

Ps. Nate Conant — *Indio Campus*

SERIES: SACRED SEASONS

November 15, 2026 — Week Three

TABLE FOR TWO, ENEMIES INCLUDED

GOD'S PROVISION IN DIFFICULT SEASONS

SERIES THEME PASSAGE:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:[2] a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted." —
Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 (ESV)

5 You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.. **6** Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.
— **Psalm 23:5-6 (NLT)**

Sermon at a Glance

- **A Prepared Table — Provision Is A PLAN, not an Accident (Hebrew *'arak*)**
- **A Positioned Table — Provision in the Presence of Pressure (Hebrew *tsarar*)**
- **A Plentiful Table — Honor and Overflow (Hebrew *dashen*, *revayah*)**
- **A Practiced Table — Gratitude Pulls Up the Chair (Greek *en panti*, *eucharisteō*)**

Series thread: Week 1 taught us to wait. Week 2 taught us to stay connected while God prunes. Week 3 teaches us to *eat* — to see God's provision in the season we'd rather skip, eleven days before Thanksgiving.

KING DAVID ON THE RUN FROM HIS SON ABSOLAM

13 And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom." 14 Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword." 30 But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. — **2 Samuel 15:13-14,30 (ESV)**

27 "When David came to **Mahanaim**, **Shobi** the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and **Machir** the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and **Barzillai** the Gileadite from Rogelim, **28** brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, **29** honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness." — **2 Samuel 17:27-29 (ESV)**

- **Mahanaim** - The name dates back to Genesis 32:2, when patriarch Jacob named the location after encountering two camps of angels (God's camp and his own camp) as he returned to Canaan.
- **Shobi** - An Ammonite leader from Rabbah. His father, Nahash, was a former king of the Ammonites. David had fought against his father
- **Machir** - A prominent supporter from Lo-debar who had previously provided refuge for Jonathan's crippled son, Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:4–5)
- **Barzillai** - the elderly Barzillai was 80 years old and the area of Gilead had opposed Israel

1. A PREPARED TABLE — PROVISION IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

The LORD is my shepherd;I shall not want. **2** He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. **3** He restores my soul;He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. **4** Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. **"You prepare a table before me…"** — **Psalm 23:1-5 (NKJV)**

WORD STUDY **ʿarak (עָרַךְ) — "to prepare, arrange, set in order"**

This is the verb in both Psalm 78:19 ("Can God **prepare** a table?") and Psalm 23:5 ("You **prepare** a table"). The question and the answer use the same word.

ʿArak is a precision word. It's used for **arranging the showbread** on the table in the tabernacle — set in order before the LORD every Sabbath (Leviticus 24:8).

It's also the standard Old Testament word for **drawing up battle lines** — armies arranged rank by rank (see 1 Samuel 17:8, 21).

Preaching point: The same word that sets a battle line sets a dinner table. God arranges your provision with the same precision a general uses to arrange an army.

Watch this. God is not microwaving something for you at the last minute. He is not hitting the drive-thru on the way to your crisis. He doesn't panic and pull leftovers out of the fridge because you showed up hungry.

Prepared means He saw you coming.

2. A POSITIONED TABLE — PROVISION IN THE PRESENCE OF PRESSURE

*You prepare a table before me in the **presence of my enemies;*** — **Psalm 23:1-5 (NKJV)**

Now this is where David messes up our theology. We want God to remove the nm enemy, *and then* feed us. We want the table after the trouble. David says God set the table **right in front of** the trouble.

WORD STUDY **tsarar (צָרַר) — "enemies, adversaries, those who hem in"**

The word translated "enemies" in Psalm 23:5 is *tsorerai* (צֹרְרָי). It belongs to a word family tied to being **narrow, tight, bound up** — the same family as *tsarah*, "distress" or "trouble."

The picture is someone or something that **squeezes** you — that pins you in a narrow place.

Preaching point: Your enemy isn't always a person. Sometimes it's a pressure. The bills that squeeze. The anxiety that tightens your chest at 2 a.m. The calendar that won't give you room to breathe. God sets your table *in front of the squeeze.*

Here's the cultural background that makes this verse sing. In the Ancient Near East, hospitality was serious business. When a host took you in and fed you at his table, your safety became *his* responsibility. Scholars of Middle Eastern culture like Kenneth Bailey describe how a host's honor was on the line for the guest under his roof. If your enemy wanted you, he now had to go through your host.

