

Daily Devotional, May 8, 2020 The Table is Set

With a greater understanding of the Good Shepherd's role as our great protector, in verse five of Psalm 23, David turns to the image of God as an extravagant banquet host. He then follows with two other benefits from God, anointing, and a cup that abundantly spills over. As we look at these final three benefits or provisions of God, each of them can be seen in the same basic way. They are all examples of God's abundance in His provision, that God is extreme in His provision. God is lavish in His provision for us.

David says, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." God does not provide for David a Big Mac and some fries (as yummy as that might be for some). God instead goes all out, providing David and all of us with luscious banquets, lavish and joyful. God then anoints our head with oil, a sign of God's hospitality, a sign of rejoicing. David's cup then overflows. God is filling up his cup, and it spills over the brim, and God continues to pour Himself into David's cup. This is a picture of generosity and abundance and extravagance.

David seems to know without question, what Jesus will say a thousand years later, "I came that they might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10 NIV) It is God's style of abundance. God establishes the good things that will not be withheld from us. God determines the kind of abundance we are going to have. But God's abundance is excessive, it is rich, it is beyond anything that we can even think or hope or ask for (Ephesians 3). Why is God so excessive in God's provision for you and for me. Because He is our Shepherd, forever with us. And it is out of that relationship that God's provision and protection flow.

Finally, David gets to verse 6, the conclusion, the final affirmation of faith. Here he says, "Surely your goodness and love (mercy) will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." David knows that rather than being pursued in the darkness by predators, that he will be pursued in all situations by God's goodness and by God's never-ending love. The Hebrew word for mercy is "hesed," which can also be translated as love or lovingkindness. When David says goodness and mercy (love, lovingkindness), it is God's goodness toward God's people.

These are terms of a covenant and God has bound himself to David as his covenantal God. David has sought to be part of the covenant that God has made with God's people, and so it is within the context of that relationship that David knows that it is God's goodness, that it is God's covenantal faithfulness, His mercy and love toward His chosen people, that will follow him all the days of his life. Psalm 23 applies to the sheep of the Good Shepherd. Today, we rest in the assurance of being Jesus' sheep, our eternal Good Shepherd in whom we find our provision, protection, mercy, lovingkindness and grace.

Prayer: Lord, from your abundance we are blessed with our daily provisions from your hand. We rejoice in your generosity and your extravagance. We thank you for seeking us out through the work of your Holy Spirit, that you have through your love, your mercy and grace, made me a part of your flock. And may these provisions follow me all the days of my life, Good Shepherd. Amen.