

SUNDAY SERMON

Willow, Alaska

Date: March 3, 2019

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:26-28

Text: Multiple

Subject: CONFESSION OF FAITH SERIES – The Providence of God

5. God's Providence

God in His infinite power and wisdom, directs all things to the purpose for which they were created; that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance or without His providence; and that whatsoever befalls the elect is by His appointment for His glory and their good.

Job38:11; Is.46:10, 11; Ec.3:14; Mk.10:29, 30; Ex.21:13; Pv.16:33; Ro.8:28.

God's providence? What does this mean? Searching the scriptures, we find this word providence one time only. However the Greek word is translated as "provision" in another verse. In this particular verse, providence is translated from the Greek word: *προνοια* *pronoia*. It means providence or provision.

Ac 24:1-3 (KJV) *And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. 2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy **providence**, 3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.*

Now let us notice the word "provision" which comes from this same Greek word:

Ro 13:14 (KJV) *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not **provision** <προνουια> for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Now, let us go to our dictionary to define the words providence and provision. Providence is a 12th century French word which came to our English language. The French word came from the Latin "providentia." It means Foresight or precaution. The English word is defined as: The action of providing, preparation, or arrangement. Provision means "seeing to things beforehand." In other words, "Your heavenly father knoweth ye have need of these things (food, shelter, clothing) [Mt. 6:31-32. Our Lord provides for us through all the ups and downs of life. His providence keeps us alive and continues to work His design for us

Mt 6:31-33 (KJV) *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? **32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. **33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

When Jacob was preparing for death, he wanted to bless the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim. So he did. He said this to Joseph:

Ge 48:15 (KJV) *And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, **the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,***

You and I can definitely say this today, no matter our age. God has fed me all my life long unto this day. None of us have ever starved – but the

LORD has always been faithful in his providential care for us. And – he has promised that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

Let us rehearse our statement again and look at our proof texts:

God in His infinite power and wisdom, directs all things to the purpose for which they were created; that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance or without His providence; and that whatsoever befalls the elect is by His appointment for His glory and their good.

Job 38:8-11 (KJV) *Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? 9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, 10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, 11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?*

Isa 46:9-11 (KJV) *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*

Ec 3:14 (KJV) *I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*

Mr 10:29-30 (KJV) *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or*

*sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, **30** But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

Ex 21:12-13 (KJV) *He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. **13** And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.*

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

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Consider this: God alone has the power and wisdom to (1) purpose and plan all things which shall occur in time, but also (2) to direct all things to the purpose for which they were created. Providence looks ahead and directs all things toward their planned end. What do we, as the created beings, have to do in determining what shall occur? Not much. We may plan and purpose, but God will overrule our planning and purposes so that we will think that we did it ourselves – that is, until we stop and consider. Again, in the 16th chapter of Proverbs, we are quickly brought into focus about God's providence in every aspect of our lives.

Pr 16:9 (KJV) *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Our heart (where we think, will, feel, deliberate, devise, plan, etc) decides which way we shall go and how it will turn out. This is why we are to “keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” (Pro. 4:23). If our thinking is right and directed by the Word and the Spirit, we will never enter into an important decision without first consulting the Word of God and praying about the matter. How can we say of ourselves as the book of James records:

Jas 4:13-15 (KJV) *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: **14** Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. **15** For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

God alone has the wisdom and power to bring to pass those things which he has determined beforehand. If it is God’s will – we shall live, and do this, or that – and not our own plans from the heart. That is providence. God will make all things – not some things – but all things work together for our Good. It is not said that all things are, in themselves good, but that God will work them out for good – to them who love God and are the called according to his purpose.

Consider this about God’s providential care:

Joseph and his brethren. It is amazing that Rachel had to wait, wait, and wait to have a son. She was so set on having a baby that she really got on to Jacob. She said, “Give me children, or else I die.” (Gen. 30:1). Rachel had to wait until God opened her womb so that Joseph would be the youngest (except for Benjamin who would come into play later). His brothers had to be older.

