

A Seat at His Table

November 19-25, 2023



MAIN POINT

God does not just accept those who surrender their lives to Christ—he delights in them as children adopted into his family.

HEAD, HEART AND LIFE CHANGE

- To know that God is pleased with us based on the perfect righteousness of Christ.
- To feel the Lord's delight not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done on our behalf.
- To reject any behaviors or habits in our lives where we are trying to earn God's acceptance and instead rest in the acceptance he has freely given to us through faith in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Think back to your middle school or high school days.

What's the silliest thing you've ever said or done to impress someone you had a crush on?

Did your words or actions work in your favor?

We can do crazy things for the people we like. Through our study of Psalm 23, we've learned about God, our shepherd, who cares for us no matter where we are in life. We'll see this week how much he likes us, how he expresses his delight in us, and how we did nothing to deserve it.

READ [PSALM 23:1-6](#).

Show Session 5: Psalm 23:5 (8 minutes).

DISCUSSION

Let's start this session by reviewing what we've covered so far. Digging in to Psalm 23 has meant slowing down and revisiting a portion of the Bible that has become overly familiar for many. We've refreshed ourselves in the truth that with the Lord as our shepherd we lack nothing. He provides us with rest, righteousness, guidance, and protection. But before we go any further, we need a reminder from session three.

Take a look back at your notes.

What did Matt refer to as the "gravitational pull" of Psalm 23?

READ [PSALM 23:5](#).

Don't forget this important point. God doesn't provide us with all of these gifts out of a sense of obligation. He does it "for his name's sake." In other words, he does it because it further displays his glory to the world when we find all of our needs met in him. God provides for us by drawing near out of a sense of deep love for all of his sheep.

How do you tend to think about God? Is he more of a distant king in your mind? Or do you picture him as a caring shepherd?

Throughout this session, Matt emphasized the point that God genuinely loves you right here, right now. How does that truth sit with you? What feelings come to the surface when you reflect on the idea that God actually likes having you near to him?

That's where we're going to focus most of our attention in this session, on the truth that God delights in those who belong to him.

READ [PSALM 23:5](#) AGAIN.

How does the picture of God throwing a feast fit into your typical view of God?

Even more, David writes that God does this "in the presence of my enemies." How does a very public display of God's affection for his people fit into your typical view of God?

As if this weren't already enough, God continues his display of extravagant care by anointing David with oil and filling his cup to the point that it overflows.

As Matt pointed out in the session, all of verse 5 builds to an overwhelming vision of God's delight in his people, one we often struggle to incorporate in to our own views of God. It's easier to think of God as a distant judge—one who gives us rules to live by and who doles out punishment when we come up short. But that's not the picture of God we receive here in Psalm 23. If you belong to the Lord's flock, he delights in you today.

In what ways could this picture of God change your view of him?

How would you describe your spiritual life currently? Are you in a season of feeling like God is distant? Or are you in a time of feasting?

What's one way the truth that God delights in you here and now could change how you approach your relationship with him today?

None of the other shepherds that we talked about in session 1—personal desires, relationships, or culture—will provide the kind of love we long for. We only experience that when the Lord becomes our shepherd through faith in Jesus Christ. John 10:10 makes it clear that every other shepherd is little more than a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But God is a loving shepherd who embraces his sheep, even when they have gone astray, like the father in the story of the prodigal son.

READ [LUKE 15:11-24](#).

Put yourself in the situation of the father: your child (or best friend) has betrayed you by claiming an inheritance that essentially declares you as good as dead to them. They blow that inheritance and out of sheer desperation return to you begging to be made your slave simply for a regular meal. How would you respond? What would you say that person deserved?

How does the father of the prodigal son respond?

Like Psalm 23, this is another very popular story to those familiar with the Bible so we don't want to miss the gravity of the father's response here. Rather than responding to his son with criticism or declaring, "I told you so," he races to his son, embraces him, and throws a party to celebrate his return. And like it or not, that's God's posture toward you in Jesus Christ.

What causes you to struggle with believing God's acceptance of you as you are in Christ?

In what ways are you trying to earn God's love and acceptance through obedience?

How might the characteristics of God that we have studied in this session change your motivations for obedience?

**What can you do practically to rest in God's acceptance this week?
What do you need to surrender to him in order to do so?**

LAST WORD

God delights in you. Let that sink in for a moment. It's no small truth. The God of the universe, the one who exists in all places at all times, who knows every secret hidden in the shadows, rejoices over the fact that you belong to him. There is no sin too great for him to forgive and he welcomes us when we return home to him in repentance.

It's easy to drift from a biblical view of God. Picturing him as a caring shepherd—let alone a loving father—can be a difficult task, but that is the God we serve. Wherever you find yourself today, whether you are surrounded by enemies or enjoying a time of refreshment, trust him. Chase after him. Expect that he will care for your needs.

LIVE IT OUT

MEMORIZE: Continue working on memorizing Psalm 23. This week, focus on verse five reciting it to yourself over the next few days.

PRAY: Ask the Lord to help you see him as he truly is and to more fully believe in the richness of his love for you.

JOURNAL: Take out a small piece of paper and write down 2–3 specific ways that God has demonstrated his delight in you at various points in your life. Then, put it in a place where you will see it at the start of each day this week. Each time you read it, reflect on God's kindness to you and thank him for it.

DUST OFF THE HEBREW

Most English translations render the Hebrew term *dashan*, which David uses in verse 5, as “anoint.” While technically it isn't an incorrect translation, the context of the psalm suggests otherwise. When we see the term “anoint” in Scripture, it often indicates an act of initiating someone into royalty. However, that's not at play in Psalm 23. The form and context of *dashan* here gets more at the idea of God's hospitality. Bearing that in mind, a better translation would be to “refresh,” which reiterates God's care for his people. Proverbs 15:30 is a helpful parallel. The same term is used in that verse to describe the refreshing effect of good news. God provides for his people abundantly preparing a feast, filling our cups to the point of overflowing, and offering the refreshment we need.