

The Twenty Third Psalm
(Study # 9)

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Introduction

1. Verse 5:

- (1) "Thou anointest my head with oil."
- (2) "Anointing" was an ancient custom of courtesy, healing and consecration.

2. The setting:

- (1) The same as in verse 4.
- (2) A colorful oriental banquet in a brilliantly-lighted banquet hall.
- (3) The arrival of happy and excited guests.
- (4) The gracious host welcoming his arriving guests.
- (5) The host anointing the head of each guest with precious, aromatic and expensive oil.
- (6) The fragrance of the oil would fill the banquet hall and remind the host of his guests for many days after the banquet.
- (7) The fragrance would also linger on the garments of the guests for many days, reminding them of the happy hours they had spent in the presence of their host.

3. A beautiful New Testament example:

- (1) Mark 14:3-9.
- (2) On Wednesday night before his death, Jesus attended a banquet in Bethany, in the home of Simon the leper.
- (3) Mary invaded the banquet hall and anointed Jesus with the precious oil of spikenard.
- (4) The fragrance would linger on Jesus through the dark hours between the banquet and the cross.
- (5) It would strengthen Jesus in the hours of his indescribable suffering.

- (6) It would remind him of the love and devotion of one true friend.
- (7) The fragrance would also linger on Mary through Christ's death and burial.

4. In this verse, David declared:

- (1) The life of faith is a banquet.
- (2) We are the invited guests.
- (3) God is our host.

5. The spiritual implications;

- (1) We have been invited to God's final, never-ending banquet.
- (2) "The marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev. 19:9)
- (3) "The supper of the great God." (Rev. 19:17)
- (4) "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. 21:23)
- (5) This verse anticipates our arrival, welcome, anointing, and lingering fragrances at God's final banquet.

6. Now, hear it again: "Thou anointest my head with oil."

7. Consider these words in the light of the following truths.

I. The Human Race Was Anointed

1. In every human life:

- (1) There are special gifts.
- (2) And special talents.
- (3) And special inspirations.
- (4) And special rays of light.
- (5) We possess qualities of life that are never deserved or understood.

- (6) Sometimes the sheer joy of living overflows our hearts.
- (7) Some would call this euphoria.
- (8) Some would call it serendipity.
- (9) Some would call it charisma.
- (10) Some understand that it is God's anointing.

2. Progressive blessings of life:

- (1) The miracle of birth.
- (2) The wonder of a mother's love.
- (3) The amazements of infancy.
- (4) The vitality and glory of youth.
- (5) The absence of worries, burdens, sorrow, suffering and depression.
- (6) The memories of banquet-like hours, places, and experiences.
- (7) The love and companionship of friends.
- (8) The memories of fellow pilgrims.
- (9) The fragrances that still linger, and strengthen, and bless us.
- (10) "Think on these things." (Phil. 4:8)

3. We are promised that our anointing will be renewed each time we approach God.

4. The vast variety of approaches to God:

- (1) Burdened with sin.
- (2) Wracked with guilt.
- (3) Torn with doubt.
- (4) Broken by failure.
- (5) Steeped in depression.
- (6) Angry, rebellious, accusative.
- (7) Abusing and condemning ourselves.
- (8) Confessing, promising, vowing.
- (9) With prayer, thanksgiving, praise and blessings.
- (10) And when we approach in penitence, God renews and repeats our anointing.

5. Exodus 30:30-38

- (1) Moses recorded God's recipe for a special oil of anointing.
- (2) This special oil was limited to the anointing of the tabernacle, ark and priests.
- (3) It could never be used on others, and must never be imitated.

6. Leviticus 14:18

- (1) Here, Moses magnified a "remnant of oil."
- (2) The word "remnant" has been interpreted by some scholars as "the last drops" or "the final drop."
- (3) There is an ancient Jewish legend to the effect that there was a special efficacy in the last drop of the "remnant of oil."
- (4) Some believe that Paul had this verse and legend in mind when he wrote: "I am now ready to be offered." (II Tim. 4:6)
- (5) The word "offered" indicates a sacrifice, or a libation poured out to God.
- (6) With this in mind, Paul's "I am now ready to be offered" may be translated as: "The final drop of my own sacrifice is about to fall."
- (7) The time will arrive when the final drop of our own sacrifice will fall on God's eternal altar.

7. But until then, we will cling to his strengthening assurance: As a human being, we belong to God's anointed human race.

II. Jesus Was Anointed

1. Three prophecies and promises:

- (1) "Kings and rulers form an alliance against the Lord and his anointed." (Psa. 2:2)
- (2) "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above all thy companions." (Psa. 45:7)
- (3) "I will make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for my anointed." (Psa. 132:17)

2. Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:18-19

- (1) In both of these passages, we are listening to the voice of Jesus:
- (2) In Isaiah: "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings . . . to bind up broken hearts . . . to proclaim freedom . . . to open prisons . . . to comfort all that mourn."
- (3) In Luke: "God has anointed me to preach to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to set captives free, to give sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are bruised."

3. Other New Testament passages:

- (1) "Thou hast anointed thy holy child Jesus." (Acts 4:27)
- (2) "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost, and with power." (Acts 10:38)
- (3) "God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." (Heb. 1:9)

4. Within the word "anoint:"

- (1) "Make coequal."
- (2) "Consecrate, dedicate."
- (3) "Sanctify, set apart."
- (4) "Endow, empower."
- (5) "Give light, make to shine."
- (6) "Glisten and glow."
- (7) "Expand and soar with outstretched wings."

