

I Shall Not Lack Resource & Reservoir of Hope

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Preacher: Dr. Don Owsley

[0 : 00] It's not terribly insignificant to talk about feasts as shepherds either, especially when addressing God, who is the Lord's shepherd, who leads his people. And so far, what we've seen in Psalm 23 is that the Lord, in his wisdom and kindness and love and grace, has provided rest. We don't lack rest in him. We don't lack restoration in him.

We do not lack a road for guidance with him, and we don't lack a refuge or protection. Now, I shall not lack resource and a reservoir of hope.

Let's look at verse 5. Verse 5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You see how contradictory that is? This is God who is speaking to David.

David, or David speaking about God himself as God. And he says, you, O God, prepare. God is the servant. In the Old Testament, God was not always a warrior God.

God was not a meanie waiting to zap and kill off people. He was a gracious, wonderful, loving God. God in the Old Testament was as much a servant as Jesus in the New Testament.

[1 : 22] When Jesus comes, the God who became man, he comes and he says, I have not come to be served. I have come to serve. He's bringing with him the whole idea of the God of the Old Testament.

I will serve. And rather than being served as he has served in those worship events in the tabernacle later in the temple, he is the one who is serving.

He says, you, O Lord, prepare a table before me. But here's something even more contradictory. In the presence of my enemies.

I don't know about you, but I've, pastors have this habit of gaining a lot of enemies. And in my 20 years as a pastor, I've had a number, you know, quite a few enemies.

And I'll tell you what, in my heart of hearts, I would not want to eat a Sloppy Joe or a Big Mac with him. I'm just not that nice. However, this is what God invites us to.

[2 : 24] And he even says, I'm going to sit you down and you're going to eat with your enemies. And I'm going to prepare a table for you and your enemies. Wow. I don't like that.

And yet, if it's an opportunity to have a feast with the Lord, you know, there it is. We're going to see why this is important. The first thing that we see here is the preparation of the host himself, God. To appreciate verse 5, we really have to learn about Asia, it was Oriental, you know, their kind of hospitality. In Genesis 18, we see Abraham who goes to extra lengths to give a feast, to put on a feast for his two guests, two angels.

And he does that. That was not an unusual event. Granted, it was special. But what they did is if you saw someone, you know, with a white flag, as it were, you know, somebody, an enemy in the distance, and he was coming, he was passing through, and you're not necessarily at war.

And he wants to pass through. You were encouraged and urged to show hospitality to that enemy. And you would open up your home. And as I've said before, that didn't mean that the woman, the wife, you know, and the others couldn't complain the whole time about it.

[3 : 48] But they still had to show hospitality. And once they were in your home or in the confines of your tent or compound, they were protected. They knew that they had a safe haven during that time.

And so enemies could come and they could feast with you. And Genesis 19, we see hospitality required absolute protection of your guests, whoever they were.

And we see this throughout the Old Testament. They were required to be hospitable to those they didn't know and even to their enemies. But he says, you, O Lord, prepare.

You place in order a table feast. God the shepherd is now God the servant. He's doing this, and he's done this in Christ for us.

God is preparing a feast, in fact, for us now. For the great day of the feast as we see in Revelation, when he collects all his people and he brings us to his table to celebrate.

[4 : 54] And then he gives us the new heavens and the new earth. So there's the preparation by the host himself here, not by the servants. But notice the power of the host here.

This is before my enemies. Now that's some power. It's the power of the host is demonstrated in the fact that the meal is served in the very presence of your enemies.

You can be assured that even in the presence of your enemies, God is with you and he will protect you. And the enemies, because of God, as gracious as he was and is, would also protect them.

Offentimes, when one would depart for a lengthy journey, he would be given a big send-off feast because they didn't know if he'd ever return.

You know, traveling the roads, you know, traveling the roads, it'd be like some kind of dystopian thing where, you know, I-25 is no longer a place traveled by a lot of cars.

[6 : 00] And you had to walk up to Fort Collins and there were thieves on the way ready to rob it if they could. And that's why you would travel in big caravans and you would hire mercenaries or soldiers or policemen, so to speak, in order to protect you.

But they would have a big feast before they left. This is what happened in Luke 10, you know, the good Samaritan coming to the aid of the one who had been robbed and beaten.

You know, he was on a journey. And he was robbed and he was beaten and left for dead. It happened frequently. But he says, I prepare you a table.

I, God, the shepherd, am serving you. And the point is, in the Lord's protection and provision for you, he does not remove the enemy. Safety is not in the absence of the enemy.

Safety is in the presence of the Lord. And that's something we need to keep in mind a lot, don't we?

So the third thing that we see here is the provision of the host or by the host.

