

## The Good Shepherd V (Go To Meeting)

Steve Durham—July 29, 2023

We've been talking about Psalm 23 and we're up to verse five

Psalm 23:5: "You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over."

This is a break between Christ dealing with the sheep, caring for them—walking the journey through the day—and the water and the place to lay down in the good grass.

Now David comes to a point where the day is starting to end and he is preparing a table. Symbolism of the table being prepared at the end of the day, and he says he does it "...**in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.**"

Psalm 23:1 *begins with*: "**The LORD is my Shepherd...**"

Notice the word *my*. David pays personal attention to the relationship he has with the Shepherd, with Jesus Christ.

"...**I shall not want**" (v 1). *I lack nothing!*

When you have that relationship with Christ there is nothing that you lack. If you enter into it properly and you seek Him, love Him, and do the things He says, and in a good covenant with Him, you lack nothing.

This is the central theme in Psa. 23. David's saying that with God as his Shepherd in life, and he lacks nothing. It's reinforced throughout Psa. 23.

We'll read a couple of Psalms here that have to do with this table setting that he talks about. David says:

Psalm 40:1: "I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit... [look at the trouble that David is talking about that he's in] ...out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon **a Rock**... [we know that spiritually is Jesus Christ] ...and established my steps" (vs 1-2).

When we keep the Law, we establish the Law, and it's a path. It shows us the path to righteousness, as he talks about earlier in Psa. 23.

Verse 3: "And He has put a new song in my mouth... [look at the joy that he has] ...*even* praise to our God; many shall see and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."

This is something that is for everyone, for others as well.

Verse 4: "Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust and does not respect the proud, nor those who turn aside to lies."

So, those folks are not going to be at the table, are they?

Verse 5: "O LORD my God, many things You have done, Your wonderful works and Your thoughts which are toward us... [God takes a personal attention and personal care with us] ...there is none to compare unto You; if I could declare and speak of them, they would be more than can be told. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, 'Lo, I come; **in the Scroll of the Book it is written of me...** [David knew quite a bit, didn't he?] ...**I delight to do Your will, O My God; and Your Law is within My heart**" (vs 4-8).

Revelation 20:11: "Then I saw a Great White Throne and the One Who was sitting on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and *the books were opened...*" (vs 11-12).

This is for everyone. This is at the end of time, at the end of the age of man, The Great White Throne Judgment.

"...and another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*.... [the first resurrection] ...And the dead were judged out of the things written in the book according to their works" (v 12). *So, there's two books.*

*The Book of Life* written for those that live now, and David was referring to *The Book of Life*.

Talking about sacrifices, God didn't want necessarily. They didn't please Him as much as this:

Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

David knew that to sit at that table, he needed to have:

- a broken spirit
- a broken and a contrite heart
- a humble heart
- ✓ yielding

- ✓ submissive
- ✓ obedient

**To God!** To establish the Law and establish that position that he had *at that table with God!*

David acknowledges that God is always with him. God is looking out for his good, and He does it with us.

Romans 8.28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God...”  
*Even in the darkest valley:*

Psalm 23:4: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”

David is looking toward the shepherd to care for him. Even in the most challenging circumstances, ‘...in the presence of my enemies, You have set a table for me....’ *So, David had comfort!*

He knew that the Shepherd would care for him. At the end of the day, he would sit down with God. That symbolism, again, is sitting at that table in the presence of the trouble that he was in. God had his back; God was going to take care of him. David lacked nothing. He knew that.

God inspired him to write this Psalm. David loves God and wants to have a Godly relationship with God, just as we should do that. As we grow in the love of God, we want to have that relationship, as well.

David lives his life in awe and reverence of God and His Laws. He writes all the way through the Psalms he tells us that, because God is with him, supplying his every need and looking out for his welfare.

Verse 5: “You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies....”

Symbolizing a close relationship with God. God loved us first. We love Him because He loved us first. He has that personal relationship.

This is using, the example of a guest at the table of the Lord. But it also describes an outdoor situation, too. So, it’s dual. It shows the customs of the time where you come in and you sit down at a host house and you are the guest.

