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Series: Perseverance

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PROMISE OF VICTORY

Hello. This will be the last lesson on perseverance – enduring and trusting in Him to receive the promise of victory. Before we start this lesson, let's watch *The Bible: American Sign Language Translation* of Psalm 23.

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even 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. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Today we will focus on Psalm 23:5, 6, *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."*

It's interesting that these verses talk about Him preparing a table for me in the presence of my enemies. What exactly does that mean? To help you understand this verse, I will share with you a story from the Bible. It is based on one verse that you might find interesting – Jude 9 (there are no chapters in Jude). Jude 9 says, *"But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'"* This is an interesting verse. This verse tells us that when Moses died, there were two people who appeared – the archangel Michael and the devil. They both came to claim the body of Moses. The devil was ready to take the body of Moses. Michael told the devil that he would take the body. In the midst of their dispute, Michael told the devil that the Lord would rebuke him. Michael took Moses' body.

Why did the devil think he had a right to take Moses' body? There is one word to answer that question – sin. Because Moses had sinned, the devil felt he had a right to take Moses' body. But God stopped him. If God is fair, judges everyone equally, and does not practice favoritism, then it seems right for sin to separate us from Him. Did Moses sin? Yes, he made a big mistake. In Exodus, you will see the story of Moses leading people out of Egypt across the Red Sea. Later, the people were in the desert for 40 years. During that time the people became very frustrated. They wondered why Moses had brought them to the desert. They complained against Moses. Moses remained quiet and worked hard in serving God. One

day the people were bickering with each other that they were thirsty because there was no water. Moses became “fed up” and very angry. He grabbed a rod and struck a rock. Water immediately flowed. The people were shocked. And God asked Moses, “Where is your honor for Me and patience? You could have prayed for Me to provide water before striking the rock. Then people will, as a result of seeing water flow from the rock, praise Me and honor Me for my power.”

But, Moses’ anger and response did not show reverence to God. God was not pleased with Moses. God punished Moses by not letting him enter the Promised Land. Moses was left speechless and remained in the desert. After the people had spent 40 years in the desert, Moses was allowed to go up on a mountain and see the Promised Land, but he couldn’t go there. Then he died. Moses accepted God’s commands and died. The devil saw all of this, including God’s displeasure with Moses, and knew that he had sinned. The devil knows that sin results in separation from God. The devil knows sin leads to death. As Romans 6:23 says, *“For the wages of sin is death...”*

But the Lord prevented the devil from taking Moses’ body. The devil probably wondered what was going on. The devil didn’t know what God’s plan was. The devil had rebelled against God before. And Moses had made a big mistake before. The devil probably felt it was fair for Moses to be punished, too. The devil was frustrated because he did not understand fully God’s plan. This was a mystery to the devil.

This mystery is explained in Colossians 1:26. Verse 26 says, *“the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations...”* I Peter 1:10-12 explains the prophets studying intently for God’s plan of salvation, trying to find out the time, circumstances, and the sufferings of Christ. Even the angels wanted to know His plan of salvation. This shows that God’s plan was a mystery. This plan was hidden from the devil so that the devil could not destroy God’s plan.

Then, it became the work and plan of the devil to destroy God’s plan. The devil wants God’s plan to fail. When Moses was a baby, the devil influenced the king of Egypt. The king decided that if any Jewish woman gave birth to a baby boy, then the boy must be killed. But many Jewish women were afraid. They did not obey the king. When asked why they didn’t kill the babies, they gave the excuse that Jewish women were too strong and gave birth before they could arrive. The king became furious. He ordered that every baby boy born had to be thrown into the Nile River and killed. Moses’ parents were afraid and did not follow the king’s orders. They decided to find a way to save Moses’ life. They put Moses in a special basket and put it in the river. A group of women who were daughters of the Egyptian king saw this beautiful baby in the basket. They picked up the baby and took care of him. The devil tried to destroy God’s plan for saving the world through the mystery of Jesus.

Then when Jesus was born, the devil influenced King Herod to ask the wise men to find the future king of Israel. But, when the wise men did not return, King Herod became upset. King Herod ordered that all boys under the age of 2 be killed. Joseph and Mary took baby Jesus and escaped to Egypt. The devil tried to mess up God’s plan.

Then Jesus grew up and started doing work for God. Jesus started preaching and healing people. The devil battled with Jesus. Eventually, the devil influenced the Jewish people to turn against Jesus and demand that He be crucified. After public trials, Jesus was crucified. And when Jesus died, the devil thought he had finally messed up God's plan. The devil celebrated Jesus' death.

But, God's plan was still a mystery. God waited until the third day when He raised Jesus from the dead. The devil was shocked and confused. Let's look at I Peter 3:19. This is interesting...after Jesus died on the cross He went to the spirits in prison. During Noah's time on earth, people rebelled against him. They mocked Noah. It started raining and all of those people drowned. Those people went to prison. So, after Jesus died on a cross, He went to this prison in hell. These spirits in hell probably wondered, "Why are we here, but why are others who have sinned like us not here?"

Jesus preached to them to let them know that He had died for them to satisfy the wages of sin, which is death. Jesus showed them that He had died. Then Jesus rose from the dead, so the spirits in prison and the devil had their question answered.

Now, the devil wondered about Moses' body. The devil finally understood that Jesus had died so Moses' sins could be forgiven. Let's go back to Colossians 1:26, "*the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.*" The mystery has been unlocked. We now understand that Jesus has risen from the dead. If we confess our sins, join Jesus' death through baptism as explained in Romans 6, and rise from baptism as Jesus arose, we will have new life with Him. Death has no hold on us because of His power. The cross and His blood cover our sins. We have conquered death and have victory.

I have a question for you. Even though the devil wanted to take Moses' body, did the archangel take him? Yes. We may find the answer in the story of the transfiguration. Jesus called Peter and John to go with Him up a mountain. Eventually, Jesus told Peter and John to stop. Jesus went up further. As Peter and John watched Jesus, He became bright and there were two men who appeared with Him, one on each side. One of the two men was Moses. The other man was Elijah. This shows us that Moses is with God.

Even though we have sinned, if we are sorry, ask God for forgiveness, remain faithful to Him, and persevere, He will give us the victory through Jesus' death and resurrection. That is the promise we have in Christ.

David, the writer of Psalm 23, understood what "*you prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies*" truly meant. That meant the enemies will accuse us of all the sins we have done against God. But, He has blessed us and "*anointed our heads with oil*" through Jesus Christ. My cup overflows... Verse 6 says, "*Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*"

David knew that even though he made many mistakes and fell to temptations, he remained faithful to God. In the end, he had victory. David saying "*I will dwell in the house*

of the LORD forever” shows that he was determined to remain faithful. We need to have that same attitude. We must hold steadfast to the belief that His goodness and love will follow us all of our lives and that we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

It is important that we are confident in the faith we have in Jesus, who did all the work for us. We just need to trust Him and He will pour out His blessings upon us. When Jesus returns, we will rise with Him. I pray that through these lessons on perseverance you will, no matter what happens in your life, continue to trust Him. Then, we will meet in heaven someday. I pray that you will continue with Jesus as I remain in Him, too. May all Christians persevere together as we strive for the goal of eternal life that God has promised us through Jesus Christ.

God bless you. I love you.



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