

Title: **“THE VERY HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD
ARE ALL NUMBERED”**

Text: Matthew 10:29-31

Readings: *Larry Criss and Bob Duff*

Subject: *Divine Providence*

Date: Tuesday Evening — January 5, 210

Tape # Z-80a

Introduction:

Horatio Spafford was a prominent, successful business man in Chicago, IL in the middle 1800's. He had enjoyed great success. He was wealthy, well-known and influential. Overnight he lost almost everything. The great Chicago fire left him in near financial ruin.

He decided to relocate his family. At two o'clock in the morning, November 22, 1873, he loaded his wife and four daughters onto a French luxury liner, (the largest and most luxurious in the world), and kissed them good-bye, promising to meet them in France in a few weeks, as soon as he could settle his business affairs.

Several days out of port, that luxurious ship, sailing peacefully toward France, was rammed by an English ship. It took the largest, best, most luxurious ship in the world just two hours to sink to the ocean floor!

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Two hundred and twenty-six people died on that ship, including all four of the Spafford daughters. Nine days later, when the survivors landed safely at Cardiff, Wales, Spafford received a short wire from his wife. It contained just two words — “Saved alone.”

As soon as possible, he booked passage on a ship to Europe to join his wife. On the way over, the Captain called Spafford to the bridge of the ship. He said, “According to my calculations, we are now passing over the place where your children drowned.” Spafford thanked the Captain, went back to his cabin, and wrote these lines...

“When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows, like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’”

This man who had lost his business, his home and his children, said to a friend, “**I am glad I can trust the Lord when it costs me something.**” When he and his wife finally met and embraced one another, she said, “**We have not lost our children. We are only separated for a little while.**”

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How I pray that God might give me such grace in the face of such trials! How could that man and his wife bear such trials, such losses, such heartaches, with such composure? Only one answer can be given. Horatio Spafford and his wife believed God. They were convinced in their hearts — *“that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

Turn with me to Matthew 10. In this chapter we have our Lord’s instruction to his disciples as he sent them out to preach the gospel, promising them constant conflict, hardship and heartache. Here he assures all who follow him, all who serve him, all who confess him shall in every generation be hated of all men. He assures us that our own families will rise up against us. And, in the midst of all these things, he says, *“Fear ye not!”*

Upon what grounds does he make that admonition? How can that be reasonable? Read Matthew 10:29-31 with me, and you will see.

(Matthew 10:29-31) *“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”*

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With these words our Lord Jesus Christ assures us that none of God’s elect shall ever be in any real danger or suffer any real harm, for we are under the special care and protection of God himself. I see six things in this sentence, which are a constant source of peace and encouragement to me.

**1. THE BLESSED FACT OF DIVINE
PREDESTINATION**

Our Savior’s words in verse 30 might be better translated “the very hairs of your head have all been numbered.” Before the world began, our heavenly Father counted up and ordained the number of hairs that were to be upon your head at this very moment! This is meticulous predestination. What does it tell us? God’s sovereign purpose of grace in predestination includes all that we do and all that we experience.

**2. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER’S PERFECT
KNOWLEDGE OF ALL THINGS CONCERNING
US**

Our God, who predestinated all things and rules all things, knows all things. We are so well known by God that he has

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even numbered the hairs of our heads. — “*Your Father knoweth.*” We need no other comfort. The Lord’s knowledge of us is constant and entire. His knowledge of us is the knowledge of a tender, sympathetic Father.

3. OUR FATHER’S CONSTANT CARE

He who takes the trouble to number the hairs of our heads must surely care for us. We are the apple of his eye. Cast all your care upon him. — “*He careth for you!*” — “*The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.*” — The Triune God is a wall of fire encircling us!

**4. THE HONOR AND HIGH ESTEEM OUR GOD
HAS FOR HIS ELECT**

God has numbered our hairs because he values them. He holds us in honor and high esteem above all the people of the world because of his gracious purpose toward us in Christ, because he has made us one with his darling Son (Isaiah 43:3-5; 1 John 4:9-11).

(Isaiah 43:3-5) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. 2 When thou

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passtest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3 For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5 Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west.”

