



"You Prepare a Table Before Me in the Presence of My Enemies"

Psalm 23 (NKJV)

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside 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; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Some scholars believe David is changing from the motif of a shepherd to a host in this verse, but I don't. When we understand the Shepherd is moving his sheep due to a seasonal transition from the lowlands to the highlands, and he "leads them in the right path" and takes them through the "gorge of the shadow of death." We see this verse is in a perfect path.

As the Shepherd gets to the new area (fields and feeding grounds), there are enemies there that must be addressed. There are poisonous plants, viper holes, reptiles, caves, and of course, wild animals. Since the Shepherd has gone ahead to check out the new area, he is aware of these ever-present enemies to his flock.

But he leads them to this new grazing place and "puts out a spread" for them where they can comfortably feed - even in the presence of these known enemies.

How does this apply to us?

I. We have a Shepherd who is a pioneer.

Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,..."

He is an author...a pioneer, forerunner, trailblazer....

He goes ahead of us to prepare a way and to take care of the enemies.

Jesus went to Calvary to take care of our enemies. He went where no one else had ever gone and did what no one else could have done.

II. We have enemies.

Good people have enemies. Even our Lord, a perfect person, had enemies.

Just as there is a Holy Trinity, there is an Evil Trinity.

We have three main enemies:

A. The World – External Enemy

The world is not a geographic location, but it is the culture, values of this present age.

John 15: 18-19 “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

I John 2: 15 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”

But Jesus prayed for us in **John 17** that God would keep us from the world and then gave us this victory statement in **I John 5:4...** “And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.”

B. The Flesh – Internal Enemy

Our flesh (not our skin) but our sinful desires and appetites is our enemy.

What I want....how I feel....I cannot trust my flesh.

Instead, my flesh must die, but I can't kill it. Instead, I can identify with the death of Christ.

Galatians 2: 20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

When Jesus died, I died. I can appropriate his death to my life.

C. The Devil – Infernal Enemy

I Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

The devil is real and alive. But he has no power over us because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Colossians 2:15 “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

III. What our Sheperd Provides for us

A. A Place

"He prepares a table"

The word for table here is not a piece of furniture – but more like " a spread."

There is a place where we are no longer hungry. A place where we can sit down – lay down.

B. His Presence

The sheep do not enjoy this place of peace due to all the enemies being gone...but because the Shepherd, who has already taken care of the enemy, is ever present with them.

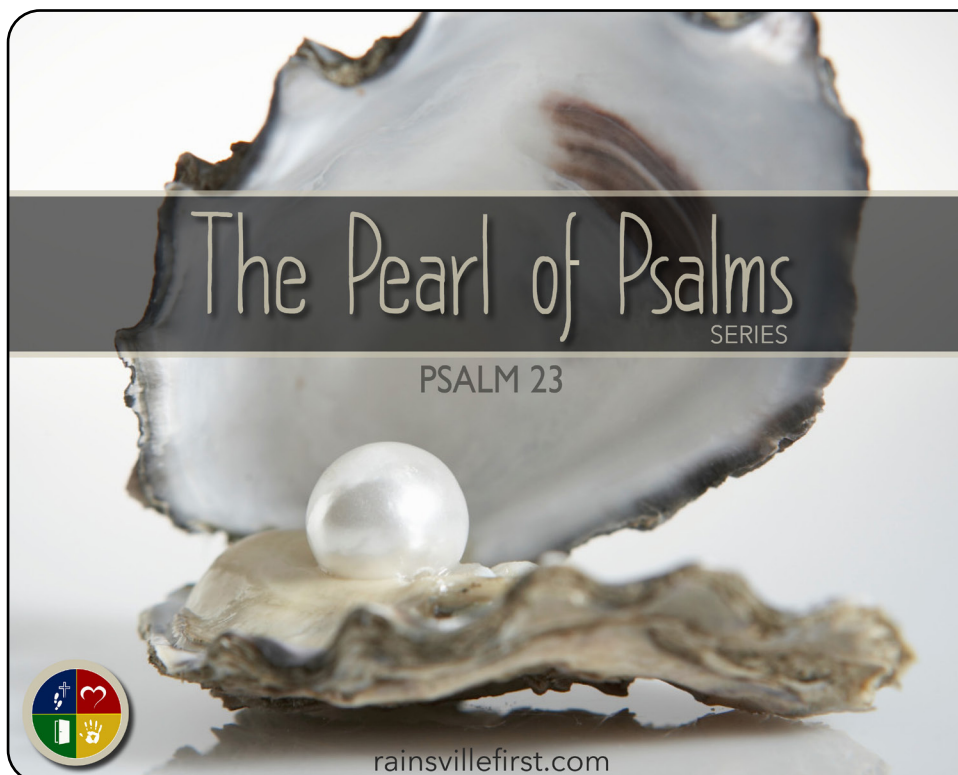
C. His Provision

He provides "a spread." We are feasting. We have everything we need and more.

D. His Peace

We have peace there.

There is no hurry – no disturbance. We sit down in perfect peace.



The Pearl of Psalms
SERIES
PSALM 23
rainsvillefirst.com

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2019

September 15th
"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

September 22nd
"I SHALL NOT WANT"

September 29th
"HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES"

October 6th
"HE LEADS ME BESIDE STILL WATERS"

October 13th
"HE RESTORES MY SOUL"

October 20th
"HE LEADS ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

November 10th
"THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY"

November 17th
"YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF THEY COMFORT ME"

November 24th
"YOU PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME
IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES"

December 1st
"YOU ANOINT MY HEAD WITH OIL; MY CUP RUNS OVER"

December 15th
"SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME"

December 22nd
"AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER"

December 29th
"THE LORD'S SUPPER"