

God Will Prepare a Table for You in the Presence of Your Enemies

In Psalm 42:5 (AMP), the psalmist asked, “Why are you cast down, O my inner self? And why should you moan over me and be disquieted within me?” It seems to be that way with many people today. Because of the pressures of everyday life—in our work, finances, our homes or relationships—there is some form of depression, discouragement or discontentment in almost everyone you see.

But it really doesn’t have to be that way. We do not need to live our lives downcast. We can be content, encouraged and joyful even in the midst of troubles.

For many years I felt bad about myself because of the abuse I endured for most of my childhood. I felt damaged and ashamed and focused more on what I did wrong than anything else. That is until I came to an understanding of who I am in Christ!

You see, what we *think* of ourselves has a lot to do with how we *feel* about ourselves. You don’t have to be mad at yourself because you don’t do everything right. You can enjoy your life even while you have a problem! The question is *can you see yourself the way God sees you—the way He says you are in His Word?* Will you trust the Holy Spirit to work in you until you *can* see it? Don’t worry ... you don’t have to wait until He’s done; the work is ongoing. You just need to trust Him.

Come to the Table: In a book I read about shepherds and sheep, it talks about how a shepherd will go to the “table lands,” a high plateau that is difficult to reach but where there is good, healthy grass for the sheep to graze. He goes and “prepares” the land by removing any poisonous grasses and flowers that could harm the sheep. In Psalm 23:5, David says,

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. ...” And 2 Samuel, chapter 9 tells a beautiful story that conveys how welcome we are at that table.

Some time after the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan, David began to search for someone in the bloodline of Saul to be good to in Jonathan’s memory. Jonathan had been like a brother to David, and he wanted to honor his friend by showing favor to any of his descendants. David found out that Jonathan had a son who was still alive. But he was told that the young man had “issues.” His feet were lame. That was no matter to King David, who sent for the young man, Mephibosheth, to be brought to him.

Of course, Mephibosheth came in fear and shame, bowing and asking, “What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I am?” Many of us come to God that way because we do not feel good enough or that we deserve God’s love, grace and mercy. I felt this way for a long time, so I understand what it’s like. But we don’t have to be good enough to come to God. He wants us to come to Him just as we are, and then He will change the things about us that need to be changed as we grow in our relationship with Him.

David assured Mephibosheth, saying, “Fear not, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your father [grandfather], and you shall eat at my table always.”

The last verse of that chapter says, “So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king’s table, [even though] he was lame in both feet.” What a beautiful account of unconditional love, acceptance and redemption!

You Are Always Welcome: This is our story as well. The table has been prepared for us in the presence of all our enemies—all our issues and problems. The Lord welcomes us to His table and anoints our heads with oil, which symbolizes the

Holy Spirit. The custom in those days was to anoint the body with oil mixed with perfume to refresh and invigorate. In the same way, the anointing of the Holy Spirit refreshes and energizes our hearts.

Another custom was the filling of the cup. As long as the host continued to fill a guest's cup, it meant that the guest was welcome. In Psalm 23:5-6, David says, "You anoint my head with oil; my [brimming] cup runs over ... and through the length of my days the house of the Lord [and His presence] shall be my dwelling place."

When the Lord is your Shepherd, there is no reason for you to feel insecure, ashamed or fearful before Him. You will *always* be welcome at the table in the presence of God!

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