

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD
THE LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION
PSALM 23:5-6**

Introduction

Remember how we saw that the **PSALMIST'S** focus shifted from talking **ABOUT** the **SHEPHERD** to talking **TO** the **SHEPHERD** in *verse 4*.

Well, in the **last two verses** of this **PSALM** we see what appears to me to be another shift that takes place. In *verse 5*, the metaphor changes. The imagery of the **SHEPHERD** and **HIS SHEEP** is no longer what we see.

Instead, **DAVID** moves from describing the **LORD** as a **SHEPHERD** to describing **HIM** as the **HOST** of a banquet! But we can see that these two metaphors actually go hand in hand and the shift is seamless as **DAVID** makes the transition!

Let's take a look at what we see!

I. WE SEE THE LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR OUR PRESENT HERE! (23:5)
DAVID is still talking here about the **ABUNDANT PROVISION** (including the **PROTECTION**) of the **LORD!** Those are the very things that we see that **DAVID** highlighted using the image of a **SHEPHERD** caring for **HIS SHEEP**.

But here we see that the **"GREEN PASTURES"** of *verse 2* have become **"A TABLE"** in *verse 5*. But notice it is not just any **TABLE**. It is a **PREPARED TABLE!**

Imagine a **TABLE PREPARED** with great love and great attention to detail; a **TABLE PREPARED** for a great feast. (*e.g. I remember when someone special was coming over to our house, not only would my mom pull out the "good China", but she would prepare a feast!*)

(*e.g. A few years ago, Pastors in the state of Florida were invited to Orlando where we were treated with great hospitality! My wife and I were put up free of charge in one of the most elegant hotels in Orlando! Every meal that was prepared for us was with great attention to detail! As I said we were treated with great hospitality!*)

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The picture that **DAVID** gives here is not only of plenty but also of great **HOSPITALITY** and **CARE** by the **HOST (i.e. the LORD)!** This is demonstrated by the fact **HE** has **ANOINTED** the guest's **HEAD** with **OIL!**

(I read where this was a custom in the Middle East. In very wealthy homes in Bible times, a cruise of oil would be by the door. This would sometimes be a very expensive, perfumed ointment; and it would be for special occasions. When a very important guest would come into the home (perhaps a family member who had been gone a long time or someone they dearly loved and wanted to see), the host would put that ointment on the face, head, and hair of his guest. It would perfume and refresh the guest. They called it "the anointing of the head." We see this custom mentioned in the JESUS' rebuke of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:36-48!

So, the **GREEN PASTURES** have become a **TABLE PREPARED** and with **GREAT HOSPITALITY** and **CARE** being shown by the **HOST**, the **LORD**.

And notice that the **"STILL WATERS"** of *verse 2* have now become a **"CUP."** And not just a **full CUP**, but a **CUP** that **"RUNNETH OVER"** or we might say an **"CUP that is overflowing!"** (**"Unlimited refills"** anybody?)

When a host stops re-filling your cup, the indication is clear— It's time to leave! But when a host just keeps filling your cup over and over again, it shows great care and attention and makes you feel special!

So...we see a **PREPARED TABLE** full of the best food you could imagine. A **CUP FULL**, even overflowing with endless refreshment! Our **LORD** does not skimp, does **HE?** What a picture of **ABUNDANCE DAVID** paints for us here!

But we also see the **LORD'S ABUNDANT PROTECTION** as **HE** prepares this table **"In the presence of mine enemies!"**

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What does that mean? It means that right here in our **PRESENT**, while we may be in the middle of some situations where fear and worry and doubt and uncertainty might try to overwhelm us, our **LORD** not only **PROVIDES** lavishly for us, but also **PROTECTS** us **through** it all! (i.e. The **LORD** takes care of us!)

DAVID knew what it was like to be on the run, far from home, in the midst of life's valleys, with enemies hot on his heels, hiding in caves, with no clear end in sight.

But while we might expect **DAVID** to feel abandoned, he tells us here that he was enjoying the **LORD's** blessings in both **PROVISION** and **PROTECTION**!

Just the same as he declared in *verse 4*: "***Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.***"

What a faithful **SHEPHERD** our **LORD** is! What an amazing **HOST** our **LORD** is! What a **PROVIDER** and **PROTECTOR HE** is!

WE SEE THE LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR OUR PRESENT HERE!