[7 : 05] It's that anointed head. You, O Lord, anoint. The literal words here. The thing about Hebrew is that in our language, we like precision.

You know, we borrow a lot from the Latin and the German. And so everything has to be precise. We think linearly. That's not the Hebrew way. They're very colorful. You know, they're picturesque.

And so what is you? You anoint. Literally, you make fat with oil my head. Now, what that means is that you use fat or oil from fat and you anoint my head.

And back then, fat was a good thing. If you had fatted calves, you know, you had fatted sheep and you have whatever. If it was fat, it was good. It meant they were rich.

They were healthy. They were good. And, you know, fat was up. Fat was in. Skinny was not. Kind of like what we see in the 1300s, 1500s.

[8 : 05] But you make fat with oil my head. And what they would do with the fat or the oil, they would perfume it with some kind of special oils. You know, probably went and got some from Young Life or Young Living and doTERRA.

And, you know, I don't know what the recipe was. But it was scented. It smelled really good. Not like some of those oils that my wife purchased.

Man, that's enough to gag a maggot. You know. It probably would keep away COVID. You know, if I just, you know. It's all those mixes they have, you know.

And some of those words you can't even pronounce. Here, have this. It's good for you. Give me COVID. But who knows?

I'm not really sure. Probably, I don't know, frankincense. I can kind of tolerate that. But it was refreshing and reviving. But one thing was for sure in the culture.

[9 : 07] You were not required to anoint the head of any enemy. You could feed them, but you didn't have to anoint them. Maybe wash his feet, but anointing was going too far. Because what the significance was is that it was showing the blessing of God himself upon the person that was being anointed.

And, you know, we see this in Psalm 33 or 133 where the oil is placed on the head, you know, and it drips down on the face and into the beard and all.

It's just a soothing and wonderful, uplifting, good thing. You know, they lived in an arid territory. Not unlike here in the sense of low humidity, unless you were close to the ocean or the Mediterranean.

And it was good to have the oil. You know, my wife and I are total opposites on so many things. I am so oily. You know, if there was a way for me to, you know, to put it in a bottle and, you know, sell it, I'd be a millionaire.

But my wife just, you know, she is, she needs that oil. And she'll lather that stuff all over, you know, you give her a hug and she pops out, you know, slips away.

[10:28] It's just, but, you know, five minutes later it's gone and she's back at it again, right? But they really liked that oil stuff because it was refreshing.

And, you know, it's good for the chapped skin and broken, you know, skin and all that. But it meant significantly, I mean, it was very, very practical that the Lord would anoint someone's head and hair and face.

You know, it was significant. But it was also very practical as well. It showed God's blessing and reprieve. And we find Psalm 46, verse 7 says, You love righteousness and hate wickedness, Lord. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness, even more than your companions. It's an oil of blessing. And the point is, is that he really gives us the resources that we need when he wants us to have it for our refreshment.

And when he does it, he gives it in abundance. This is not only anoint, but it says it's overflowing. You anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows.

[11:44] It runs over. Our little grandson loves to do that. You know, he goes to the sink and he wants to fill up a little bottle. And he has the sink on full blast.

And it's filled up. And the sink gets filled up. And the floor is filled up. And, you know, it just keeps overflowing. And, you know, then we discover it. We panic and freak out. But, you know, he just loves the overflow.

And this is the picture that we have. Not only does God give us that anointing of refreshment and provision, but it overflows.

It overflows. It takes me back to the time when mom used to, you know, her mom used to make these wonderful feasts. Thanksgiving, Christmas, you know.

And my grandmother, my mom's mom, you had to eat until she said you were finished. Oh, come on. You're too skinny, you know.

[12:44] You're skinny Beninka longa legs with umbrella feet. Come on. We've got to fatten you up, you know. And she'd feed and feed. It's all right. Now you're not done. She'd give you more. You want any more? No, I'm full.

No, you're not. And that's what it means, you know. You're just lavished on and on and on, overflowing resources for refreshment, given in abundance.

Saturated and drenched and intoxicated because you're supplied with more than enough. But here's the thing. What was David's cup? What was David's cup? Well, if you go to Psalm 16 or Psalm 116, you find that the cup is really God himself.

He is the one that overflows your life. It's kind of the point that Jesus made when he talks about him being the fountain.

You know, it's up and bubbling and flows over. God was that way. David was drunk with the Lord, so to speak. It's not a lack of mental sobriety, but an overwhelming intoxication and consumption of the Lord himself.

[14:03] That's what the banquet was all about. And that's what having, we shall not lack resources and abundance for life because our host and our supply is God himself.

