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You've Prepared a Banquet for Me, in Front of My Enemies

BY RITA BENNETT, WORSHIP COLUMNIST

"The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yes, 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 in the presence of my enemies"; (Psalms 23:5a, KJV MOD). This verse we will look at today.

The Shepherd David, who wrote this psalm, was set apart by God to be King of Israel. Since he was the youngest of his brothers and was simply a shepherd boy, it did not seem logical for him to have this great honor. But God looked at his heart, not his size or age.

As it is with many leaders who rise to the top, they are not happy when qualified younger persons threaten to take their place. That's exactly what happened here.

King Saul was on the hunt to destroy his contender to the throne. Even though David had a group of followers – a rag tag army of 400 to 600, he had to be on the move so as not to be taken out by Saul. Interestingly, Jonathan, the king's son, was secretly on David's side.

DEALING WITH AN ENEMY

David could sing to God these positive words in the midst of the threat of death: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." Many times the Scripture says, "And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him (1 Samuel 18:14 NKJV).

Two times David could have killed King Saul and taken his throne, but he would not do it. Why was that? Because David feared displeasing his Lord more than he feared letting the anointed but sinful king continue to live.

During a battle, David cut off part of the hem of Saul's garment, and he showed it to him (at a healthy distance). He told Saul "I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed" (1 Samuel 24:10b).

David's humble, godly behavior had won the king over, and Saul said, "And now I know indeed that you shall be king..." (1 Samuel 24:20a). They even made a covenant together to protect Saul's offspring.

SINGING YOUR WAY THROUGH BATTLE

David was a psalmist who filled his life with music. I can picture David taking time during days of hiding in the hills to sing and write down a song or two. The Psalms he left are a banquet for us today.

Perhaps you can write a song about your emotional pain. Songs often tell of pain in a relationship. Singing songs of praise in worship services are very comforting to

congregants. In fact, it is healthy to fill your lungs up with fresh air and sing out with praise.

I've written a few personal songs. One related to a challenge I was facing. Words and music came as I was playing my ukulele.

"I am heavy hearted. I hear my Savior whisper: 'This too shall pass away. This too shall pass, this too shall pass, this too shall pass away'" (Chorus).

"I carried all your burdens, I said, 'My yoke is easy.' Yes, I will help you in this hour. Yes, I will help every second, every minute; Help you with My pow'r." Pretty simple, I admit, but meaningful to me. (Title is *You're Coming Though* ©1996 R. Bennett).

The many psalms that David the shepherd wrote are quoted and sung all over the world. Psalms can even be downloaded to your iPod.

David was victorious in battle because he put God first. He kept a Spirit-inspired song of praise in his heart consistently.

You, too, can sing your own psalms of victory. Try it.

(See you next time at the 9th Psalm 23 series.)

Local author Rita Bennett is CEO of the Edmonds-based Christian Renewal Association. She can be reached at (425) 775-2965 or at www.EmotionallyFree.org, or by writing her at P.O. Box 576, Edmonds, WA 98020. Reprint ©2010 by Rita Bennett.