But it also shows with the sheep sitting at the table. That doesn’t leave the outdoor setting. But first, let’s talk about the guest situation.

God has called us and he’s chosen us to be His Family, hasn’t he? We know those Scriptures; we’re invited to be at God’s table. That’s a special invitation that we’re given. It’s a special chosen elect. And the word to be faithful and to have that

invitation from God to come and to sit at that banquet, sit at that table. We’re an honored guest of a generous and loving God, or a loving host: Jesus Christ. He’s:

- the Provider
- the Sustainer
- the Creator
- the Comforter
- comforting
- merciful
- faithful
- our Shepherd

Christ attends to David’s every need; covering and showering him with personal attention and care, just as He does us. And by the way, ***we are God’s sheep!***

Psalm 100:3: “...we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”

So He has personal attention and care one-on-one. Just like Christ does with us, He did with David. God loves us so much that He gave His only begotten son, He gives His life for us!

John 10:9: “**I am the door.** If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy. **I have come so that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly. I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep**” (vs 9-11).

He gives personally everything. He wants us to give everything to him, the heart, mind, soul, and our being, everything 100% completely, because that’s how he deals with us. Abundant living he wants us to have physically and eternally.

2-Corinthians 9:8: “For God *is* able to... [bless you abundantly in all things at all times, even in trouble]] ...make all grace abound toward you so that in every *way* you may always have sufficiency in all *things*, *and* may abound unto every good work,”

That’s the point, you have God’s Holy Spirit”

- He leads you
- He cares for you
- He watches over you

He wants you to sit at His table and grow—feed, eat, and grow—and enjoy.

Philippians 1:6: “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not delaying the promise of *His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, He is longsuffering... [patient and merciful] ...toward us, **not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**”

We do that on a regular basis, don't we, because we're not perfect. We make mistakes. But when we repent and come to God and ask for that blood of Christ to be shed on our behalf and we're justified and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, we're back in the good graces. We're back in the scene as Jesus Christ in God the Father's eyes.

We're back at the table again in good stead. Christ is covering and showering David and us and the sheep with all good things, in addition to protecting us.

Psa.17 is a very interesting Psalm. We talk about Psa. 91 being the protection Psalm. Psa. 17 has an awful lot to say about sitting at a table and being surrounded by enemies and being in trouble and difficulties and God having your back and taking care of you.

Psalm 17:1: “Hear the right, O LORD...”—***the righteous!*** Hear those that are trying, that are repenting. David was; He had a heart for God.

“...attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, for it is not from lips of deceit” (v 1).

So, think about this in your case, in your situation, in my situation. We can cry out to God and He'll hear us.

Isaiah 59:2<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: “But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid *His* face from you, that He will not hear.”

Our sins separate us from God. If we're trying and we're repentant and we're availing ourselves of that atonement, that propitiation, the blood of Christ, then we're seen in good stead. We're not deceitful. We're sincere.

Psalm 17:2: “Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes behold things that are upright. You have tried my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tested me, and You shall find nothing...” (vs 2-3). *Now, isn't that wonderful to be able to say?*

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...”

Those who avail themselves of that process and are repentant that have come into covenant with God. ***There's no condemnation!*** So you've tested me and you're not going to find anything.

Psalm 17:3: “...I have purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the words of Your lips, I have kept *myself* from the paths of the violent... [he's trying to walk straight] ...My steps have held fast to Your paths, my feet have not slipped. I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; incline Your ear to me; hear my speech” (vs 3-6).

*Then he asks this of God;* v 7: “Show Your marvelous loving kindness, O Savior of those seeking refuge in You... [at that table] ...by Your right hand... [by your power and your strength] ...*save them* from those who rise up against them”—*those enemies that are around about!*

Verse 8: “Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings from the face of the wicked who oppress me—my deadly enemies who encircle me” (vs 8-9)

Now look at the table and you're eating, and you've got hell around you. You've got these people that want to do you harm. David had a lot of that, and we do, too. “...From the face of the wicked who oppress me, my deadly enemies who encircle me.”