(1 John 4:9-11) “ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

5. THE PROMISE OF DIVINE PROTECTION

The hairs of our heads are all numbered because our God intends that, “*There shall not an hair of your head perish*” (Luke 21:18). Trials are certain. Temptations are sure. Tribulations are constant in this world. But there is no

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cause for fear. — *“The very hairs of your head are all numbered!”*

6. A COMFORTING ASSURANCE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The primary intent of this word from our Redeemer’s lips is to show us our God’s constant rule of all things. **The sparrow cannot fall to the ground, neither can a hair fall from your head without your Father’s eternal decree in predestination and his direction in providence.**

Proposition: The knowledge and understanding God’s providence is the comfort and strength of believing hearts in the midst of their trials and temptations in this world.

Divisions: Let me wrap my message up by showing you three things about God’s wise, good, adorable providence, three things about God’s providence that our to sustain our souls in peace in the midst of every earthly heartache and woe. May God the Holy Spirit be our Teacher.

1. God’s providence is mysterious.
2. God’s providence is minute.
3. God’s providence is good.

MYSTERIOUS

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First, God’s providence is mysterious (Romans 11:33-36). I refer to this passage numerous often; but I want you to read it with me one more time. Here the Holy Spirit declares to us the mystery of God’s providence.

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

His judgments are a great deep. His ways are past finding out. But I know this...

- **God always has his way.**
- **His ways are not our ways.**
- **His way is always right and best.**

“Keep silence all created things,
And wait your Maker’s nod;
My soul stands trembling while she sings
The honors of her God.

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Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown
Hang on His firm decree;
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.

Chained to His throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size
Drawn by the eternal pen.

His providence unfolds the book
And makes His counsels shine;
Each opening leaf and every stroke
Fulfils some bright design.

Here He exalts neglected worms
To scepters and a crown;
And then, the following page He turns,
And treads the monarch down.

Not Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives,
Nor dares the favorite angel pry
Between the folded leaves.

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My God, I would not long to see
My fate with curious eyes,
What gloomy lines are writ for me,
Or what bright scenes may rise.

In Thy fair book of life and grace
May I but find my name
Recorded by electing grace
Beneath my Lord the Lamb!

God’s providence is his sovereign rule of the universe for the salvation of chosen sinners to the praise of the glory of his grace. — If God has chosen you, if Christ has redeemed you, God will save you. He will do whatever is necessary to bring you to repentance and faith in Christ (Psalm 107).

MINUTE

Second, God’s providence is minute. — *“The very hairs of your head are all numbered”* (Matthew 10:30).

Divine providence is all inclusive! God rules everything, great and small, everywhere, and always! There is absolutely nothing in the universe that is not always under the total rule of our God (Ps. 115; 135; Eph 1:11).

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(Psalms 115) “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake. (2) Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God? (3) But **OUR GOD IS IN THE HEAVENS: HE HATH DONE WHATSOEVER HE HATH PLEASSED.** (4) Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. (5) They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: (6) They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: (7) They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. (8) They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them. (9) **O Israel,** trust thou in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield. (10) **O house of Aaron,** trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield. (11) **Ye that fear the LORD,** trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield. (12) **The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us;** he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. (13) He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great. (14) The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children. (15) **Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.** (16) The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of

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men. (17) The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. (18) But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.”

(Psalms 135) “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD. (2) Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, (3) Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant. (4) **For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.** (5) For **I KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GREAT, AND THAT OUR LORD IS ABOVE ALL GODS.** (6) **WHATSOEVER THE LORD PLEASED, THAT DID HE IN HEAVEN, AND IN EARTH, IN THE SEAS, AND ALL DEEP PLACES.** (7) **He causeth** the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; **he bringeth** the wind out of his treasures. (8) **Who smote** the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. (9) **Who sent** tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants. (10) **Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;** (11) Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:

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(12) And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people. (13) **Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.** (14) For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants. (15) The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. (16) They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; (17) They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths. (18) They that make them are like unto them: *so is* every one that trusteth in them. (19) Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron: (20) Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD. (21) Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.”

(Ephesians 1:11) “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

Our God is in control of all inanimate matter.

- The Creation
- The Red Sea

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- The Jordan River
- The Crowd that Followed Korah
- The Fiery Furnace
- The Whirlwind
- The Crucifixion

Our great God is in total control of all brute beasts, all irrational creatures.

- The Flies, Frogs and Locusts in Egypt
- The Whale that Swallowed Jonah
- The Cock that Crew for Peter

“The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; his kingdom ruleth over all!”

Our God and heavenly Father controls, (absolutely and totally) all rational creatures too. — He controls all men and women everywhere, good and bad, in the good they do and in the evil they perform. All angels, all demons and Satan himself are under the total control of our God.

(Psalms 76:10) “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

(Isaiah 14:24-27) “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, **Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:** ...

