

THIS PRESENT TIME #11

PROVIDENCE: THE HAND OF GOD

4.2.23

Romans 8:28 KJV “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

The meaning of Providence:

The idea of God’s care of His creation, including protection, guidance, purpose and preservation. The on-going care of creation is usually referred to as “general providence,” while divine intervention is referred to as “special providence.”

Getting started

1. This work of God referred to in Romans 8 revolves around the key ideas of (1) redemption and (2) refinement.
2. The idea of Providence was a matter of profound conviction to Paul - (“And we know....”).
3. The conclusion is that nothing can touch our lives unless it is (1) planned or (2) permitted.
4. Sustaining or delivering grace is promised.
5. God is not the instigator of evil, but He promises to refine, redeem, and restore.
6. Providence does not imply fatalism. Rather we should aggressively seek the Hand of God to be upon our lives.

From this verse, four anchors of our soul emerge:

1. God’s plan is BENEFICIAL (“all things work together for **good**”).
2. God’s plan is ACTIVE (“all things **work** together for good”).
3. God’s plan is INCLUSIVE (“**all things** work together for good”).
4. God’s plan is HARMONIOUS (“all things **work together** for good”).

Christian Life Lessons

1. God has already committed to love us forever.
2. God wants to strengthen our faith so that trust in Him is our natural response.
3. “God remembers our frames, that we are but dust.”
4. Sometimes providence seems to come INDIRECTLY as we simply serve The Lord. (Anna)
5. Sometimes providence is manifested DIRECTLY as we obey specific instruction. (Simeon)
6. Sometimes providence carries us, though we do not understand God’s methods. (the man born blind)

The Woodcutter’s Wisdom

By Max Lucado

Once upon a time there was an old woodcutter who lived in a tiny village. Although poor, he was envied by all, for he owned a beautiful white horse. Even the king coveted his treasure. A horse like this had never been seen before — such was its splendor, its majesty, its strength.

People offered fabulous prices for the steed, but the old woodcutter always refused. “This horse is not a horse to me; he is a friend! How could anyone sell a friend?” The man was poor and his friends all urged him to sell, but the man never sold the horse.

One morning, the woodcutter found his horse was not in the stable. All the village came to see him and scolded him: “You old fool! You should have sold your horse. You could have gotten whatever price you wanted; no price would have been too high. Now the horse is gone all you can do is weep!”

The old man responded, “No. You go too far! Who knows if my loss of the horse is a blessing or a curse? Only God knows. No one is wise enough to know how this will turn out. Only God knows. So just bless His name and go on with your life.”

The people of the village laughed. They thought the woodcutter was a fool; if he wasn’t he would have sold the horse and lived off the money.

After fifteen days, the horse returned. He hadn’t been stolen; he had run away into the forest. And when he returned, he had brought a dozen wild horses with him. Once again the village people gathered around the woodcutter and spoke, “Old man, you were right and we were wrong! What we thought was a curse was actually a blessing. Please forgive us. You should be rejoicing!”

The old man replied, "Once again, you go too far. Say only that the horse is back and that he has brought 12 others with him. Who knows if this is a blessing or a curse? Only God knows. No one is wise enough to know how this will turn out. Only God knows. Just bless His name and go on with your life."

The people said little, but deep down they knew the old woodcutter was wrong. Twelve wild horses had returned with one horse. They knew this was a blessing! With a little work, the animals could be broken and trained and sold for much money.

The old woodcutter had a son, an only son. The young man soon began to break the wild horses. After a few days, the lad fell from one of the horses and broke both legs. Once again, the villagers gathered around the old woodcutter and said, "You were right and we were wrong! What we thought was a blessing was actually a curse. Please forgive us! You would be right to weep. Your only son has broken his legs and now in your old age you have no one to help you. Now you are poorer than ever."

The old man replied, "Once again you go too far. Say only that my son broke his legs. Who knows if this is a blessing or a curse? Only God knows. No one is wise enough to know how this will turn out. Only God knows. Just bless His name and go on with your life."

It so happened that a few weeks later the country engaged in war against a neighboring country. All the young men of the village were required to join the army. Only the son of the old woodcutter was exempted from military service because he was injured. Once again the people of the village gathered around the old man crying and screaming because their sons had been taken. They would never see their sons again. "You were right, old man," they wept. "This proves that your son's accident was a blessing. Your son's legs may be broken, but at least he is with you. Our sons are gone forever."

The old woodcutter replied, "Once again you go too far. Say only that your sons had to go to war while mine did not. Who knows if this is a blessing or a curse? Only God knows. No one is wise enough to know how this will turn out. Only God knows. Just bless His name and go on with your life."