Finally, verse 6, I shall not lack a reservoir of hope. I shall not lack a reservoir of hope. Surely goodness.

Surely goodness. I have to admit that that movie airplane has ruined it for me. You know, where he says, surely. Yes, and my name is not Shirley.

Yeah, don't call me Shirley, right? Surely goodness and mercy. What it means here really is surely and only. Certainly and only.

Only and nothing else will pursue me. Surely and only goodness and mercy will follow me. That is a really weak word.

[15:06] And I don't know why the English translators did it that way. Because the word picture is it chases me. It chases me. The shepherd has taken you to the grass.

He met his peaceful waters through dark valleys. Placed you in the presence of your enemies. He brought you to an abundant provision of everything you can imagine. And nothing so far has hurt you because he is the great shepherd.

But certainly and surely and only mercy. It's the word chesed.

Covenant love. Loving kindness. Grace. It's a few things that we have to see about mercy in the Old Testament. Or even in the scriptures itself. It's eternal in nature because God himself is eternal in nature.

We see this in 1 Chronicles 16. Or 2 Chronicles 5. It's the very fact that his mercy keeps on lavishing. Keeps on coming. Keeps on flowing. But it's like the word picture that we have here.

[16:17] Essentially it's like the dam has broken. And now you have this rush of water that's coming after you. And you're running and it's chasing after you. His mercy is like that.

It's a characteristic of God himself upon which you can trust and depend according to Psalm 13 and other places. If you need his mercy, it's there. If you want his mercy, it's there.

Which, as a reminder, as you know, mercy is keeping from you what you deserve. And grace is giving to you what you don't deserve.

And so here he is. He's holding back something that you do deserve. But he's giving to you what you don't deserve. It always operates in perfect harmony with truth according to Psalm 85.

And ultimately it's based on the work of Jesus the Great Shepherd. But notice something else as we wrap up. It's a common theme that we find in many laments or the Psalms of lament.

[17:19] Remember, a lament is the opportunity to really cry out to God and complain to God about the situation in which you find yourself. It's not complaining about God.

It's complaining to God. And there's a big difference. A lament is legitimate. You read the laments. Lamentations, some of the laments of Jeremiah, the Psalms of lament.

He cries out. And, you know, it's like, once again, our little guy, you know, he isn't getting his way. Something's gone wrong. And he comes to us and he is having a meltdown.

He's crying. And he's, ah, like he did this morning as I was going out the door because he wanted to go with me. And, you know, he's complaining and complaining.

And that's what a lament is. Except what the lament does is it kind of wraps up and says, nevertheless, no matter what happens, I vow to praise you.

[18:18] That's a lament. And the common theme in many of the laments is the fact that there were enemies pursuing David. That was the number one thing that he often complained to God about.

Enemies pursuing him, following him, chasing after him. But now he's confronted with his enemies. He's having a feast.

He sits down with them. And notice what else is chasing him. Mercy. You got enemies chasing you, David? Here comes my mercy, which is chasing you too.

And it's going to catch up to you. And it's going to overpower you. And it's going to take you on. That's my mercy. And it's going to overflow.

So it's not just following like your shadow. It really is an act of pursuit after you. That's what God's mercy does. Goodness and mercy from the shepherd is doing something it follows or pursues.

[19:20] It chases. And goodness is the providential provision in life and mercy is that unceasing love in grace and salvation.

God is the great rescuer in all this. And ultimately, it becomes the paradigm for praise, the ground for worship, and joy and thanksgiving in the Old Testament.

It's the foundation, the reason why God's people went to be in the presence in the house of the Lord forever. That was a dream.

See, if God has abundantly provided a thanksgiving feast in life, and since you've been rooted and grounded in the covenantal love and chased and overwhelmed by the goodness of God, then you can, with the psalmist, bathe in that reservoir of hope that he's offered, anticipating the return and the dwelling in the house of the Lord forever.

Notice where you end up. From the wilderness to the grassy meadow to the peaceful waters, through the treacherous ravine of the shadow of death, into the company of the enemy, at the banquet feast, filled with overflowing goodness and mercy, chasing after you.

[20:38] That's the shepherd we have. And that's the basis for our worship. Thank you, God, for this.

Thank you for all that you do, have done, continue to do. Thank you that your mercy has chased those of us who have come to faith in Christ. You would not let us go until you found us and we found you.

And thank you that it continues and that we have an overflow of grace, an overflow of abundance of your kindness and mercy and love to us.

We thank you for that. We pray that this is not some ethereal thing or something that just sounds nice and wonderful, a good story, but that it really is a covenant creed that we can say that is true of our lives because Jesus is the great shepherd of his sheep.

He is our shepherd. And we will not lack any of this. Amen.