

Psalm 23: Feasting at the Table (part 2)

I. I WILL PREPARE A TABLE FOR YOU IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR ENEMIES

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me besides the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, 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. 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; I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)

- A. The beginning of 2010 Mike gave a message “Feasting on God: A Table in the Presence of my Enemies.” This message has been one that I have returned to several times throughout the years to find a strengthening, vision, and realignment in various seasons of life.
- B. In this Psalm David speaks on how the Lord had prepared to feed his heart and to increase his encounter in God. *It is an amazing thing when the attack comes and our relationship with God is strengthened and our experience in the Spirit is increased.*

II. REVIEW

- A. Psalm 23 is a description of David's experience in God and it is his confession before the Lord. Psalm 23 is a declaration of his faith, particularly in a time of trouble. There are about ten or fifteen different phrases. They are confessions and statements that David made before God.
- B. ***The Lord is my shepherd:*** David describes the Lord's attentive leadership as a shepherd. He is consciously recognizing Jesus as the leader of his life. He is saying “I am consciously submitting to Your leadership. I am consciously transferring the ownership of my life into Your hands. You are the shepherd. I am the sheep. You provide the direction. I follow You.”
- C. ***I shall not want:*** I shall not lack anything necessary to accomplish the will of God, the destiny of God, or the assignment of God in my life. God will give you the *emotional strengthening*, and He will give you the circumstances to do the will of God.
- D. ***He makes me to lie down in green pastures:*** The green pastures is what the sheep ate and the still waters is what they drank, so David is declaring the Lord leads us to the place of feasting. This is talking about feasting when everything is going well. If we feast when we are in an easy seasons we are much more likely to feast on God when the enemy approaches.
- E. ***He leads me beside still waters:*** Sheep cannot drink from a fast flowing stream. If you bring the sheep up to a river that is flowing or even a brook that is fast moving, they cannot drink from it. *The Lords leadership is so sensitive that He will feed you, and He will give you drink in a way that suites your ability to receive.*

- F. **He restores my soul:** We are constantly in need of our soul restored. Our peace restored. Our purity strengthened. We need to get restored daily, weekly, and all the time.
- G. **He leads me in paths of righteousness:** Righteousness does not just mean moral virtue. It does mean that, but it also means correct paths, or right paths. We lose our focus. We lose our direction in our life, our family, our marriage, our ministry, our children, and our money. The Lord leads us in the right path by giving us hints, whisper and impressions.
- H. **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death:** The devil tells us it is death, but it is only a shadow because Jesus is the victor over physical death, but He is also the victor over the devil and the devil's attack. It appears like the valley of death, but it really is not. It actually can lead to a greater experience in God. It is not the valley of death. *It is actually a valley that will lead to life.*
- I. **You are with me:** His nearness and presence is the truth and reality that keeps us from fear and despair. He will not leave us or forsake us. It is in the valley seasons where the enemy comes in with his primary accusation that the Lord is not with us, that He has left us and we are to fend for our selves. The temptation is to see the added pressures and pains that come along with valley seasons as proof the Lord is not with us. We must get our confidence that He is with us by the truth of the word and the anointing of the Spirit rather than our circumstances.
- J. **Your rod and Your staff they comfort me:** These were two instruments that the shepherd used regularly. The rod was the club to fend off the wild beast. The rod is the protection of the Lord. The staff was a different instrument it was to guide the sheep. The staff was to nudge the sheep to show them where to go. *The rod is protection and the staff is direction.*
- K. **They comfort me:** When we are in the valley of the shadow of death we can have confidence. We can be comforted by this: He will fend off the wild beast, and He will give us the midcourse corrections constantly to get us through that period of time. We can be comforted knowing He will intervene. We can have the assurance that God will constantly intervene to give us a midcourse correction at every step of the way.

III. THE LORD PREPARES A TABLE FOR HIS PEOPLE

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.” (Ps 23:5)

- A. **You prepare a table before me:** The Lord is going to put a feast on the table before us. The Lord will feed us in a way that will cause us to have victory at the heart level, as well as in circumstances, but the most important issue when the enemy comes is what happens in our heart.
- B. Feasting on God is the practical theme of Psalm 23. We want to grow in understanding and revelation that the seat at the table is available even while we are under pressure.

