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THE TABLE OF THE LORD
by Paris Reidhead

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Summary: The table of the Lord represents peace with God, eternal life,
and fellowship with God and others, which we receive by repenting of our
sins, receiving Jesus Christ as our sovereign Lord, and trusting in his
shed blood to atone for our sins.

Duration: 16:53 Topics: "Communion"
Scripture References: Matthew 26:26, Revelation 12:11

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DESCRIPTION

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In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of partaking in the Lord's table and the significance of the bread and cup as symbols of
repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as the sovereign Lord. The speaker highlights that the power and virtue are not in the bread or wine themselves, but in the act of repentance and faith in Jesus' shed blood for the forgiveness of sins. The sermon also references Psalm 23,
particularly focusing on the fifth verse, to illustrate the role of the Lord as a shepherd who prepares a table before us in the presence of our
enemies. The speaker concludes by urging the congregation to rejoice in
their acceptance of Jesus as their reigning Lord and to pray in gratitude for the new way of approaching God through Him.

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CONTENT

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Will you turn please to Psalm 23. There are several scriptures that I'm
going to want you to note, but it is particularly with Psalm 23 that

we

will prepare our hearts. I've been asking the Lord in preparation for this morning to give to me some insight that was not had before in reference to this memorial feast and our Lord's table.

I'm going to read this psalm, these six verses, but I want you to pay particular attention to the fifth verse. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Psalm 23 is a messianic psalm, one that speaks of Christ.

The word the Lord is my shepherd is actually one word in the Hebrew, Jehovah ra'ah, the Lord my shepherd. Now here we have the statement that this one, the Lord who's a shepherd, is going to prepare a table in the presence of his enemies. We come to the table of the Lord.

The two elements that we have, bread and wine, characterize the table, whether it was in the wilderness of a shepherd, or whether it was in the house of the family, or whether it would have been at some festive occasion. Bread and wine, staples of the average meal among the Jewish people. Now David is saying, in the presence of my enemies thou preparest a table for me.

I want you to turn to Matthew 26 and see how that table was prepared. Matthew 26, in verse 26. This is the one of whom David spoke.

This is Jehovah ra'ah, the Lord's shepherd. And as they were eating, Jesus, and always remember, Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. And so David is speaking of one who's preparing a table in the presence of enemies.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and break it and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat. This is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, drink ye all of it.

For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. This is the table in the presence of enemies. For you find that as the Lord Jesus concluded the supper, went out with his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane, there to pray that he was soon surrounded with enemies.

In fact, he'd had one with him who had dipped in the cup and had eaten the bread, Judas. They surround him. They tie his hands with ropes.

They lead him with spears against his back, taking him as they would a common criminal and bring him to the place where he is judged, beaten, scourged, and crucified in the presence of enemies, all enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. But what is he doing? He's taking the bread of the table and the wine that was in the cup. And there he's preparing a table for you and for me.

And he did it again, I say, in the presence of his enemies. For as the Lord Jesus there in garden of Gethsemane reached out to me and took my sin as it were upon him and identified himself with me, in a sense, since he had accepted me as being my substitute, my representative, you could say that as far as the law was concerned and as far as his father was concerned, even God on the throne in heaven became his enemy. He had to deal with the Lord Jesus Christ as the law demanded that he deal with me.

The Lord Jesus became the public offering for sin that he might vindicate the holiness of God, support and prove the righteousness of the law, and make it possible for God to be just and the justifier of him that would come in repentance and faith and receive the Lord Jesus Christ. And so in a sense, even heaven has become his enemy. My God, why hast thou forsaken me? was the cry from the heart of the Son of God in those hours.

But it was not just that God was dealing with him as his justice demanded that he deal with me or with you, but because the Lord Jesus

Christ had identified with us and had been made to be sin for us, he who knew no sin, he was now subject to everything that his ancient foe could do. And those three hours of darkness were not darkness produced by God, in my judgment at least, but they were darkness that were produced by the Prince of Darkness, the God of this world, who surrounded the cross where God the Son had been identified with our sin, thus became vulnerable and thus became subject to what Satan could do. If you want to understand what happened in those hours, read the other Messianic Psalms, and you will discover that the Lord Jesus Christ is described as having been bruised and beaten and buffeted until he didn't even resemble a human being.