So picture it. David is at the table. The enemies are standing right there at the edge of the tent. They can see him. They can smell the food. And they can't touch him — because he's eating at **God's** table.

Charles Spurgeon saw this more than a hundred years ago:

"When a soldier is in the presence of his enemies, if he eats at all he snatches a hasty meal… But observe, "Thou preparest a table"… Nothing is hurried, there is no confusion… the enemy is at the door, and yet God prepareth a table, and the Christian sits down and eats as if everything were in perfect peace." — Charles H. Spurgeon, The Treasury of David

The Table Jesus Sat At

And don't you dare think God asks you to do something He wouldn't do Himself. Look at the night before the cross:

"…the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it…" — 1 Corinthians 11:23–24 (NKJV)

Jesus sat at a table *in the presence of His enemy.* Judas was right there. Same room. Same bread. Jesus handed him the piece Himself (John 13:26). The cross was less than a day away.

And what did Jesus do at that table? **He gave thanks.**

The Greek word there is *eucharistēsas* — that's where we get the word *Eucharist*. Our Lord gave thanks with a traitor at the table and a cross on the calendar.

So don't tell me you can't give thanks because of who's sitting at your table this year.

3. A PLENTIFUL TABLE — HONOR AND OVERFLOW

"You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over." **— Psalm 23:5 (NKJV)**

God doesn't just feed David. He honors him.

WORD STUDY dashen (דָּשֵׁן) and revayah (רְוָיָה)

"You anoint" is *dishanta*, from *dashen* — literally "to make fat, to make rich." It's the language

abundance, not survival. Anointing a guest's head with oil was a host's sign of honor and welcome.

Jesus called out a host who skipped it: "You wdid not anoint My head with oil…" (Luke 7:46). Leaving out the oil meant leaving out the honor.

"Runs over" is *revayah* — **saturation**, drenched, soaked through. The same word shows up in Psalm 66:12: "You brought us out to **rich fulfillment**."

Preaching point: In the wilderness, God doesn't give you a refugee's ration. He gives you a guest of honor's portion.

Some of you have been sitting at God's table like you snuck in the back door. Like you're waiting on somebody to check the guest list and throw you out.

Hear me: you're not a refugee at this table. You're not on a waitlist. The oil on your head says **you belong here.**

Now — let me be pastoral and honest. This is not a prosperity verse. The overflow doesn't always look like more stuff. Paul wrote "I have all and abound" (Philippians 4:18) while he was in chains. Sometimes the overflow is peace you can't explain. Sometimes it's the presence of God in the hospital room. Sometimes it's a Shobi, a Machir, and a Barzillai — **people** God sends with beds and bowls and casseroles right when you hit the wilderness.

Some of you have been praying for God to provide, and He did. He sent people. And you were too proud to sit down and eat what they brought.

4. A PRACTICED TABLE — GRATITUDE PULLS UP THE CHAIR

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

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD, forever. **Psalm 23:5 (NKJV)**

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

Don't read that like a greeting card. Read it in context. Paul had been run out of Thessalonica by a mob (Acts 17:5–10). He says this church received the Word "in much affliction" (1 Thessalonians 1:6). These were persecuted believers. This verse wasn't written for a picnic. It was written for a wilderness.

WORD STUDY **en panti eucharisteite (ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε)**

*__En panti__ — *"in everything," not "for everything." Paul doesn't tell you to thank God* for *the cancer, the betrayal, or the layoff. He tells you to give thanks* in* it.

*__Eucharisteite__ — *from* eu *("good") +* charis *("grace"). Gratitude is recognizing the good grace** that is present.

It's a **present imperative** — a command for ongoing action: *keep on* giving thanks. Gratitude is not a mood. It's a practice.

Preaching point: Gratitude doesn't deny **DIFFICULTY**. It discerns the table.

CLOSING:

The Core Truth: Gratitude isn't a mood or a reaction to an easy season; it is a practice and a spiritual discipline. Paul doesn't command us to thank God *for* the pain, the betrayal, or the wilderness, but to give thanks *in* it (*en panti*).

Gratitude doesn't deny the reality of the wilderness—it simply discerns the table God has already set right in the middle of it.