- C. This table is within the reach of every single believer.

1 Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Is 55:1)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1:2-4)

IV. WHEN WE DON'T FEAST ON GOD

- A. We are always partaking of something. There is no way around it. We partake of that which we are preoccupied with.
- B. Many believers are suffering from spiritual malnutrition. The Lord has spread the table in front of them. They study the menu, but they do not actually eat. They sit at the table but the Lord will not force-feed. He will not make us eat. We are at the table with a banquet in front of us.
- C. When we do not feast on God, but we feed our soul on our enemy, our enemy looks *powerful and permanent*. We end up with despair. It is like this problem is never going to go away whether it is a person, just a circumstance, or issue in your life, our enemy looks permanent and so powerful when we consume our thinking on our enemy.
- D. The enemy could be pressures in society. It could be people. It could be circumstances. In kind of a simple definition, *the enemy includes anything that hinders your connection with God*. The enemy is anything that is seeking to hinder the will of God in your life from happening.
- E. There are enemies that resist us. Those are the ones that kind of create pain. They are attacking us, or they are resisting us in some way. It is people or circumstances. King David was attacked by different people at different times in his life. There were actual people trying to kill him, so the resistance can be intense.
- F. There is a lesser enemy but this lesser enemy is very effective. It is the enemy that annoys us. This enemy can be subtle, but very, very destructive to our spiritual life causing our heart to disconnect from God.
- G. It is critical that when the enemy rages and his attack even increases, it is critical that we feed on the Lord more. Whatever we focus on is what we are feasting on. Whatever we are preoccupied with is what we are feasting our soul on.

V. BENEFITS OF PARTAKING AT THE TABLE

- A. If we stay connected to the Lord we stay in a place of *confidence*. When we stay in a place of talking to the Lord the enemy does not look near so powerful. If we lose our dialogue with the Lord and our confidence in the Lord the enemy has so much more impact negatively in our life.
- B. When we feast on God, our enemy looks different. Our enemy looks *small* and our enemy looks *temporary*.
- C. **You anoint my head with oil:** When David ate at the table he experienced the increase of the oil of the Lord in his life. There is a spiritual principle. *There is an increase in the manifestation of the presence of God when the enemy approaches.* When we respond to God in a right way there is actually an opportunity in the Spirit for great increase.
- D. There is a measure of the spirit of glory that only comes when we respond right under persecution. We have the spirit of glory to a certain measure in our everyday life but there is an extra measure that only comes when the reproach from the enemy is present and the heart responds rightly.

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (1 Peter 4:14)

- E. When resistance comes and tries to stop the will of God in our lives, and we respond in godliness and humility, it actually is an opportunity for our increase in the spirit of glory. It actually results in us increasing beyond what we could have if that enemy would not have attacked us.
- F. **My cup runs over:** David is talking about a vibrant heart in God. The cup that David was talking about is his connection to the Lord, and the Lord's promises to David's life. It was the Lord, the Lord's provision, and the Lord's promises. When the enemy is attacking, we are feasting on God and we are responding rightly, there is an increased anointing. We find out that our cup is full. It is above full. It is flowing over.
- G. The way that we feast on God's table is that we connect with God. We do this by: **Pray reading the Word** and **fellowshipping with the Spirit** with a spirit of gratitude and confidence.

VI. GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME

- A. **Goodness and Mercy shall follow me:** mercy is the forgiveness of the past, but it is more than that. Goodness is provision for the present and the future. Mercy and goodness are following us all the days of our lives. The word follow is the Hebrew verb of an animal pursuing another animal. Mercy and goodness are pursuing and are running hard after us.
- B. We can be our own worst enemy. If we do not feel it, we get into despair, and we cancel ourselves out. The devil did not actually defeat us. We took ourselves out of the game. The number one temptation I am convinced in the whole Body of Christ is the temptation to quit.