

P231

GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM

SERIES: Psalm 23

TITLE: Thou preparest a table before me

SONGS: You're My Best Friend

Come Celebrate Jesus

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. Psalm 23 verse 5 says, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." In Old Testament times, to eat and drink at someone's table created a bond of loyalty. This scene is not simply of a host and a guest, but rather of two friends. The Psalmist David needed a loyal friend. He found this and more at the Lord's table. Under God's protection and power, he could feast in safety and security though surrounded by his enemies. One commentary wrote that this could also be interpreted as that of a victory feast, where David celebrated, as his defeated, unarmed enemies looked on. Regardless of the meaning, David's enemies couldn't harm him because the Lord was on his side. Today, on Grace Notes, Barbara Sandbek will show how we, too, can feast comfortably in the middle of a crisis because of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

In our ministry we're privileged to be invited to peoples' homes to eat. Recently the pastor of the church where we gave our concert asked us to join his family for dinner. When we arrived, we were met with the tantalizing smell of food and a beautifully prepared table. The pastor's dear wife wouldn't let me do a thing, so I went in the dining room to look at the table. The dishes had a picture painted on them of a bird resting in its birdhouse. How peaceful. There were three forks, too. That meant dessert was on the menu – what more could you want? Everything was in perfect order. The meal was a real feast – so much better than the fast food restaurants we usually frequent. I ate slower than I've ever eaten before, because I was comfortable in their presence – it felt like home. The fellowship was as good as the food, too. In the course of the conversation, I found that the pastor's wife had cancer. In a few days she was going to undergo another series of treatments. She said she felt sick most of the time. I thought of all the planning and preparing that went into this dinner, and the sacrifice she made to be such a gracious host.

But though her sacrifice was indeed memorable, there was a far greater sacrifice made for us all. This sacrifice was planned long before we were even born and was prefigured many thousands of years ago by another table set in the Temple. This table typified the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It was made of hard, indestructible wood, which spoke of how Christ would withstand the fire of Crucifixion (recorded in John 10:18), the decaying affects of the

grave (noted in Acts 2:31) and his bodily resurrection (according to Matt. 28:5-6).

Freshly baked bread, called showbread, was placed on the table at all times. It was made without leaven, symbolizing Christ's sinless life, and was sprinkled with frankincense, which represented His purity. The showbread was the foreshadowing of Jesus, the true bread of life, who would give unfailing sustenance to all who partake of Him.

I wonder if King David was referring to Jesus when he spoke of that table so bountifully set before him. Was he reminded of the many times he'd prepared the table land for grazing his sheep by removing the things that might kill them, and how His Messiah, the Great Shepherd, would come to remove the barrier of sin and give everlasting life?

It was many years later that Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem, which means house of bread, and was placed in a manger - a feeding trough for animals. Jesus said of Himself in John 6:48, "I am the bread of life."

In verse 51 He continued...

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

According to Hebrews 10:5-10, God prepared a body for Jesus, and allowed Him to be broken as our once and for all sacrifice, so we could be made holy, and enter into fellowship with God. When we partake of Jesus through belief in Him, He becomes a part of us, just like bread is when we ingest it. Jesus, our gracious host and friend, invites us to sit at His table, feast on His goodness, and celebrate in safety, because He defeated our enemies when he rose from the grave.

***** WRITERS: Claire Clonginger/John Rosasco

*** COME CELEGRATE *** LENGTH:3:46

*The door is opened wide
And on the hearth a fire is burning
The room is full of light
A festive meal has been prepared
And a song invites you in
To come share your life with Him*

Chorus 1

***Come celebrate Jesus - Come celebrate Jesus
The bread and the wine
The moment in time
Come celebrate Jesus
The Spirit that frees us
His table has been laid
Come now and celebrate Him***

Verse 2

***He is the Open Door
He is the fire that welcomes and warms us
He is the Song of Joy
That brings a hungry heart back home
And His life's a melody and His love's the Victory***

Repeat chorus

Celebrate, celebrate

Chorus 2

***Come celebrate Jesus, come celebrate Jesus
Come as you are, bring Him your heart
Come celebrate Jesus, the Spirit that frees us
His table has been laid
Come now & celebrate Him***

Let it start, let it begin

Repeat chorus 1

Celebrate - Celebrate

In John 12:24 Jesus pictured His life as a grain of wheat that must die to produce fruit. This fruit is born in those who put their trust in him.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He met with His followers again before He ascended. He told them that he must return to Heaven so He could send the Holy Spirit to indwell them and produce the fruit He died to give them – fruit of the Spirit.

According to Galatians 5:22...

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

I visited a lady in the hospital, and quoted the 23rd Psalm to her. When I got to the phrase..."Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies", I paused, because God gave me a beautiful mental picture of what was taking place in her room.

I could see the enemy of sickness surrounding her, yet she wasn't phased by it – she was preoccupied with someone else - the Lord. I saw Him placing a tray table on her bed and adorning it with a freshly washed, white linen cloth, and a single white flower in a delicate vase. He filled the table with fruit, but it was no ordinary fruit, rather the fruit of the Spirit. With His nail-scarred hand, He took from His overflowing basket, the fruit of LOVE. Immediately, the room filled with a beautifully scented fragrance, like that of the lily of the valley.

He handed her a piece of JOY to eat in the middle of her suffering. He gave her His KINDNESS and GOODNESS berries to sustain her through the night when she couldn't sleep. His fruit of PEACE was a succulent orange, filled with juice that flowed out like a river. The PATIENCE and SELF-CONTROL fruits he offered were to help settle her down and enable her to cope with the many hours of confinement. He then proceeded to show her the fruits of GENTLENESS and FAITHFULNESS, and asked her to partake of these as reminders that He would be by her side at all times, and would heal her broken body with his kind and gentle touch.

God has prepared a table full of the fruit of the Spirit to help us rise above the enemies that confront us here on earth. We have this when we accept Jesus as our Savior. As Believers, this world is not our home. But our best friend, Jesus, is even now preparing a place for us in heaven, void of enemies, where we can be at home and feast together at his table forever.

******* WRITERS: Steve & Annie Chapman
*** YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND ** LENGTH: 2:35

Verse 1

***I've found a friend - His Name is Jesus
He showed me love like I've never known
Gave His life to seal my pardon
And give to me a mansion for my home***

Chorus

***You're my bread when I'm hungry
You're my shelter from the troubled wind***

***You're my anchor in life's ocean
But most of all - You're my BEST FRIEND***

Verse 2

***When I need hope and inspiration
You're always there - when I'm tired & weak
I could search the whole world over
And You'd still be everything that I need***

Repeat chorus

You've been listening to Grace Notes.

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Join us on our next program.

Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!