

# THE TABLE BEFORE US

*“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”*  
—PSALM 23:5

David wrote many of the psalms hiding out in caves and wooded areas while on the run from King Saul. One of his best known is Psalm 23, “The Lord is My Shepherd”, which includes the beautiful sentence, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” In that sentence there are two contradictory aspects – a feast and a fight.

Victory and ease should never be confused or made synonymous with each other. To say that God gives victory does not mean we do not fight. The feast represents the full and free provision by God of everything we need. But where is the feast? The startling answer is “in the presence of my enemies”. It is in the thick of battle, nose to nose with the enemy that the feast is laid before us. If we are to enjoy the feast, we must engage in the fight. Avoid the fight and we miss the feast!

In our early Christian days, many of us probably thought the more we grow in our walk with God, the easier the fight. Temptations would dwindle, the old nature would lie down and the devil would give up. But actually, the reverse is true. The more we grow in Christ, the more we unsettle the devil and the more intense the battle.

Job is a prime example. The Bible describes him as a blameless, upright man who feared God and shunned evil. He was the greatest man God had among all the people of the East. But Satan wanted to discredit Job as being faithful to God, so God gave Satan permission to attack, but

within boundaries which were extended. As a result, Job suffered devastating loss. In the midst of it, he says of God, “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). In other words, I cannot see God, but I know God sees me, and out of this He is bringing forth gold!

In our own lives, the fight is persistent, but so is the feast. God’s victory is enjoyed in the midst of our conflict; our poverty for His riches and our weaknesses for His strength. Whether the tactics of Satan or our own vulnerabilities, the battle of flesh against the Spirit will be ongoing until the day we die, but so will the liberating presence and counteraction of the Holy Spirit who alone is equal to the task and prepares the table before us.

***PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the ample provision You provide in my struggles. It is the “feast” that sees me through.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I drawing upon the provision of God in my times of hardship?***