Verse 10: “They have closed their pitiless hearts... [no pity] ...with their mouth they speak proudly. They have now surrounded us in our steps. They have set their eyes to cast us down to the earth.... [this is an interesting analogy]: ...They are like a lion that longs to tear his prey, and like a young lion stalking in secret places” (vs 10-12).

- What motivates them?
- What are they the children of?
- What spirit is influencing them?

Even members in the Church sometimes are not led by the Holy Spirit, but allow Satan to lead them, guide them in doing things and having jealousy, envy, bitterness and anger. ***Those are not from God!*** So, when we let go of those things and allow those to happen in us, we're letting go of the Holy Spirit.

*We end up being led by Satan,* by this lion that longs to tear his prey apart and like young lion stalking in secret places.

Verse 13: “Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him down; deliver my soul from the wicked by Your sword, from men by Your hand, O LORD, from men of the world whose portion is in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your treasure. They are full of children, and will leave their riches to their babes. As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness” (vs 13-15).

Again, David knew and understood the Plan of God. He was going to be satisfied at the table. The enemies were not going to harm him. He put them in God's hands. He trusted in God. And then the result of that was an eternal blessing.

"...I will be satisfied when I awake with your likeness."

So finally, God is covering and showering him with eternal blessings. And the greatest blessing we can have:

Revelation 3:5—*David understood this*: "The one who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

***The Crown of Life!*** That is the eternal blessing that we have waiting for us ***IF we endure and we stick with it.***

James 1:12 *talks about that*: "Blessed is the man who endures trials, because after he has been proved **he shall receive a Crown of Life**, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

That's a promise, a Crown of Life ***IF*** we endure the trials and hang in there and stay with it!

Revelation 2:10: *the Church at Smyrna*: "Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer...."

Now this can be written about us as well. There's a lot more suffering coming down the road. So don't fear that, he says.

"...Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a Crown of Life. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death**" (vs 10-11).

See that environment that we're in at that table, even though the enemies are around us, we have eternal blessings that are there. As long as we:

- feed from the Bread of Life, the food that God gives us
- walk in that righteous way of life
- avail ourselves of that comfort, peace and enjoyment at that table

*So the central theme of Psalm 23:1*: "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" (vs 1-2).

Look at all the care, the personal care and comfort while we're on this, in these pasture lands,

the world, and we walk in this way of life, this journey that He's given to us.

Verse 3: "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" (vs 3-4).

*What a wonderful Psalm this is, Psalm 23!*  
Then in:

Verse 5: "You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies...."

***Christ protecting us, caring for us, loving us!*** There's nothing that we can want in that situation. He's gonna care for us all the time, take care of us always. As long as we stay close to him and we mess up, we go and we repent and we change. We go back to him and ask for his help. His, the blood that he shed on our behalf for the remission of sins.

Philippians 4:19: "But my God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Then Christ talks in on the Sermon of the Mount. Matthew 6:8: "Now then, do not be like them... [He's talking about the evil ones] ...for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him."

Verses 31-32 says, 'Don't worry about things; God knows all your needs.'

- don't be anxious, worried and fearful
- don't be anxious about tomorrow
- don't be anxious about your life
- don't be anxious as to what you shall eat or what you shall drink

***As long as you're at that table that's been set for us,***

Verse 25: "Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?"

Is not life more than food? ***Life! Eternal Life!*** The food that we eat is that Bread of Life—Christ—the words that He gives us, that we live by.

Verse 27: "But who among you, by taking careful thought, is able to add one cubit to his stature?"

Not able to do that. Without God, we're nothing.

Verse 31: "Therefore, do not be anxious,

saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we be clothed?’ For the nations seek after all these things....” (vs 31-32).

The world seeks after those things. They’re competitive. It’s a dog fight.

“...And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But *as for* you... [here’s what we do; here’s what He wants us to do]: **...seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself. Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of that *day*” (vs 32-34).

