

“Tattered Blankets”

CHAPTER 7

THE THREAD OF ENEMIES

The Image: Eating Beside Your Foes

One of the strangest images in scripture is found in Psalm 23: *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”*

If it were me, I’d prefer the enemies be removed before the meal begins. I’d prefer the blanket of peace to be free of conflict, but God does not always remove the enemies; instead, He sets a feast right in front of them.

A single thread of enmity cannot cover us; it only binds us in bitterness. But at the table of God, even the presence of enemies becomes part of the story of grace.

The Story: Ministry Wounds

In ministry, I’ve sat at many tables where conflict was thick in the air. I remember once being betrayed by people I had loved and served, their words cut deep, their rejection stung. For a while, all I could see was the unraveling, the friendship torn, trust shredded.

But in time, I discovered something surprising: God had set a different table for me, not a table of vindication, but a table of sustenance. In the presence of betrayal, I found fresh streams of His love. In the presence of rejection, I discovered a deeper belonging.

The enemies did not vanish, but the Shepherd still served bread and wine.

The Scripture: Goodness in the Midst

The psalm does not say, *“You prepare a table once my enemies are gone,”* it says, *“in their presence,”* that’s where love will emerge.

This is the gospel’s strange power: God does not wait for perfect peace to feed us, He provides nourishment even when surrounded by strife, confusion, despair, outbursts.

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Romans 12 echoes this: *“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.”* In other words, the table is not only for us, but through us, for those we’d rather exclude.

The Pastoral Word: Choosing the Table

Conflict is unavoidable. Betrayal is painful, but the invitation is not to clutch the thread of bitterness, it is to sit at the table of grace.

Enemies remind us that the world is broken. The table reminds us that love is stronger. To eat in their presence is to declare: God’s goodness is my portion, His mercy is my covering, I need not fear, even here.

The Invitation: Sit at the Table

Recall someone who has wounded or opposed you. Picture them seated across from you at a table.

Now picture Christ at the head, breaking bread, pouring wine. Hear Him say to you: *“Surely goodness and mercy will follow you, even here.”*

Rest in the truth that His abundance is not diminished by conflict; the table is set; the cup overflows.

Journal Prompts

- Who has wounded or opposed me that still lingers in my mind?
- How might I picture Christ preparing a table for me in that very presence?
- What would it mean for me to rest at that table, even with enemies nearby?

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