Joseph had dreams. Why did Joseph dream? How could he but share what had come into his dream? His brother hated him. They purposed to kill him. But Judah talked them out of it. Let's sell him – and so they did. They meant it for evil to Joseph. Watch the providence continue. He just happened to be sold to Potiphar, captain of the guard in Egypt. Why not someone else? He found favor with Potiphar. Potiphar put everything in his house at the pleasure of Joseph (his wife excepted). Why was that? Then Potiphar's wife accused Joseph falsely – and so he was cast into prison. Such a horrible thing! Falsely accused! We have to wonder what he was thinking about his brothers! And how he must have been grieved that he was taken away from his Father and mother. So Joseph was cast into prison. But Joseph found favor with the keeper of the prison. Why? The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper!

Pharaoh's Butler and Baker had displeased him just at this time and he send them to the prison. They dreamed a dream, each of them. Why at this time? Joseph interpreted their dreams. God gave him that. Joseph asked them to remember him? Surely he thought he might get out prison. The baker was hanged on a tree as Joseph said and the butler was restored. Two years passed and Joseph stayed in the prison. No doubt, he was wondering if they told the Pharaoh. Pharaoh had a dream that greatly troubled him after two years had gone by? Why just at this time? The butler did his job for two years and suddenly remembered that Joseph had interpreted his dream. So he told Pharaoh.

Pharaoh sent for Joseph who cleaned himself up, shaved, and was brought into see Pharaoh. Pharaoh told his dream and Joseph told him what the dreams meant (he had two dreams). This man found grace in

the eyes of Pharaoh because the Pharaoh saw the spirit of the Gods in him. Therefore, he was appointed to be over all the land and over everyone except that Pharaoh was greater in the throne. He gave Joseph his ring from his hand and placed it on Joseph's hand. He arrayed Joseph in vestures of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. Joseph was no doubt thinking – Wow (from the pit to the prison to the palace)! Joseph prepared for the coming famine by gathering food and storing it up in the cities.

The Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife – and then the Lord gave Joseph two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. These men would later become two of the children of Israel. Why were they born just then? Why did not Joseph have daughters? Or ten sons instead of two? Why was it that the famine waxed hard in the land of Canaan? How was it that Jacob had heard there was corn in Egypt? Then sent his sons (those older boys) to get some corn? Joseph saw them and knew them – but they could not yet recognize Joseph. You all remember the story well how that Joseph sent for his father and his brethren and brought them to Egypt to give them the best of the land – the land of Goshen. Just before doing that, he revealed himself to his brothers – and the Bible says they were troubled at his presence.

After Jacob and his family came to Egypt, and had been there for some time, Jacob died. After this, Joseph's brothers were undoubtedly thinking "Now this guy is going to give us what we deserve for selling him to the Ishaelites and so they asked Joseph to forgive their sin and the evil which they did to him. Joseph wept! He said to them, "Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto God, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Brothers and sisters, that is God's providence. He worked all things together for good for them to bring his purpose to pass in them.

Beloved, not only did God's providence rule in the life of Joseph and his family, we can see God's care over so many of his dear children.

- God's providence was over Noah and his family all through the flood ordeal.
- God's providence was over Abraham and Sarah. God providentially protected Abraham as he took his armed servants to rescue Lot who had been taken captive. He providentially protected Abraham and Sarah when Abimelech would have taken her to wife.
- God's providence protected Jacob when his brother Esau hated him and wanted to kill him. God's providence was over him when he worked for Uncle Laban to prepare sustenance for his family.
- God's providence was over David and his men when King Saul sought to kill him.
- God's providence was over Elijah when Jezebel had determined to kill him. God commanded the Ravens to bring him bread and flesh – and provided a brook for his water.

We could bring forth many of the Bible characters and look at the details of their lives to see God's providence in caring for them and taking them to his planned purpose for each of them. He is doing that in your life, beloved, if you are a child of the living God. He works everything together for good to them who are the called according to his purpose. Think of that! Everything! Whether the thing is good or bad, God works is for the good of his people – those who love him and are the called according to His purpose.

Are you of the called? Has God called you to himself by his gospel? Are you now believing that Jesus Christ is the son of the living God and that he laid down his life for you on the cross? If so, then God's had stated his purpose for your life? Is it not that you will definitely be conformed (fitted and molded) to the image of His son, Jesus Christ, that He might

be the firstborn of many brethren? Is it not that he will present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy? Trust and rejoice in Gods Providence over you.