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(26) This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

We have no trouble believing that God controls good things and good people; but those are not the things that bother me. It’s the bad stuff that disturbs me. I want to know who is in control of wickedness and evil. That is the One I will worship.

Many have a lot of trouble with this. They do not understand that God truly is God, as fully in control of hell as he is in heaven, as totally in control of wickedness as of righteousness.

What about sin? What about the fall? — “God is not the Author of sin; but he is the Controller and Director of sin. God is not the Causative Force, but the Directing Agent in the sins of men. Men are rebellious; but they have not pushed God off his throne. They are not out from under his control.”

C. D. Cole

- Adam’s Fall
- Tamar’s Incest
- Joseph’s Enslavement

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- Elimelech’s Departure
- David’s Sin
- The Crucifixion

Illustration: Irrigation Canals

(**Proverbs** 16:4) “The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”

(**Proverbs** 16:33) “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.”

(**Proverbs** 21:1) “The king’s heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

(**Acts** 2:23) “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:”

(**Acts** 4:27-28) “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, (28) For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

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GOOD

God’s providence is mysterious and minute. But be sure you get this third thing. **God’s providence is good!** — *“All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

No event in history is isolated from any other event. — *“All things work together!”* — **What does Paul mean when he says that “all things work together for good”?**

- Not Necessarily Immediate Good.
- Not Necessarily Temporal Good.
- But Spiritual Good.
- Eternal Good.
- Collective Good.

Actually, that which is truly good for me is very often the exact opposite of that which is presently good.

Illustrations: Tom DeJarnette — *“If I had not been in prison for murder, I would never have learned the gospel.”*

Brad and Iris Johnson
Paul on the Damascus Road
The Prodigal Son

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Onesimus

God’s providence is always executed in the wisest manner possible. — We are often unable to see and understand the reasons and causes for specific events in our lives, in the lives of others, or in the history of the world. But our lack of understanding does not prevent us from believing God. We bow to his will, which is evident in his works of providence, and say...

(**Romans** 11:33) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

All God’s works of providence are executed perfect holiness and righteousness. — Even in the way he uses the evil works of men and devils is totally free of sin on his part. Though he has predestined and permits deeds of wickedness, sin cannot be imputed to the Almighty. Let men think and say what they will, these two things are plainly revealed in Holy Scripture...

1. “*All things are of God*” (2 Corinthians 5:18).
2. “*The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*” (Psalm 145:17).

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All God’s providential works are executed with the irresistible power of his omnipotence. — Everything that comes to pass in time is brought to pass by God’s sovereign providence, according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. He works all things after the counsel of his own will. His counsel always stands. He always does all his pleasure in all things everywhere. — *“Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him”* (Isaiah 3:10).

God’s providence demands and deserves our unceasing praise. — **John Gill wrote,** “We should **give to him the glory** of all; **observe with wonder and gratitude,** the various steps of it (his providence) respecting ourselves and others; and **put our trust in him** for things temporal and spiritual; **and at all times cast our care upon him,** who cares for us; seeing it is, and always will be, well with the righteous, in time and to all eternity.”

APPLICATION

It is good for me to know Christ and be found in him. If God has to cripple me, or cripple my child to get my attention and then turn my eyes and my heart to Christ, that is good! It is good for me...

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- To fellowship with God and walk humbly before him.
- To be a blessing to others.
- To be weaned from this world.
- To be a better preacher.
- To continue in the faith.
- To finish my course with joy.
- To die in the faith.
- To rise in glory and be like Christ!

Whatever God sees fit to use to accomplish these things for us and in us is good! At your leisure, read Psalm 107 again. There we are given a detailed view of God’s providence. — *“All things work together for good.”*

Illustration: A Pharmacist Mixing Medicine

Too much **joy** would intoxicate me. — Too much **misery** would drive me into despair. — Too much **sorrow** would crush me. — Too much **suffering** would break my spirit. — Too much **pleasure** would ruin me. — Too much **defeat** would discourage me. — Too much **success** would puff me up. — Too much **failure** would keep me from doing anything. — Too much **criticism** would harden me. — Too much **praise** would exalt me. — My God knows exactly what I need. His providence is wisely designed and

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sovereignly sent for my good! Let him therefore send and do what he will. By his grace, I will...

- Face it.
- Bow to it.
- Accept it.
- Give thanks for it.

“I welcome all His sovereign will,
For all His will is love.
And when I know not what He does,
I’ll wait for light above.”

AMEN.