II. WE SEE THE LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR OUR FUTURE HERE! (23:6a)

After talking about the **LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION** for his **PRESENT**, **DAVID** tells us that he is **ASSURED** of the **LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION** for his **FUTURE**!

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life..."

In light of what the **LORD** had **DONE** for him and was **DOING** for him, **DAVID** speaks confidently here of what the **LORD WOULD DO** for him **ALL** the rest of the days of his life on this earth!

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DAVID knew the way the **LORD** would take care of him, and he knew that because our **LORD** is **FAITHFUL**, and **UNCHANGING**, that the **KIND CARE** of the **LORD** would continue!

I like what sheep rancher turned pastor, Phillip Keller wrote about this verse: (He's the one I quoted about **SHEEP** being **CAST**.)

"Not only is this a bold statement, but it is somewhat of a boast, an exclamation of implicit confidence in the ONE WHO controls his career and destiny. How many CHRISTIANS actually feel this way about CHRIST? How many of us are truly convinced that no matter what occurs in our lives we are being followed by goodness and mercy? Of course it is very simple to speak this way when things are going well...But what about when one's body breaks down? ...What is my reaction when my job folds up and there is no money to meet the bills? ...What do I say when suddenly, without good grounds, friends prove false and turn against me? These are the sort of times that test a person's confidence in the care of Christ....When my little world is falling apart and the dream castles of my ambitions and hopes crumble into ruins can I honestly declare, "Surely—yes—surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"?"

The **HEBREW** word that **DAVID** uses here, translated as "**follow**", is a word that is also often translated in **SCRIPTURE** as "**pursue**". **DAVID** himself used this word when he questioned **SAUL** in *1 Samuel 26:18*, "*Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? what evil is in my hand?"*

DAVID knew what it felt like to be **followed** or **pursued** by evil men who wanted to vent their wrath against him and do him harm.

But **DAVID** endured that kind of persecution while reminding himself that the **LORD'S "goodness and mercy"** also "**followed or pursued**" him and would continue to do so **all the days of his life**.

The question is, do we have that same confidence? We should!

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Romans 8:31–32–“31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

WE SEE THE LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR OUR PRESENT...FOR OUR FUTURE...

III. WE SEE THE LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOR OUR ETERNITY AFTER HERE! (23:6b)

Not only was **DAVID** rejoicing in and confident in the **LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION** for his **PRESENT** and for his **FUTURE** life on earth, but as we see here, he was confident that he would enjoy the **LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION FOREVER!**

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

What does **DAVID** mean when he says *“the house of the LORD”*? Well, in most cases when that phrase is used in the **Old Testament** it simply refers to either the earthly **TEMPLE in JERUSALEM** or the mobile **TABERNACLE** that preceded it.

Both of those places were associated with the **PRESENCE OF THE LORD!** But we can know that **DAVID** was not talking about either of those physical locations, but rather was talking about being in the **LORD'S PRESENCE** where the **LORD** is *“for ever”*

Under the **OLD COVENANT**, the **TEMPLE** was where the **LORD'S** special presence dwelt among **HIS PEOPLE**. It's the place where **HIS PEOPLE** came to be forgiven and to worship.

So **DAVID'S** confidence was that **HE** would dwell in the fullness of what the earthly **TEMPLE** represented! **HE** would dwell in **the LORD'S PRESENCE FOREVER**, in that place of forgiveness and worship.

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Conclusion

So, in a sense, the way **DAVID** ends this **PSALM** adds a new fullness to the beginning of this **PSALM**.

The **LORD** is my **SHEPHERD...FOREVER!**

I shall not want...**FOREVER!**

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...**FOREVER!**

He leadeth me beside the still waters...**FOREVER!**

Do you think **DAVID** would describe himself as **BLESSED?** Of course he would. On what grounds? Because of the extent to which and the regularity with which he experienced the **LORD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION**.

The most amazing thing about **PSALM 23** is not its poetry or timeless quality.

The most amazing thing is that anyone can know now the same kind of care that David experienced then...**IF the LORD IS THEIR SHEPHERD!**

How do we access this **PSALM 23** kind of **ABUNDANCE?** There is only one way. It has nothing do with luck. **It has everything to do with JESUS CHRIST and the BLESSINGS that come from a relationship with HIM!**

John 10:10– “...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

2 Corinthians 9:8–“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:”

Ephesians 3:20–21–“20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”