

One of a series of devotions based on Psalm 23

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, HE PREPARES A BANQUET FOR ME

Psalm 23:5 “The LORD is my shepherd. . . You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies

One of the LORD’s blessings is described in Psalm 23:5 as being invited to and served an extravagant banquet. The Christian feasts on the salvation the LORD freely gives him. This analogy of a banquet seems so out of place. One doesn’t associate banquets with shepherds and sheep. Shepherding is a lonely, isolated vocation. His sheep do best when they are in the green pasture and by the still waters.

A second unexpected picture is presented in the opening words of Psalm 23:5. Did you note who the guests are at the banquet? The Shepherd prepares the banquet. Both the Shepherd’s sheep and their enemies are mentioned. There are two possible pictures. The one is the sheep of the Shepherd’s flock are His guests at the banquet he has called. Their enemies observe all that is happening but cannot participate. The other possible picture is far more radical. Both the sheep and their enemies are invited to the banquet and dine together.

By the very designation “guest” one realizes those attending are there at the gracious invitation of the host. The picture here is most likely the eternal banquet in heaven prepared by Jesus for His sheep. As the Pharisees were surprised and aghast that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, there will most likely be many surprises at who is seated at the eternal banquet in heaven. This should not be surprising because Jesus said He came to seek and to save the lost.

Jesus, your Good Shepherd, has prepared a banquet for you. He invites you to come, eat and drink, be filled and satisfied. “Take, eat; this is my body” . . . “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:26-28) In the Church’s liturgy this is referred to as “a foretaste of the feast to come.” The hymn writer, in Hymn 622, (LSB) begins the hymn with these words, “Lord Jesus Christ, You have prepared this feast for our salvation. . .”

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for preparing the Holy meal of Communion for me and for all You invite to partake, for forgiveness, life and salvation. Amen.

The King of love my shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow, My ransomed soul He leadeth
And where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me
And on His shoulder gently laid And home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill With Thee, dear LORD beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still, Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight; Thine unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight From Thy pure chalice floweth!
(LSB 709)