

One of a series of devotions based on Psalm 23

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, HE ANOINTS MY HEAD WITH OIL

Psalm 23:5 “The LORD is my shepherd. . . you anoint my head with oil;

Up to this point, Psalm 23 has pictured our life journey filled with ups and downs, challenges, difficulties, trials and tribulations. Verse 5 presents a visual change, a new picture of the relationship of the sheep with the shepherd. In this verse your host seats you at a banquet table that is filled with the best foods after he has treated you as a distinguished guest by anointing your head with oil. All rules of highest social graces are observed.

The host of the banquet, in welcoming his invited guests, makes sure they are treated like royalty. Guests were given oil to put on their head as a sign of hospitality. The oil soothed and healed. Its purpose is to make the guest comfortable, filled with joy and able best able to receive all the blessings from the banquet. For the host, nothing was considered too good for the well-being, relaxation and enjoyment of his guests.

The word anoint can literally be translated “make glad or happy.” Mary Magdalene anointed Jesus with oil as Jesus struggled with the thought of His upcoming trial and crucifixion. The disciples rebuked her for being wasteful. Jesus complimented her for preparing his body for what was about to happen to Him.

God is the host of the banquet in Psalm 23. He invites you to His banquet which He personally prepares for you. He, the most excellent host, makes sure that perfumed oil is poured over your head. His goal is for you to have a most intimate fellowship with Him. He desires to pour out upon you His richest blessings. He is concerned your every need is completely satisfied.

Your Good Shepherd leads you down paths that only He knows. He anoints you with oil to prepare you to sit down at the banquet He prepares for you. He treats you as a king or queen, a person of great importance. He determines the menu knowing what will best nourish and sustain you body, soul and spirit.

Grace, God's undeserved love for you, is pictured by this banquet and the anointing of oil. The host does it all. You are the recipient, the one who benefits, the one who is blessed.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, my Good Shepherd, thanks for Your gracious anointing, setting me apart as God's adopted child and seating me at the eternal banquet that is mine to enjoy because of Your saving work. 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!
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