5. Jesus was anointed as:

- (1) Son.
- (2) Prophet.
- (3) Priest.
- (4) King.
- (5) Messiah.
- (6) Lord.
- (7) Savior.

6. A gripping Old Testament drama:

- (1) I Kings 1:1-45.
- (2) This chapter presents a dramatic series of events in the history of the nation of Israel.
- (3) David was on his deathbed, at the close of his 40-year reign. (verse 1)
- (4) Adonijah and Joab hatched a devious plot to usurp the throne, and the kingdom. (verses 5-9)
- (5) The nation was poised on the brink of anarchy.
- (6) Nathan and Bathsheba formed an alliance which thwarted the plot of Adonijah and Joab. (verses 11-30)
- (7) At Gihon, Solomon was anointed to be the king. (verses 38-39)
- (8) Especial notice: Solomon was anointed with "A horn of oil out of the tabernacle." (verse 39)
- (9) The drama climaxes in verses 44-45 as Jonathan, the messenger, breathlessly cries: "Solomon has been anointed as king!"
- (10) "And the city rang again with rejoicing!"

7. Today, in our modern world:

- (1) So many dying, departing and fallen rulers.
- (2) So many empty and impotent thrones and seats of government.
- (3) The near-anarchy condition of the entire world.
- (4) The ever-increasing decadence, depravity and degradation of our own nation.
- (5) The multiplicity of scientists, sociologists, psychologists, politicians, preachers and self-appointed experts raving, ranting and telling us exactly what we need.

8. Our greatest need:

- (1) Breathless messenger proclaiming: "God has anointed Jesus as Son, Prophet, Priest, King, Messiah, Lord and Savior."
- (2) Then: Our world would also ring again with rejoicing!

9. A New Testament proclamation:
 - (1) I Corinthians 15:25-26.
 - (2) From the highest peak of this mountain-top chapter, Paul cried: "He must reign 'til he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."
10. We do not yet see or understand this; but we shall, we shall!

III. God's Children Are Anointed

1. Revelation 1:5-6
 - (1) From his lonely exile on the isle of Patmos, John could have written words of self-pity.
 - (2) Instead, he wrote words of praise:
 - (3) "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God."
 - (4) "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."
2. Was John writing about:
 - (1) A mystical dream, or a beautiful reality?
 - (2) A foolish fancy, or an eternal fact?
 - (3) An unavailing pursuit, or an undeniable promise?
 - (4) Something to pray for, or an already-accomplished possession?
3. It is an already-accomplished fact:
 - (1) It was long ago settled in God's mind.
 - (2) It is promised in God's word.
 - (3) It is ours to appropriate, or to scorn.
4. We are anointed with promise:
 - (1) To Jacob. (Gen. 28:15-18)
 - (2) To servants. (Isa. 54:17)

- (3) To the persecuted. (Mat. 5:10-12)
 - (4) To John on Patmos. (Rev. 1:17-18)
 - (5) To all believers. (Rev. 11:15)
5. We are anointed with invitation:
- (1) We are invited to God's eternal banquet, "The supper of the great God." (Rev. 19:17)
 - (2) Our invitation is personally delivered; not only by servants, but also by his son.
 - (3) The invitation: "Come, for all things are ready." (Luke 14:17)
6. We are anointed with welcome:
- (1) We are welcomed by the host.
 - (2) We are anointed by the host.
 - (3) The fragrance lingers on and on.
7. We are anointed with joy and gladness:
- (1) In the Bible, from Exodus to Revelation, "joy" and "gladness" ring up toward 400 times.
 - (2) The Old Testament world was in dire need of joy and gladness.
 - (3) Our modern world is still in need of joy and gladness.
 - (4) There are great masses of lonely and hurting people all around us who need to see and hear happy faces and cheerful words.
 - (5) If you are a stranger to joy and gladness in your own life, you will automatically have crippled your service to lonely and hurting people.
 - (6) If your church never reflects joy and gladness in its doctrine, activities and worship services, it has automatically crippled its service to its lonely and hurting world.
 - (7) Remember how Paul, from the cell of a stinking and vermin-infested Roman jail, again and again cried, "Joy! Joy! Joy!"

8. We are anointed with unction:

- (1) I John 2:20.
- (2) "You have an unction from the Holy one."

9. Regarding "unction:"

- (1) The Hebrew word from which "unction" came was "krismah."
 - (2) From "krismah" came the Greek word "chrisma."
 - (3) From "chrisma" came our overly-used-in-recent-years word "charisma."
 - (4) All of these words are derived from, and still convey, the original meaning of "anointing."
 - (5) "Unction" possesses a few gentle suggestions for interpretation, which allow the following:
 - (6) "The anointing of God."
 - (7) "The endowment of the Holy Spirit."
 - (8) "That which provides what is needed."
 - (9) "That which soothes and comforts."
 - (10) "Unction" accomplished what learning and eloquence can never attain.
 - (11) With "unction," God's message will pierce the hearts of men.
 - (12) Without "unction," the most eloquent words will fall like broken arrows at the feet of an archer.
 - (13) We know when "unction" is present, and when it is absent.
10. My favorite comment on "unction:" A black pastor once told me, "I don't fully know what unction is, but I do know when I ain't got it!"

Conclusion

"Thou anointest my head with oil."



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