Sit at the table. Don’t worry about it. Enjoy! You have a special invitation to be there, and a special calling, which is that of the firstfruits. It’s an amazing calling that we have. Christ is our Good Shepherd. He takes care of us. What a wonderful analogy that is.

1 Peter 5:4: “And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory.”

Stay at that table. don’t ask to be excused; stay right there! Our eternal blessings from the Shepherd and the Father in heaven, that’s what those are. We have a Chief Shepherd that takes care of us. has our back and in the presence of our enemies. He set a table for us, and wants us to come and eat the Bread of Life. That’s encouraging! There’s nothing more encouraging than really being able to focus on that in good and bad times, even in the presence of those that would hurt us, in and out of the Church!

I know that may sound surprising to some of you, but at all times, not everybody in the Church is being led by the Spirit. Sometimes we get off. At those times, there are problems.

Trusting God to be there, and that we are in His presence always puts us at peace. He said in

John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you... [right after He says the Comforter will come] ...My peace I give to you; not as the world gives...” *It’s a different peace! This is real peace!*

1-Peter 5:7: “Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.”

Again, David had a lot of adversaries. Seated at the table, they posed no threat to David. Why? Because he, **and we**, have guest rights to that table; it’s called family rights. We have family rights with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Rom. 8.13-16—we know these Scriptures, where children of God are inheritors with God and with Christ.

Romans 8:13: “Because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God. Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship...” (vs 13-15).

That’s what gives us that invitation to the table.

“...whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God.” (vs 15-16).

And look at this, the spiritual blessing here:

Verse 17: “Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ... [we’re right there with Christ at that table, we’re family] ...if indeed we suffer together with Him... [that’s going to happen] so that we may also be glorified together with Him.”

He learned obedience through His suffering. That’s what God wants us to learn, as well, to be like Christ. He’s our example!

It gives us guest rights, first seat at the table, with God, the Father and Jesus Christ. We’re the sons of God!

1-John 3:1<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2)—*as long as that seed of begettal is dwelling in us, and we’re not practicing sin!*

In the Middle East the custom was that if you were the host and you had a guest, you were obligated to safeguard that visitor from all enemies, no matter what the cost. If he was in your house, that was your responsibility.

So, David’s thinking about that when he writes this, but he’s also thinking about the sheep.

Just a few things, and I won’t go through all the customs, but regarding guest and host’s responsibility:

As a house guest, we are preparing to serve and dine with the host at the house. So, we go in and he’s going to offer a meal, he’s going to offer us

water, he's going to give us a greeting, and he bows down, and there are several things that they do, we won't go through all of them.

The host would sit the guest down and then prepare the food and set it at the table, making it ready, the food ready for dinner. The host was considered to be a servant, and the guest was the Lord.

In other words, that house was yours, and they would say that. Lot spoke of himself with the guest when they came in (Gen. 19), remember he said, 'Behold now, my Lord, turn in, I pray unto you, into your servant's house.' He saw himself as the servant.

- What was Christ? *Christ was the servant, he came to serve, not to be served!*
- What are we to be? *Christ like!*

We are to be servants, as well, that mentality, and you have a guest, love your neighbor, bring them in. He was given a drink of water, one of the first things done for a guest who had been received is to offer him a drink of water.

Look at the analogy of water with *the woman at the well*, Christ told her that 'if you knew what this water was'; *eternal life!* She said, 'Where do I get that water?' *He was offering her eternal life*, and she was giving him a drink of water.

Doing this is recognizing Him as being worthy of that reception. When Eliezer, Abraham's servant, went with the camels and saw a well, he did so by requesting from the maiden who came to the well to draw water said, 'Let me, I pray you, drink a little water from your pitcher.'

She answered him and said, 'Drink, my Lord.' This was an indication that she was welcoming him to be a guest at her house. All that attached to that drink of water, but that was a custom.

What was one of the things that the shepherd does with the sheep, provides refreshing water, clear water to the sheep.

Mark 9.41—*Christ says*: "For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, he shall in no way lose his reward."

In the lands of the East, when a host accepts a man to be his guest, he agrees that whatever the cost, he will defend him from the enemies, whatever they may be.

