**Psalm 23:1-6**

**Psalms 23:5 - “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou aniontest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”**

David begins this Psalm with the statement “The LORD is my shepherd!” (**Psalm 23:1**) Everything else he says flows from this opening statement.

The LORD had covenanted to be David's God -- David's Saviour! David’s Shepherd!

David’s testimony of the Shepherd’s care for His sheep includes green pastures and still waters – describing the peace, comfort, and satisfaction of God's salvation. (**Psalm 23:2**)

David's testimony of the Shepherd’s care for His sheep includes their restoration - “He restoreth my soul!” (**Psalm 23:3**)

Over the years of being led by the Shepherd, David could reflect upon times when he had been recovered from death and destruction – when he had been relieved from distress – when he had been revived during times of spiritual decline – when he had been refreshed when weary – and when he had restored when wandering.

Over the years of being led by the Shepherd, David knew by experience the kindness of the Shepherd to lead him “in the paths of righteousness for his name sake.”

During times when he was being led by his Shepherd, David also spoke of his life as filled with darkness and shadows – as being squeezed in on every side – times when he felt the shadow of death over him. (**Psalm 23:4**)

**In Psalm 23:5, we learn that David also knew that his Shepherd would not forsake him during the times he was surrounded by his enemies.**

Every true child of God knows that he is always in the presence of his enemies. His enemies include such things as his own sin, his own selfishness – the world which hates his God – the god of the world who hates his God - and enemies of the gospel message with which he has been entrusted.

At the same time, he knows that his Shepherd does not flee at the sight of any enemy!

From this verse we learn that not only does the believer have the promise of God that he will never leave him nor forsake him in the presence of his enemies; he also has the promise that God will richly bless him in the presence of his enemies.

**Psalms 23:5** - “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou aniontest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

**Psalm 23:5a** - “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies”

**“Thou” - My spiritually prepared table is continually prepared by my Shepherd – my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

Though my enemies are great - as great as God's enemies - my God is greater than them all. My enemies desire that I be removed from the blessings of God but are not able to accomplish their desired goal! Why? Because my Shepherd prepares a table of blessings for me and nothing can separate me from those blessings!

**Romans 8:37-39** – “(37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**.”

**“Thou”** – My Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one who prepares all things for me. He is: My Shepherd - My Saviour - My Salvation - My Sovereign Lord - My Strong Deliverer - My Sure Foundation - My Sacrifice for Sin - My Conquering Captain - My Soul's Bishop (the one who oversees the spiritual progress of my soul) - My Soul's Soundness, Security, Safety and Support - My Secure High Tower - My Safe Haven - My Shield and Protector - My Salem's Prince (the prince of peace) - My Sent One - My Law Keeper - My Sin Bearer - My Sin Offering - My Sin Remover - My Shame Bearer - My Sanctification - My Sanctuary - My Security - My Shadow (shade) in a hot and weary land - My Song in the night - My Satisfaction - My Special Friend

How can I not be provided for when He is all that and more!

**My table is prepared in the midst of my enemies – in their very presence!**

**“In the presence of mine enemies”** -- Before them - in their sight - in such a way as they are unable do anything to keep the Shepherd from prospering His Sheep.

Does the blessed Saviour have enemies? Does the holy and good God have enemies? YES!

And, because they are His enemies; they are also the enemies of His people?

Is this world full of real enemies for the child of God? Did God intend that the Christian life be one of continual battle - continual struggle - continual trial? YES!

But He also intended it to be a life spent feasting on His spiritual blessings as His Sheep live in the midst of their enemies.

We would not be true Christians if we did not have enemies! Being hated by the enemies of our God is a sure sign that we are true Christians.

**John 15:18** – “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”

Who are my enemies? They are as many and as varied as the enemies of my God.

**They are**:

**My own sin** – **Romans 7:18 and 24 –** “(18) For I know that **in me** (that is, in my flesh,) **dwelleth no good thing** … (24) **O wretched man** that I am! who shall deliver me from **the body of this death**?”

**My archenemy Satan** – **Ephesians 6:12** – “For we 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**.”

**This present World** – **John 15:18** – “**If the world hate you**, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”

**The system and philosophy of this present World** – **Colossians 2:8** – “Beware lest any man spoil you **through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world**, and not after Christ.”

**Also**:

**There are the many enemies of the gospel with which we have been entrusted** – **Philippians 3:18** – “(For many walk, of whom I have told you often … that they are **the enemies of the cross of Christ**:”

**There are many who hate God – His Son (our Shepherd) and His truth** -- **Romans 8:7** – “Because the carnal mind is **enmity against God** …”

**Also**:

**There are the enemies of this body** - weakness, sickness, disease, and death – **I Corinthians 15:26** – “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

**Finally**:

**There are my personal enemies** who desire to see me defeated in my walk with my shepherd - my Lord Jesus Christ.

**II Timothy 3:8** – “Now as Jannes and Jambres **withstood Moses** …”

As Moses had personal enemies who withstood him because of his walk with God, so we have them, too.

**II Timothy 4:14-15** – “(14) Alexander the coppersmith **did me much evil**: the Lord reward him according to his works: (15) Of whom **be thou ware also**; for he hath greatly withstood our words.”

As the apostle Paul had those who did him much harm because of his walk with his God and his declaration of the gospel of the grace of God, so we have them, too.

These are all enemies before whom the Lord spreads His table of blessings for His Sheep.

Even though we have many and great enemies - we also have the promise of divine blessings upon each of us as children of God!

Is the Lord Jesus Christ not our Saviour - Our Shepherd? Has He not promised that we shall not want (**Psalm 23:1**)? YES!

In fact His promise of being with us throughout our lives to bless us is evidenced in a table being spread **before us** and **for us** in the presence of our enemies.

How is God’s table defined in the Scriptures? This table is a table of spiritual blessings!

**I eat at the table spread with the peace of God -- Isaiah 32:17** - “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness, and assurance forever.”

**I eat at the table spread with a sense and knowledge of security - Psalm 125:1-2** - “They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever.”

**I eat at the table spread with the continual presence of God -- Matthew 28:20** - “Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.”

**Hebrews 13:5** - “He hath said, I will never leave thee, not forsake thee.”

**My table is prepared for my spiritual health and enjoyment in time and for my joy and God’s vindication in eternity.**

**My spiritual health is dependent upon the blessing of God's faithful provision for my soul. - Psalm 42:11** - “… Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, **who is the health of my countenance**, and my God.”

**My present spiritual enjoyment is dependent upon the blessing of God bestowed upon me.** - **Isaiah 51:11** – “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and **everlasting** joy shall be **upon** their head: and they shall **obtain** gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

**Isaiah 61:10** -”I will greatly **rejoice** in the LORD, my soul shall be **joyful** in my God; for **he hath clothed me** with the garments of salvation, **he hath covered me** with the robe of righteousness ...”

**My future joy is dependent upon the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ given to me to provide a place for me in heaven**. - **John 17:24** – “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, **be with me where I am**; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

**Revelation 5:9 & 13** – “(9) And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation … (13) And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever”

**My future exaltation (over all my enemies) is dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ and the victory He won for His Sheep at Calvary** over sin, Satan, death, the grave, and Hell!

In heaven the song of every saint will be - **Revelation 19:1 and 6** -- “Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:” “Alleluia: For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

**The world's table described as:**

**A pig pin** – **Luke 15:15-16** -- “And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.”

**A pail of leftovers and worn out things ready to be destroyed** – **Hebrews 1:11-12** – “They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”