

7/21/2019

“God’s Promise to Provide”

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Series: Standing on God’s Promises

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: God promises and will provide for our physical, mental/emotional and spiritual needs. We should regularly acknowledge God’s promise and provision with trust, thanksgiving and praise (worship).

On an especially hot day like today in our part of the world, we may want to complain about the heat. But those of us who have it, can also be especially thankful for air conditioning. In fact, how many of you here grew up without it?

And how many of you here grew up without cell phones?

And how many remember having only one TV in the house? . . . Black and white 19 inches? ☺

Yes, I’m sure that most, if not all of us here, can be thankful for the many conveniences of modern day technology and entertainment. And some perhaps, are even especially thankful for running water and electricity.

And when we consider all the many blessings of God’s creation which we truly enjoy, both material and non-material, we may say with the psalmist . . .

“Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind. For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.”

Psalm 107:8-9

† **From the beginning of creation to Jesus and beyond, God has provided food and other necessities, sometimes in abundance.**

Lest we do not believe or ever forget, consider what the Bible says about God’s provision. From the beginning of creation, God has provided.

To Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:29-30) . . .

Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the

*ground -- everything that has the breath of life in it -- I give every green plant for food.”
And it was so.*

And after the great flood (Genesis 9:1-3) . . .

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.”

And let’s remember Abraham who walked in faith as God tested him with the sacrifice of his son Isaac. When Isaac asked his father, “Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Abraham answered (Genesis 22:8), “*God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.*” *And the two of them went on together.*

(Genesis 22:13) “*Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”*”

Friends, God did provide the sacrifice for Abraham to offer. And God would later provide the sacrifice for the descendants of Israel and all humankind!

But first, God provided manna to eat in the wilderness as the Hebrew people journeyed from slavery to freedom, towards a new land of promise, opportunity and prosperity.

Following the Exodus, as God’s people entered Canaan, God said to the people . . .

“So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today -- to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul -- then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.” (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)

Again, as the Psalmist says (Psalm 111:4-5) . . .

“He has caused his wonders to be remembered;

the LORD is gracious and compassionate.

“He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.”

To King David, God sent the prophet Nathan. (2 Samuel 7:8-10)

“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. ‘And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.’”

† **Even to those who have gone astray, God provides forgiveness, goodness and mercy. God provides all good things to those who seek God’s righteousness – living in right relationship with God and others.**

To a sinful and rebellious people, whom God punished with destruction and exile, God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, saying . . .

“Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.” (Jeremiah 33:6-9)

How many people still today are looking for, and longing for, peace and prosperity! That is why so many are still migrating from one country to another. Even when we are rebellious, disobedient, and estranged from God, God still promises to provide. Maybe that’s where you are right now in your life. Listen to God’s love and promise for you.

And what did Jesus have to say about God’s promise to provide, and our response to Him?

† **Followers of Jesus put their hope and trust in God first, not in material wealth, willing to share generously with others.**

Jesus said (Matthew 6:25-34) . . .

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today

and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

As Jesus himself promised and instructed (Matthew 7:7-12) . . .

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

As Patrick Castleberry of Mississippi shared in The Upper Room recently (6/25/19):

"As I was walking with my mother this morning, we noticed lilies growing among the overgrown grass and weeds in a lot that has sat abandoned since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It was both striking and touching to see an example of such beauty in the midst of such ugliness. It brought to my mind the words of Jesus telling us not to worry about what we shall wear or eat because God knows what we need and will provide it for us

"In the same way that my mother and I could not see the bulb underground being nourished to eventually become a beautiful flower, we may not notice when God is hard at work in our lives. But much like a flower in bloom, the beauty and splendor of the end result will be visible to all."

And so Patrick prays: "Dear God, thank you for being a steadfast presence of love in our lives. Help us to trust that you are at work even when we cannot see it. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."

As the Apostle Paul witnessed in his own life (Phil 4:19) . . .

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

Say to one another . . . My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

So, what do you need in your life right now? What do you want God to provide for you or someone else? Food, shelter, forgiveness, rest, peace, spiritual strength; healing of some kind for yourself, family or friends? Are you seeking new or better employment, success in a business, or some other means of support and financial stability and progress?

I know that many of you, like myself, can bear witness to God's marvelous blessings of provision in these and other ways. I hope you will share a witness with someone this week.

Friends, do not worry or stress out about such things. And do not let the evil one deceive you or turn your heart from God -- envying those, or idolizing those who have more power, money or possessions than you. And do not let God's blessings and miracles become an ego trip.

Remember how Paul, when he and Barnabas were in the city of Lystra, healed a man who could not walk from birth. The people called them gods and wanted to worship them.

The Book of Acts tells us (Acts 14:14-18) . . .

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

And to Timothy, Paul wrote (1Tim. 6:17) . . . *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."*

Yes, God promises and will provide for our physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We should regularly acknowledge God's promise and provision with trust, thanksgiving and praise (worship).

So, friends, what do you need or want God to provide in your life?

Maybe you have it already, and need to give thanks.

Maybe you need to ask in prayer, with a humble attitude of expectancy.

Maybe you need to remember to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness.

Maybe you need to respond to God's provision by sharing what you have and by laying up treasure in heaven as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that you may take hold of the life that is truly life.

And may each of each hear, believe, and receive God's promise to provide! Amen.