The second part of this being set at the table is the outdoor setting in the pasture land. There were

'table lands' they called them, or plateaus within the hills.

Go out to Colorado, it's like this. You go up in the Rockies and then there is this plateau, a long green area. This was the 'table land.'

The shepherd set a table in the presence of his enemies. So, there were dangers and obstructions on this table land that the shepherd had to go and check out and take care of to be sure that the area was cleared for the sheep so they wouldn't be harmed.

From time to time, he'd go through the area that he was going to be leading the sheep, and he would clear out the areas, examine the grass, the surrounding area, and find a good and safe feeding place for the sheep so they would be protected. They'd have good food, and they would be protected from the enemies. It took all of his skill and his courage because there were predators out in the area, and he had to be on guard at all times.

1-Samuel 17:34: "David said to Saul, 'Your servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* out of its mouth. And when it rose against me, I caught *it* by the beard, and struck it and killed it'" (vs 34-35).

So, there were predators that had to be cleared out. David was well aware of that around the feeding grounds in the high hills at these table lands. They lived in caves and different, in the rocks and in the bushes. There were wolves, bears and panthers. So, it took courage from the shepherd to go out and clear this out.

There were also snakes in the holes of moles and golfers and in the grass, and the shepherd would clear them out. He would run them out, beat them out of the grass and run them out so they wouldn't bite the sheep.

The table lands were high in the hills and there were those were the summer ranges for the sheep. Not all plants were good, and that's why they had to be cleared out. The bad plants had to be identified. Some of them were—and I was surprised—acorns, azalea, milkweed. You'd think those wouldn't be harmful, but if the sheep ate those, it would harm them. Mountain laurel and red maple leaves also were not good.

Areas that didn't have any grass were seeded. Poisonous plants were removed. Any obstructions, rocks, sticks, brush, trees, weeds uprooted. Everything was prepared.

That table was prepared for the sheep, and then the sheep were brought in. So, he was speaking from personal experience of clearing that area, the hazards and obstructions and the predators. He prepared the table land of his father, for his father's sheep.

God does the same thing for us, we are His sheep, and as we walk through this life there are times that He wants us to rest and sit down at the table.

In general, we're in that setting through life. He clears it of danger. Where is that 'table land' for us? It's the world, isn't it?

John 17:14—*Christ said*: "I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them from the evil one" (vs 14-15).

The setting, the 'table land' and keeping the enemies away. That's what He does for us. Christ said that in John 17 in the final prayer that He gave.

John 14:30—*Jesus says*: "I will not speak with you much longer because the ruler of this world is coming; but he does not have a single thing in Me."

So, even though they're around, they're not going to harm us if we stay close to God.

Verse 31: "Yet, *he comes* so that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me. Arise, let us go out."

That was right before He, in John 15, talked about the vine, headed toward the last moments of His life.

Satan is one of those predators; he is depicted as a roaring lion in:

1-Peter 5:7<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: "Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you. Be sober! Be vigilant!... [so we have a part] ...For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour" (vs 7-8).

Anyone who get up away from that 'table' our Good Shepherd is able to shut the mouth of Satan so that he doesn't harm us. A good example that I thought about:

Dan. 6—Daniel got thrown into the lion's den by chicanery and it wasn't his fault, he hadn't done anything wrong, but those that were trying to set a trap for him got him and the king had to throw him in the lion's den.

Daniel 6:19: "So the king arose early in the morning... [he was worried about Daniel because he liked Daniel] ...and hurried to the lions' den. 20: And when he came near the den, he cried with a grieved voice to Daniel..." (vs 19-20).

"...The king spoke and said to Daniel, 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God Whom you serve continually able to deliver you from the lions?' Then Daniel said to the king, 'O king, live forever. My God has sent His angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me because before Him innocency was found in me. And also before you, O king, I have done no harm'" (vs 20-22).

God able to do that, and there's another thing that He did, He sent his angels to him.

