



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

July 2, 2023

Love sets a table

Sermon Recap from 7/2/2023

Psalm 23:5

I'm an introverted person. One of the distinctive marks of an introvert is that they don't mind going to a restaurant and asking for a table for one. Don't get me wrong, I love eating and being with people. I love a good dinner party, or going out to eat with friends. I also enjoy a meal by myself. I enjoy the calmness of a table for one. There are no social expectations, no awkward silences. There might be a book, or a crossword puzzle, or a legal pad and a pen. I enjoy a table for one. It can be a space for reflection, meditation, or even prayer. Sometimes though, it is not so comfortable.

God "prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies," reads Psalm 23. What if it is a table for one? What if the enemy is within?

I've sat with myself on dark and lonely nights.

What if the enemy is my own shortcomings, failures, and faults?

I struggle with procrastination. I try to work within my ADHD. I have sat at a table prepared for work, with piles of books, tabs open, and passed hours away with accomplishing little.

What if the enemy is my own apathy?

I've walked by pain, turned a blind eye to the suffering of my neighbor. I no longer cry when I read about a shooting. I am weary of empathy and compassion toward every lost cause.

What if the enemy is my own comfort?

I've chosen to settle for the inertia of inaction over disrupting the status quo. My own rights have never been truly threatened, so why get upset when others' are trampled?

What if the enemy is my own pride?

I've avoided the one that hurt me. I've held onto bitterness, even when the taste in my mouth was too much to bear. I avoid people with whom I disagree and walk away from relationships instead of doing the hard work of reconciliation.

What if the enemy is my own fear?

I've ignored the persecution of others and participated in unjust systems for fear of the wrath would be turned onto me.

The word in this Psalm for "enemy" is a Hebrew word that also means "cramped" or "bound." It is not about armies encamped on the other side of the field. The enemies of Psalm 23 are not conspiring agents or rivals.

The enemies are the things that bind us. They are the things that restrict us from love and relationship. They are the things that vex us, frustrate us, and keep us from living how God would have us live.

Jesus tells me to love my enemies. Am I to love my enemy when the enemy is looking back at me in the mirror? What am I supposed to do with a table set in the presence of my enemies?

I know the answer. I've sat at that table before. Still, God meets me there. There, at a table for one, I meet God, who unbinds me.

I sit at the table in the presence of my enemy, and can only confess to my God and myself the times I have fallen short. I sit with myself and have no choice but to forgive, so I may be forgiven. I sit at my table for one and am confronted with the profound absurdity of the gospel. There is good news in sitting at the table for one.

There is confession. There is forgiveness. There is grace. There is bread for me to eat, and a cup overflowing. There is oil being poured out on my head with such exuberance and abundance it seems shocking. There at the table for one I learn that goodness and mercy are following me. No, they are doing more than following me. Actively, purposefully, God is pursuing me.

The good shepherd sets a table before me and beckons me to come. So I sit at the table for one and know that I am not alone.

Next Week: Psalm 23:6
Love pursues me.