



Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 46:1-13
New Testament Reading – Ephesians 1:3-13

Saying Farewell to Fear # 2

“Trusting God’s Providence”

Philippians 4:10-23

In the first nine verses of Philippians 4, the Apostle Paul revealed the believer’s secret to a life of total peace.

- Stand fast in the Lord: fill your hearts with love, joy, and truth, and let your trust in the Lord be evident in your gentle attitude and actions.
- Don’t be anxious about anything, but pray about everything, with thanksgiving and supplication, and the peace that passes understanding will guard their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

In the last thirteen verses of Philippians 4, the Apostle Paul revealed the believer’s secret to a life of total contentment, and in doing so, he illustrated his trust in the God’s providence.

- Learn to be content in all of life's circumstances.
- Learn to be content, whether in need or plenty, in suffering as well as in health.
- Trust Christ, who is within you to strengthen you.
- Trust God to supply your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

What is God's Providence?

The almighty, everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were, by his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth with all creatures and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

Answer to question 27 of the Heidelberg Catechism

In laymen's terms, God's providence is the means by which God, who created heaven and earth, for His glory, controls all of the intricate affairs of men and nature, to accomplish His purpose, which is to draw all men to see their need for salvation through Jesus Christ.

- There is no such thing as luck, fate, or chance for a Christian.
- Our Sovereign God providentially achieves what He has sovereignly ordained for our lives.
- **Romans 8:28 – “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

1. Explaining God's Providence – Philippians 4:19-20 – “My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever, Amen.”

The God in whom we believe is too complex to be defined in simple terms.

- However, He has revealed all we need to know about Him in His Word, and through His Son, including His providence.
- God's providence is the method by which God's sovereignty is achieved – He orchestrates all things to accomplish His pre-ordained purpose.
- **Job 42:2 – “I know you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”**
- **Isaiah 46:9-10 – “I am God, and there is no other; there is none other like Me. My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish My purpose.”**

2. Embracing God's Providence – Philippians 4:11-12 – *“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things, I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”*

The Christians at Philippi had supported Paul's missionary work for many years, but Paul assured them, that if their support of him did not continue, it would be according to the providence of God.

- Paul had learned this principle of God's providence through the crucible of suffering.
- In Acts 16, Luke recorded how Paul and his companions went to Philippi on their first missionary journey.
- They preached the gospel to a wealthy woman named Lydia, who not only became a believer but opened her home as a place for believers to assemble on the Lord's Day.
- One day, Paul cast an evil spirit out of a young girl who was working as a fortune teller, and the girl's owners were so outraged at the loss of income, they had Paul flogged, put into prison, and bound in locks at his ankles.
- Rather than whine about his miserable situation, Paul prayed and praised God all night.
- God shook the very foundations of that jail so strongly that the chains fell off Paul's feet, and the door of the jail opened.
- The jailer was so moved by God's miracle, that he and his family were saved.
- What Satan's minions had intended for a hindrance to the gospel became the very tool God used for the advancement of the gospel.
- Philippians 1:12 – Paul said his imprisonment turned out for the greater progress of the gospel.
- Philippians 3:8 – Paul said nothing in this world could compare with the knowledge of God.
- Philippians 3:10 – Paul said his suffering gave him a greater opportunity to have a more intimate fellowship with God.
- In times of crisis, believers are more aware of God's providence, God's provision, and God's protection.
- True contentment can only be found through our unconditional trust in God's providence.

3. Expressing God's Providence – Philippians 4:13 – *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*

Paul wrote this letter while facing some of the worst times in his life and ministry.

- He lived every day with the pain of physical suffering.
- He lived every day with the threat of physical harm and death.
- He lived every day with the challenge of fulfilling the mission Christ had given him, yet he faced hostile opposition in every city, and at every turn.
- Yet, even with all this distress, Paul made it through each day, and the gospel spread from person to person, and then from city to city until it spread throughout the Roman Empire.
- However, it was not Paul who accomplished his goal, but it was CHRIST IN HIM who providentially made it all happen.
- Paul had so died to himself that he no longer lived, but Christ lived in Him, and he trusted in the providence of God to keep him alive until he had accomplished his assignment.

How is God providentially using the wars, natural disasters, and chaotic society to accomplish His sovereign purpose?

- Since God told us in the Gospels and the Epistles that these events would happen as we draw near to the end of this age, we must conclude that He is using them to fulfill His purpose.
 - **Satan wants to use these events for his purposes** – to steal, kill, and destroy – to cause us to doubt God's love, and to question our faith in Him.
 - **God wants to use these events for His purposes** – to reveal the vanity of the world's system, and, therefore, lost man's need for a Savior, and to draw those who do believe in Him to an even deeper relationship.
- While the unsaved will become depressed over the severity of the crisis, believers will rejoice in the Lord, for God has given us the opportunity to declare and to demonstrate our faith.
- God has invited us to be part of what He is doing in this final hour to bring the saved to repentance, and the lost to salvation.
- Therefore, when the crisis comes, Christians should move from “panic to peace” to manifest the power of God's amazing grace.