Sidebar: In Heb. 1:13; I don't know how many times this has happened to us, maybe you've seen your angel, I have several times, but God uses them and assigns them to us.

We'll look at a couple of Scriptures that says that to help us when it comes time to be protected, and to be watched after and cared for. In addition to Christ:

Hebrews 1:13: "But unto which of the angels did He ever say, '**Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet**?' Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent forth to minister to those who are about to inherit salvation?" (vs 13-14).

As we saw earlier, inheritors, that's us! Angels are sent to be ministering spirits for us, and God sends them.

Matthew 8.10—*talking about the blessing of the little children*: "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones; for **I tell you that their angels in heaven** continually look upon the face of My Father, Who is in heaven."

So, in addition to our Good Shepherd protecting us and caring for us, he sends us an angel. He says our angel from God to protect us and keep us from injury, from dangers and obstacles that we encounter.

- He's got us
- He protects us
- He watches over us

That setting that we are in is at the table, we're not gonna be harmed if we stay in God. stay at the table and stay with Him and love Him. God will protect us, he doesn't want any to perish.

Psalm 34:4: "I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.

They looked to Him and were radiant; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard, and saved him out of all his troubles. **The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them.** O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.... [stays at the table] ...O fear the LORD, all you saints, for there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him” (vs 4-9),

That fear is reverence, awe and love. Loving God! He loved us first, we love Him back.

Verse 10: “The young lions do lack... [do not have food, they’re not going to get the food they want; *that’s us*] ...and suffer hunger, **but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.**

Now, all these come from David!

Psalm 121:1: “I will lift up my eyes to the hills: from where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved. He Who keeps you will not slumber” (vs 1-3).

Remember what Satan said at the pinnacle?  
*Cast Yourself down, the angel will stop You and won’t let You be hurt.*

Verse 4: “Behold, He Who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your life. The LORD shall guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore” (vs 4-8).

So in this life as we live it, we’re walking and feeding and living this life in the ‘table lands,’ sitting at his table in the presence of our enemies, the Good Shepherd has prepared a resting area for the sheep; Christ assures us that! Peace, ‘My peace I leave with you.’

We can have peace knowing that God has prepared our lives around Him, in Him and with Him. We’re in His care. It’s interesting because the word *prepare* has the connotation, the meaning of *setting something in place*. Setting it in array, to furnish. It has the connotation of a battle scene. The battle is set.

David talks about this; he uses the same word in preparing for battle. But prepare a table has the connotation of a battle scene. The enemy is all around us. The table is prepared in the midst of our enemies, in Satan’s world; he’s the ‘god of this world’ and he’s the ‘prince of the power of the air.’

**But in God:**

- we have a hiding place
- we have a rest
- we have a fortress
- we have protection

Psalm 32:7: “You [God] are my hiding place...”

- the high tower
- the fortress!
- the place to watch the battle from
- a safe place

“...You shall preserve me from trouble. You have encircled me with songs of deliverance. Selah: (v 7).

- Isn’t that awesome?
- Isn’t that comforting?
- we have to watch out for Satan, the predator
- we have to watch out for ourselves
- we can be our own worst enemy sometimes

We fall back into getting away from the table, back into the world and we’re not supposed to do that. With our carnal nature, we have that sin within, that drags us back. But we’re to **guard the door of our mind!**

2-Corinthians 10:3<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup> “For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh.... [we have to be on guard and know who our enemy is] ... For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds, casting down *vain* imaginations... [there we are, get them out, guard the door of the mind] ... and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...” (vs 3-5).

- pride
- vanity
- arrogance
- I’m better than you
- I need to be served

*All the self that’s in us, get rid of that!*

“...and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ” (v 5).

Every thought, God says, ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts,’ *they’re higher than our thoughts!*

Verse 6: “And having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled. Are you looking at things according to their appearance? If anyone is persuaded in his *own* mind that he is Christ’s, let him reconsider this concerning himself; for exactly as he *is* Christ’s, so also *are* we Christ’s” (vs 6-7).



