

THE TABLE THE LORD PREPARES FOR US

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” Psalms 23: 3

When David wrote this psalm he was a real King and had real enemies. The banquet he describes was appropriate for his needs. However, I’m not a king and have no enemies over which I want to gloat, so how can I apply this to my needs?

The enemies that most of us face are more spiritual and personal. We find ourselves failing to live up to the high standards we have set for ourselves. We, like Simon Peter, may boast, “Although others show weakness and forsake you, I won’t. I will die before I deny my loyalty to you.” Then we hear the rooster crow. The horrible weight of failure crushes our spirit and we slink into the dark corner to join other failures.

We are often our own worst enemy. We proudly boast that we will never do “certain things,” only to discover that we did “those things.” We promise never to repeat the mistake—only to discover that we have done it. Again. And even again!

How did Jesus treat Simon Peter after he denied three times that he even knew him? (Read the entire story of love, forgiveness and restoration in John 21.) Jesus prepared breakfast and invited him to eat. This “Table of the Lord” represented forgiveness, acceptance, peace and unity. Then he spoke words of restitution, forgiveness and complete restoration as a servant of Christ.

All the disciples had deserted Jesus and he brought all of them to the table of restitution. There they learned that followers who fail would be forgiven and restored, and that they in turn must forgive each other.

At the Last Supper the disciples were shocked when Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and washed their feet. They only partially understood what he meant as he broke bread and passed the cup saying, “This bread represents my body that is broken for you, and this cup represents my blood that is shed for you.”

Today Christian churches observe the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion. At this table Christians are to renew their fellowship with Jesus, as well as with other believers.

Jesus also prepares a table for us personally. He offers us an individual table of forgiveness of our sins; of restoration to our place of service; restoration of any hurt or damaged feelings with our Christian brothers and sisters; and the renewal of our intimate relationship with Christ.

Jesus prepares an individual table for those who are downcast, discouraged, crushed by guilt and a sense of failure; for those who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones; for those who have relationship problems and may hold grudges, bitterness, and anger; for those who want to renew their love and commitment to the Lord; for those who are old looking forward to their home with God.

The Lord prepares a table for us in the presence of our inward and outward enemies. He restores our souls and fills our spiritual cups with joy, peace and assurance.

He invites us with these words: “Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28,29

As we approach the Table of the Lord, laden with divine spiritual food, we prepare ourselves by remembering these words of Jesus: “This bread is my body broken for you. This cup is my blood that I shed for you. As often as you feast here, remember the price I paid to provide it for you.”