

Psalm 23:1, 5-6 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want* [I will be content with what I have (see 1 Timothy 6:8)]. ... <sup>5</sup> *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.* <sup>6</sup> *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

## I. Introduction

### A. The person writing or reciting this Psalm, verse 1

1. David, the original author
  - a. The youngest of 8 boys born to Jesse of Bethlehem
  - b. His first job outside the home of his father was as a shepherd (see 1 Samuel 16:19)
  - c. David saw in God the relationship that he had with his sheep
    - i. Sheep have no natural defense against predators and rely on the shepherd to protect them
    - ii. Sheep will get lost if a shepherd doesn't keep them together
    - iii. The shepherd must provide food and water for the sheep
    - iv. The sheep know that their lives depend on following their own shepherd
2. Every believer who reads this Psalm
  - a. We are not naturally cautious about things that would harm us (see 1 Peter 2:25)
  - b. We are too often ready to wander away from the God who loves us (see Luke 15:4)
  - c. God has provided everything we need for this life and our eternal life (see Hebrews 13:5)
  - d. We can follow our Good Shepherd into eternal life with confidence (see John 10:9-15)
3. The person that the Psalm is addressed to: The LORD (verse 1)
  - a. The Lord is at the center of Psalm 23
    - i. Most important: to understand your relation with the Lord

- ii. Jesus, God the Son, is the Good Shepherd & gives His life for the sheep

John 10:11 *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

- iii. Jesus is the Good Shepherd & knows His sheep

John 10:14 *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine* [and my sheep know Me].

- iv. God continues as the providing Shepherd to the entire world

(Jesus speaking to people on a hillside, the “Sermon on the Mount”)  
Matthew 5:45 *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

- b. The Lord is THE Shepherd

- i. He cares for the sheep of His pasture
- ii. He provides daily needs for His sheep
- iii. He leads His sheep through pathways of life
- iv. He even walks with His sheep down into the valley of the shadow of death – very difficult times

- c. The Lord is MY Shepherd – every believer’s shepherd

- d. Christian will not lack (want) anything necessary in life

## B. The preparation

1. God’s preparation: He prepares a table for His people, even in a hostile environment
2. God takes good care of His people, even during the difficult times

## C. The purpose

1. God sets this table in the presence of Christian’s enemies (Satan’s kingdom)
2. And God puts out a banquet – not a drive through menu
3. God wants you to sit down at this table

Revelation 3:20 *Behold, I [Jesus] stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup* [eat at a table] *with him, and he with me.*

4. Daniel thrown into a lion's den as old man, but he remained faithful to God. And God delivered him

Daniel 6:5, 10, 23 <sup>5</sup> *Then said these men [the Satraps conspiring against Daniel], We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. ...* <sup>10</sup> *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed [a law forbidding prayer to any god except King Nebuchadnezzar], he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber [apartment] toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and **prayed, and gave thanks before his God**, as he did aforetime. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they [the zookeepers] should take Daniel up out of the [lions] den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and **no manner of hurt was found upon him**, because he believed in his God.*

## II. God Gives Provision to those at His table

### A. God cleans this table

1. God washes & sanitizes this table. God washes & sanitizes each believer by the blood of Jesus
2. God does not remove marks or scuffs from Christian's table. Our past experiences are still with us. God wants us to overcome bad habits.
3. God forgives Christian's sins by the blood of the Lamb of God

John 1:29 *The next day John [the Baptist] seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold** [Look at] **the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.***

### B. God covers this table

1. God covers this table with tablecloth of His grace

Ephesians 2:8-9 <sup>8</sup> *For **by grace are ye saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

2. Learn to stay at God's table. God's gift is received, not earned.

### C. God caters the meal (prepares the meal Himself)

1. Jesus is the Bread of Life

John 6:35 *And Jesus said unto them [the crowd He had just fed in a remote place], **I am the bread of life**: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

2. Joseph was 17-year-old slave when he had to learn to sit at God's table (see Genesis 37:12 – 41:46)
3. Too easy for Christian to have "order envy" from looking at someone else's table. Trust in your Shepherd to give YOU what YOU need.

### III. God Gives Power Through the Oil

#### A. It is personal

1. God's oil poured out on my head (Oil was used to keep wounds from becoming infected and to keep skin from becoming dry and cracked)
2. Every believer has God's anointing oil (The Holy Spirit)
3. Stay close to the Good Shepherd

Hebrews 13:20, 21 <sup>20</sup> Now [my prayer for you is that] *the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus [that raised our Lord Jesus from the dead], **that great shepherd of the sheep**, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,* <sup>21</sup> [will] *make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

#### B. It is powerful

1. Shepherd's soothing oil used for healing His sheep
2. Biggest struggles are in the human mind

Ephesians 6:12 *For **we** [Christians] **wrestle** not against flesh and blood, but **against** principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, **against spiritual wickedness** in high places.*

3. Sweet hour of prayer

James 5:14 *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, **anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:***

#### C. It is precious

1. This is the cup of blessing

1 Corinthians 10:16 ***The cup of blessing which we bless** [give thanks for], *is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?**

2. After Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus sent him a personal message to meet Him in Galilee

Mark 16:7 [An angel speaking to the disciples after Jesus' resurrection] *But go your way, tell his disciples **and Peter** that he [Jesus] *goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.**

### IV. God Gives Plenty by His Oil

#### A. Cup of plenty

1. God's cup of blessing runs over – overfilled (verse 5)

2. Will Christian have character to continue with Christ when their life receives blessings?

Proverbs 30:7-9 <sup>7</sup> *Two things have I required of thee [God]; deny me them not before I die:* <sup>8</sup> *Remove far from me vanity and lies: **give me neither poverty nor riches**; feed me with food convenient for me:* <sup>9</sup> *Lest I be full [rich], and deny thee, and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*

B. Care of protection

1. Christian will dwell (live) in God's house forever (John 14:2,3)
  - a. Invitation to "make yourself at home"
  - b. Accept invitation, "You are welcome to move in."
2. Sit down & enjoy your meal

Hebrews 10:12, 16 <sup>12</sup> *But this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; ...* <sup>16</sup> *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days," saith the Lord, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;"*

V. Conclusion

- A. God's goodness & longsuffering leads people to repentance

Romans 2:4 *Or despisest thou [Or do you scorn] the riches of his goodness and forbearance [forbearance: to postpone the collection of a debt] and longsuffering; not knowing that **the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?***

- B. Goodness & mercy holds me up in all life's trials & tribulations, verse 6

- C. God gives eternal hope

Jude 1:21 **Keep yourselves in the love of God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.