So, those enemies can be ourselves. Sometimes they can be one another. They can be *those within the Church*, not necessarily those outside the Church. They're going to persecute us; we're going to know where that comes from.

But isn't it hurtful when it's somebody within the Church that blindsides us, doesn't it? Gal. 5 talks about the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit; the fruits of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit.

*But Paul also says; Galatians 5:9: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."*

Verse 13: "...serve one another with love. For the whole Law is fulfilled in this *commandment*: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" *But that doesn't always happen!*

Verse 15: "But if you bite and devour one another, watch out *lest* you be consumed by one another. Now *this* I say... [this is how we stop that] ... walk by *the* Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things you wish to do" (vs 15-17).

There's this fight in him (Rom. 7). You're constantly pulled away. And when others aren't being led, and we have problems with one another, we're not supposed to do that.

Verse 18: "But if you are led by *the* Spirit, you are not under *works of law*"—*talking about traditions and what they are!*

Verse 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit. We should not become vainglorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another" (vs 22-26).

Those can be predators, dangers or obstacles in our way; stay at the table. We love God and we put the self out. We put out the flesh. We put out carnality at that table. Sometimes the enemy is less obvious.

1-Thessalonians 3:2<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: "That we may be delivered from **perverse and wicked men, for all are not of the faith**.... [that's a shock to some people] But the Lord is faithful, Who will establish you and keep *you* from the evil one.... [you have a job to do in that as well] ...Now concerning you, we trust in *the* Lord that you both practice and will be practicing the things that we command you. You're sitting at the table. Obviously, you're going

to be doing that. That's what God and Christ expect.

Verse 5: "And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into *the* endurance of Christ."

That's a big verse, a big statement. We're going through the love of God, into the Love series in Bible study. Big subject!

Verse 6: "Now **we command you**, brethren, in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

This is a command; this is important! If you know somebody isn't walking with Christ, you know somebody has a different doctrine—even though they're sweet and nice people, and you just like them so much—

"...*that* you withdraw from every brother...[not from people in the world] ...who is walking irresponsibly..." (v 6).

They may be a brother, they may have God's Holy Spirit, but at the time, they're not being led by it!

"...and not according to the ordinance that he received from us" (v 6).

That's a command to keep us at the table, to make sure we're protected from our enemies. At that moment, they are our enemies. They're not walking with Christ, not walking with God! Christ is our workmanship!

Ephesians 2:4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ...." (vs 4-5).

He has raised us up together and has caused us to sit together in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ.

"...(For you have been saved by grace.)" (v 6).

Verse 8: "...*especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God"—*not of your own works that you don't boast!*

Verse 10: "For we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them."

We're fellow citizens with the saints of the household of God. We have that invitation at the household of God to come to the table.

Verse 20: "You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone in Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together is

increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 20-22).

He gives us that Holy Spirit to help us to stay at the table, to help us to grow and to overcome and to change. Sometimes we fail in that and we have to be put back on track. We need one another to do that and God will give us that.

The Holy Spirit pricks our conscience and keeps us on track if we listen to it. We know that the One in us is greater than the world.

1 John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

We have occasion where people bring in doctrines that are not on track. We call them false doctrines, but they may not be a lot off; they might sound right, but they’re off a little. We have to discern from that what is the Truth.

Verse 2: “By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the* flesh is from God.”

Some of these things are direct, they deny Christ. They go against that.

Verse 3: “And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist...”

Verse 4: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world.”

We have to remember that God, as he did with Job, God put a hedge around Job. He does that with us as well.

Satan said, ‘Take that hedge down, and I can get to him.’ So, God let him do that for a while. Sometimes God lets Satan have his way with us for a purpose, to help us to grow and overcome, to be tested, and to stay strong. After the fact; sometimes in the trial we’re not doing real well.

If we’re in covenant with God, and reverently and repentantly following Him, He may allow certain things to come, certain trials to come, but they’re for our benefit. He controls the events.

He has our best interest in mind, and we’ll be able to enjoy the table that is set before us in the presence of our enemies. Much better at the end of it. All things work for the good of those who believe in God.

Psalm 9:9: “The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.”