If you please, it was that hell brought out all of its hosts, its forces, its weapons, and long last the one who had cast Lucifer out of heaven down to earth, exiled him, had become subject to the attacks that Satan could bring. So he's preparing a table in the presence of my enemies and your enemies, where the God of this world has done everything he can to deform, to destroy. If you have any question about that, visit with us in some of the villages in Africa where we've been, and see as the people are branded, scarified, and marked with tribal markings, almost as though hell were doing what western stockmen do with their cattle, that they might identify them on the reins they brand them.

And the prince of this world seems to take peculiar pleasure in branding the faces, the countenances of those who worship and serve him. Enemies, enemies of the human race, enemies of those made in the image and likeness of God, enemies of the Son of God. And yet in that place, the Lord Jesus Christ, now because he's identified with my sin and yours, is there, and he in effect says to Satan, do everything you can do.

And when they can't lift another arm to another spear to throw at him, or another arrow to loose, another sword of any kind, another blow of any kind, when there's nothing more that God can do to sinful men to vindicate his holiness and justice and satisfy his law, the Lord Jesus Christ cries out, it is finished. He has done everything that he came to do. He has vindicated the Father's law.

He satisfied the holiness of God. He made it possible for God to be just
and the justifier of them that would repent and savingly receive him as
their Lord and Savior. And now that table is open, he has died.

The bread that he broke at the table, his broken body, the wine that they drank, his poured out blood, is accepted by the Father. He is raised from the dead in the glory of his resurrection triumph. And now we too, with David who foresaw it, can say he prepares the table before
me in the presence of my enemies.

And when you come to this table, you are saying, I have repented of my sin. I have decided that I am neither wise enough, nor strong enough, nor good enough to govern and rule and control my own life. I have opened my heart to receive Jesus Christ as the undisputed sovereign and
reigning Lord in every area of my life.

I want to please him. That is the passion and purpose, to please the Lord. Whatever it costs, wherever it takes me, whatever it'll be, I want
to please the Lord.

That is what is meant by repentance, by faith so receiving him as the one who should rule. Now in Revelation, the 12th chapter and the 11th verse, we have the same table referred to, oh I think just a little different light upon it, but it behooves you to recognize it because it's at this table that it becomes effective. In verse 10, we read in Revelation 12, And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ.

For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before
our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto
the death. How did they overcome him? This enemy that had been there at
the time when the table of the Lord was prepared for us? How do you overcome that ancient foe that's still released and still active? By partaking of the bread he gave himself for me by partaking of the cup. Oh is the power, is the virtue in the bread? Is it in the wild grapefruit of the grape? He had grape juice or wine.

Is it there where the power resides? No, no. These are but symbols. These are but emblems.

What are you doing when you take the bread in the cup? You are saying
I
have repented of my sin. I have received Jesus Christ as my sovereign
Lord and I have trusting in his shed blood to atone for my sin, to
wash
away my guilt and uncleanness. I am a child of God through faith.

And so they overcame him. Who? This defeated foe that was still
permitted to live and work for a time until his execution should be
carried out. They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word
of
the testimony.

So that table prepared for David in the presence of his enemies is the
source of peace with God. It's the source of eternal life. It's the
source of our fellowship one with another and it's the emblem and the
means of our victory over our defeated foe.

So as we come to that table prepared before in the presence of his
enemies and ours, let us rejoice that we have opened our heart to
receive him as sovereign Lord, the reigning saint. We lift our hearts
to
thee this morning to thank thee and to praise thee that thou hast
given
to us this new, this living way whereby we can come sit as it were
with
that company of disciples that night who saw him take the bread and
break it and bless it, saying, this is my body given for you, and take
the cup and bless it, saying, this is my blood shed for the remission
of
sins for many of many. We are included, our Father, among that many,
for
we have looked upon the lamb that was slain and seen him in our place
and in our stead dying our death and we have so received him as dying
Savior but also as reigning Lord.

We have given to him these lives that first he created and then he
purchased back by his poured out life. So to that end, Father, let the
table acquire a new significance to us as we hear thy shepherd
psalmist
say again he prepares the table before me in the presence of mine
enemies. Oh how grateful our Father we are that he overcame all his
enemies and ours and has opened for us this new and living way through
his Shedlock in his worthy name and for his sake we ask.

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