arid pasturelands of Judah in spring...
         2. 2. “Verse 4 moves to the Judean wilderness (and specifically to the ravines on its eastern edge in (late) summer...
         3. 3. “Verse 5 concludes the journey in the temple in Jerusalem in early autumn and specifically at the time of Sukkot (the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles).”
   2. When the Covenant people gathered in Jerusalem for that feast…
      1. God’s provision… celebrate God’s blessing on Israel’s seven major crops: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, honey, wheat, and barley (Deut. 8:8).[[13]](#footnote-13)
         1. *you anoint my head with oil;*
         2. *my cup overflows.*
      2. God’s rescue… the people lived in temporary dwellings (booths) as a reminder that they were rescued for slavery and provided for in the wilderness
         1. *in the presence of my enemies;*
      3. God’s promise… sacrifices looked forward with expectancy to God forgiving their sins and providing for their every need (Zech. 14).
         1. *You prepare a table before me*
   3. In the Gospel of John…
      1. We see what this verse celebrates…
         1. At the feast of Booths…
            1. As the enemies of Christ looked on…

***37****On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.****38****Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”****39****Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

* + - * 1. As one commentator noted… “represents the anointing that The LORD has placed on the head of the Church (2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 1 John 2:20,27), but also the role that the indwelling Spirit plays in the sovereign, saving and satisfying union of love between Christ and His Bride (John 14:15-17,23, Romans 8:9-11).”

*you anoint my head with oil;*

*my cup overflows.*

* + - 1. ALSO at the feast of Booths…
         1. The grace of Jesus is revealed.

A woman caught in the very act of adultery is brought before Jesus.

Her enemies condemn her… they prepare to hurl their stones and call down curses.

Yet the Good Shepherd will not lose one of his sheep and turns to her attackers saying…

John 8 -  *Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.*

As her enemies flee, the rabbi turned host bids her to walk in holiness.

***10****Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”****11****She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”*

* 1. Beloved, our Good Shepherd has called you to His Feast.
     1. It is the Feast that Isaiah described with well-aged wine… and rich food full of marrow…
        1. Your LORD has prepared a table for you.
     2. It is a Feast that the feeding of God’s people on bread is a physical way to describe the spiritual “believing upon Christ” in his work of the Cross (John 6).
        1. There death itself is swallowed up in the resurrection on the King (Isa. 25) and Satan your accuser is vanquished (Gen. 3).
           1. Your LORD has provided for you by conquering His enemies.
     3. It is a Feast where the intimacy with God will grow ever sweeter and the fellowship with the saints will only love.
        1. In a world of no condemnation…
           1. Your LORD bids you sit at the wedding feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19).
  2. Or to say it another way…
     1. *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;*
     2. *you anoint my head with oil;*
     3. *my cup overflows.*

1. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ps23.title&off=24&ctx=Lord+Is+My+Shepherd%0a~23%C2%A0A+Psalm+of+David.) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 23:title–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. the host metaphor, conveys the same ideas as that of the shepherd metaphor, namely, hospitality and provision (“You prepare a table before me”), protection (“in the presence of my enemies”), and abundance (“my head with oil”; “… my cup overflows”).

   Willem S. Prinsloo, “The Psalms,” in Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 382. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23*, 104- 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms, 396.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. c. in common life (cf. RSSem i. 183 f., 2nd ed. 200 f.), arrange a table (i.e. dishes in order upon it), שֻׁלְחָן Is 21:5 Pr 9:2 (fig. of wisdom), Ez 23:41 (of Jerus. in fig.); ψ 23:5; [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Derek Kinder, Psalms 1-70, 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. —*shew hostility toward, treat with enmity, vex, harass*, c. acc. pers. Is 11:13; Nu 10:9; 25:17; once c. ל pers. v 18; also pt. as subst. (cstr. or c. sf.) *vexer, harasser*, Am 5:12; Is 11:13; Ex 23:22 (E), ψ 6:8; 7:5, 7; 8:3; 10:5; 23:5; 31:12; 42:11; 69:20; 74:4, 23; 143:12; Est 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24.—Lv 18:18 v. [צָרַר] sub ii. צָרָה, infr. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. David Gibson, *The LORD of Psalm 23*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Gibson, 110-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. cup (which represents abundance)—are prepared for the child of God, who may feast in spite of his enemies, confident that this favor will ever attend him. This beautiful Psalm most admirably sets before us, in its chief figure, that of a shepherd, the gentle, kind, and sure care extended to God’s people, who, as a shepherd, both rules and feeds them.

    Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart*, 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Keller, *The Song of Jesus, 41.* [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/feast-of-tabernacles/ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)