We can go to Him in times of trouble. When these things happen, we know He’s there.

Verse 10: “And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You. Sing praises to the LORD, Who dwells in Zion; declare among the nations His deeds. For He Who avenges blood remembers them; He forgets not the cry of the humble. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble *which I suffer* from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death, so that I may declare all Your praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion; I will rejoice in Your salvation” (vs 10-14).

*He helps us overcome with the Holy Spirit!*

Revelation 3:5: “The one who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

When we’re seated at His table, we don’t have to fear. Now, maybe a couple things happen, but we’re still at the table. We’re still under His care as the shepherd.

Rom. 8—I love this section. We need to remember this always as we walk this way and sit at that table land and that plateau with the Shepherd and the other sheep.

Romans 8:35: “What shall separate us from the love of Christ?....”

Nothing, nothing’s going to separate us from that. We might, it might be us that does it. We have to be on guard.

“...*Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Accordingly, it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for *the* slaughter.’ But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us” (vs 35-37).

We win out, we win if we hang in there! Christ will make sure that we make it. We just have to do our part.

Verse 38: “For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 38-39).

So, David said, You prepare a place for me, a table for me in the presence of my enemies; a close relationship with God, the honored guest at the table.

The called sons of God, children of God, sitting at that table with a capable Host, a gracious Host Who:

- attends to our needs
- showers us with:
  - ✓ personal care
  - ✓ abundant goodness
  - ✓ protection from the enemy
  - ✓ eternal blessings

***What a wonderful picture!***

David had many adversaries, we do too, and we will have. But in the presence of the Lord seated at His table, they pose no threat because:

- we have guest rights
- we have family rights
- we are the sons of God

*He loves us and He personally cares for us!* What a wonderful thought, what a wonderful Psalm.

I want to read this. We read this in a lot at the end of messages, but it's a focus that we have at the end of our lives, eternally:

- where we're going to live
- where we're going to be
- what we're going to do
- the relationship we'll have with God the Father and Jesus Christ

Revelation 21:2: "And I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from heaven say, 'Behold, the Tabernacle of God *is* with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be anymore death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away.' And He Who sits on the Throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the Water of Life. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son'" (vs 2-7).

**Scriptural References:**

- 1) Psalm 23:5, 1
- 2) Psalm 40:1-8
- 3) Revelation 20:11-12
- 4) Psalm 51:17

- 5) Romans 8:28
- 6) Psalm 23:4-5
- 7) Psalm 100:3
- 8) John 10:9-11
- 9) 2 Corinthians 9:8
- 10) Philippians 1:6
- 11) 2 Peter 3:9
- 12) Psalm 17:1
- 13) Isaiah 59:2
- 14) Psalm 17:2-3
- 15) Romans 8:1
- 16) Psalm 17:4-15
- 17) Revelation 3:5
- 18) James 1:12
- 19) Revelation 2:10-11
- 20) Psalm 23:1-5
- 21) Philippians 4:19
- 22) Matthew 6:8, 25, 27 31-34.
- 23) 1 Peter 5:4
- 24) John 14:27
- 25) 1 Peter 5:7
- 26) Romans 8:13-17
- 27) 1 John 3:1-2
- 28) Mark 9:41,
- 29) 1 Samuel 17:34-35
- 30) John 17:14-15
- 31) John 14:30-31
- 32) 1 Peter 5:7-8.
- 33) Daniel 6:19-22
- 34) Hebrews 1:13-14
- 35) Matthew 8:10
- 36) Psalm 34:4-10
- 37) Psalm 121:1-8
- 38) Psalm 32:7
- 39) 2 Corinthians 10:3-7
- 40) Galatians 5:9, 13-18, 22-26
- 41) 2 Thessalonians 3:2-6
- 42) Ephesians 2:4-6, 8, 10, 20-22
- 43) 1 John 4:1-4
- 44) Psalm 9:9-14
- 45) Revelation 3:5
- 46) Romans 8:35-39
- 47) Revelation 21:2-7

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- John 15
- Romans 7

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