

LACK NOTHING

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE 23rd PSALM



SETTING THE TABLE

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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are concluding our series called **Lack Nothing** which is based upon King David's 23rd Psalm. We have learned a lot about David in these past few weeks, haven't we? This great king warmed the heart of God because his own heart adored his Shepherd Father. He had many faults and failings, just as we have, but David's life story is ultimately one of devotion and gratitude for God's grace. His psalms are about his own journey with God -- both the highlights and lowlights -- and they encourage us to persevere in our faith because protection and redemption are ours through Jesus' sacrifice and God's grace. An important message as we leave this Psalm is that God has prepared a place of security -- a table -- where He is ever-present, comforting us and protecting us from our enemies.

QUESTION: Before beginning this study, what did you think was lacking in your life? How has your perspective about that changed? What about David's life has encouraged you to persevere in your faith?

SCRIPTURE¹

Psalm 23:1-6 (THE VOICE) The Eternal is my shepherd, He cares for me always. He provides me rest in rich, green fields beside streams of refreshing water. He soothes my fears; He makes me whole again, steering me off worn, hard paths to roads where truth and righteousness echo His name. Even in the unending shadows of death's darkness, I am not overcome by fear. Because You are with me in those dark moments, near with Your protection and guidance, I am comforted. You spread out a table before me, provisions in the midst of attack from my enemies; You care for all my needs, anointing my head with soothing, fragrant oil, filling my cup again and again with Your grace. Certainly, Your faithful protection and loving provision will pursue me where I go, always, everywhere. I will always be with the Eternal, in Your house forever.

John 10:11 Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that you may have life ... and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd ... The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

OBSERVATION

The metaphor of sheep and shepherd is, of course, about Jesus and us and it is not entirely complimentary about the us part. Sheep are not that fast; they can't see very well; they can't really fight for themselves; sometimes they wander off even when it is obvious that they should stay put; and sometimes the shepherd is trying to move forward and the sheep are lagging behind. Sound familiar? At the end of each day, the shepherd's job was to lead the flock back toward home after spending time in the fields, but as they were heading home, it was actually the most dangerous time of the day. The shepherd would expect predators (wolves, lions, or bears, oh my!) to follow behind the flock and try and pick off any weak or stray sheep. The shepherd would be in front, but if he was alone, he had to keep a nervous eye on the rear of the flock because of those nasty predators. The enemy was not just following, but was actively pursuing the flock to steal, kill

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

and destroy. By using the imagery of the sheep, God isn't saying we are always so awesome. He knows better than that, so He is saying that he wants to lead us to a table where we will be anointed with oil and our cups filled to overflowing.

QUESTION: Who or what do you consider your enemy today? When do you feel that enemy biting at your heels most often?

QUESTION: Is there a stronghold your enemy is accusing you of that is continuing to darken your day and steal your joy? Where are you going to find rest from those accusations?

APPLICATION

There are so many negative and threatening things in our lives today – enemies that seem to be always pursuing us. Maybe this current season has challenged our faith, shaken our resolve, and we are being tempted to wander, but don't do it! When we sit down with God, we have to know that other things will invite themselves to that table if we allow them -- things like stuff and circumstances that are enemies of what God wants to do in our lives. Stuff that pursues us, stalks us, and things that want to separate us from the Shepherd. Isn't it amazing how fast the enemies in our lives can try to insert themselves at our tables – how fast we can go from being connected to God to having an enemy there getting between us and Him? This is a table that is about stealing, killing and destroying, but God's pursuit of us looks different. He gave His life in order to sit at the table with us so that our lives would matter. That we wouldn't be filled with meaningless wandering, but live full of purpose. So, don't give the enemy a seat at your table! He doesn't deserve your attention or energy. Let's fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, because we have been uniquely invited to dine with Him.

QUESTION: Which enemies are trying to join you there? Why do you choose to call them enemies?

So, let's talk about this table. This is what we are studying this week – we have nothing to offer Jesus, yet he keeps His covenant and invites us to His table of forgiveness, redemption, protection, comfort and rest. Its purpose is to show us what our relationship with God is all about. This would have really meant something in the time of the 23rd Psalm. The people lived in a desert environment so a table with food and cool water was a precious commodity. To spread it out for someone was the ultimate act of hospitality and goodness. This is a generous mentality.

QUESTION: One story about David involves the son, Mephibosheth, of his best friend Jonathan with whom he had a covenant – that David would care for Jonathan's family should he be killed in battle. Please read his story in 2 Samuel 9:1-11. What parallels do you find between David's table there and God's table.

QUESTION: Tell us about your family's dinner table. What do you love about it? What would you like to change?

QUESTION: When was the last time you invited friends to dinner at your home? What did you enjoy most about that experience?

This is a season to be reminded that, if we surrender to the Good Shepherd, His goodness, mercy, protection, and provision are pursuing us. He is preparing a table and, even with our enemies present, He is at the table with us.

QUESTION: What about this five-week study have you appreciated the most?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You prepare a table for us in the presence of our insecurity, in the presence of our deficit, in the presence of our addictions, in the presence of our confusion, in the presence of what we have lost, in the presence of the threat that we won't make it, and in the presence of our enemies. We trust that You are always there: preparing, protecting and pursuing us. We praise and thank you, Lord. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

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