

Podcast 267 God our Provider

Scott: Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme! I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve! How are you today?

Steve: I am here, and I'm in faith. The best part of preparing for a podcast is I get to be awash in Scripture, and "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17) The more time I spend in Scripture, the more faith I have, and the more time I spend reading the news, the more discouraged I get.

Steve: I think it was you a few podcasts ago, that you suggested we have a challenge and for every minute we spend on social media, we replace it with reading a Psalm. I am sure we would all be more encouraged if we did.

Steve: Our topic today is God our Provider. I'm wondering, instead of putting "God our Provider" as a title, what would you think about, God. Our. Provider. I've noticed that the younger generation does that. Like, Oh. My. Word.

When I consider God. Our. Provider. I always want to break into song and sing, "All I have needed Thy hand hath provided." That song resonates with my heart.

Let's pray,

Father, help us to indeed get our eyes up. Help us to continue as the song says, "When all around our soul gives way," help us to look up and find that You are all our hope and stay. And help me to know which of these passages to read and expound upon, and help us all to have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Steve: What does Jehovah-Jireh mean?

Scott: God our Provider, or the Lord provides.

Steve: The Lord will provide. It's the only time I think that phrase is used in Scripture, and the context is Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Any parent who reads this account has a chill.

"Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' Abraham said, 'God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.'" (Genesis 22:6-8).

A few verses later, when Isaac was on the sticks, "the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' Abraham lifted up his eyes and

looked, and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his thorns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place 'The LORD will Provide' [or "Jehovah-Jireh"]; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.'" (Genesis 22:11-14)

I'm not positive as I have not done the research on that, but there is a pretty good chance that that mount was connected to the mount Calvary where certainly God provided us everything we need. On Mount Calvary Jesus was our ram in the thicket, and God provided for Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. He took our place, so as a result we have been provided a way to be saved from sin, and an escape from hell. In this podcast we're going to focus on God providing for our physical needs. He has provided so many things including hope, rest for our souls, and we could go on and on. But in this episode, we only have twenty minutes, so we're going to focus on physical provision.

Scott, you have mentioned that the world in which we live might be coming to an end? Well, the world is a darker place. I live in Lancaster County, with the plain people, Amish and the Mennonite, who are Anabaptists. I have been in their homes, and one of the books that I've seen frequently is **Foxe's Book of Martyrs**. This book has encouraged persecuted people. We know from Matthew 24 that there will come times in our future that are troublesome, and that's one reason we're studying this today, because God miraculously provides. He provides courage, He provides hope, He provides strength, and He also provides for physical needs.

I'm going to examine several places through Scripture, and many of them take place in troublesome times, where God provided for His children. And the first one that I chose is Genesis 7, when Noah was about to enter into a period where God was going to judge the entire world. I'll read the account. Genesis 7:1-5. "The LORD [Jehovah] said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and all your household'" - because, as a parent, it's one thing for God to provide for me, but who's going to take care of my wife and children? But God took care of that. "'Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.'" And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him."

You and I know the rest of the story. God provided a way of escape for Noah and his family during a worldwide flood. Whew! Now I'm going to jump ahead to the children of Israel in the grasp of the most powerful nation on earth at the time, the nation of

Egypt. God is going to bring judgment upon that land, and at the same time He's going to protect His children, the children of Israel, the slaves. And interestingly, there's a really good description of what happened in the book of Nehemiah and again in the Psalms, as an overview of what God did in Exodus.

"You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, 'This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,' and had committed great blasphemies, you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell." (Nehemiah 9:17-21)

I'm going to add a little bit more from Psalm 78. "He commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven, and he rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance. He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind; he rained meat on them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. And they ate and were well filled," (Psalm 78:23-29)

This is miraculous, when you think about a million plus people suddenly thrust into the wilderness, and God provided for them. It was a miracle. For forty years, they were sustained by God.

Now I'm going to just move ahead to some of the early great prophets, Elijah and Elisha. And it's interesting for me to read these stories with the mindset that Jesus also read these accounts, and how must they have encouraged Him that God would provide for Him as well?

Elijah in 1 Kings 17:8-16, went to a widow's house, and asks her, "Could you prepare for me a little cake?" And she says, "This is all I have. This is going to be our last supper. This is going to be my meal for my son and I, and this is it." And he says, "No. If you take care of me, God will take care of you." And God miraculously provided oil and bread the whole time that he was there in her home.

After Jezebel had threatened to kill Elijah, he's out in the wilderness, and lays himself down. Now he's in the same position as the woman who had provided for him in the seventeenth chapter. In 1 Kings 19, He said, "Enough, O LORD. Take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." And he laid down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, 'Arise and eat.' And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he

ate and drank and lay down again.” It happened again, and he went on the strength of those couple meals for forty days and forty nights. That was miraculous! You can’t eat two meals and go for forty days.

I wonder if Jesus remembered that when He was in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights and He hungered. But God provided miraculously for him. Or perhaps what encouraged Elijah was that Moses spent forty days and forty nights on top of the mountain.

Elijah’s follower and his heir – Elisha. In 2 Kings 4, a lady approached him and said, “My husband used to follow you. We have no money.” And he said, “Go gather all your empty vessels and fill them up full of oil.” And they did. And he said, “Now, sell the oil and pay your bills.” Wow! Another miracle! I wonder if that’s the kind of thing that God chose to put in Scripture to encourage us when we come to hard times.

Scott, now I’m going to ask you a question. Have you ever hosted somebody from another country? I’ve done it a couple of times. I remember taking them into a supermarket, and they were astounded. They saw all this food, and the selection and quantities and quality and variety, and the opulence that we have as Americans compared to other parts of the world. And they just could not get over the supermarkets. That was the most impressive thing to them.

In any nations the people have a daily dependence on God, and this is something that we may have to learn in days to come, in depending on God in a new way. I notice that Jesus in the sixth chapter of Matthew, taught us to pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.”

How many times have we prayed that without thinking much of it because all we have to do is go down to the supermarket. But Jesus taught us to pray that way: “Give us this day our daily bread.” And then a few verses down, also in Matthew chapter 6, the Sermon on the Mount: “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

For much of the world, those two passages mean a whole lot more than those of us that have been blessed with living in such a blessed country for decades, years, hundreds of years.

If I was to have asked our listening audience, “What is a wonderful passage that’s a promise that God will provide for us?” I’d be willing to bet that a lot of folks would select Philippians 4:19, which says, “My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

I think it's important that we read that passage in light of the context. In Luke chapter 6, verse 38, Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." The NLT translates it a little differently but I think it makes it a little clearer. "Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

With that passage in your mind, the principle that God is teaching through Jesus is give and it shall be given, you reap what you sow, those kind of thoughts. Now, I'm going to read the whole context in Philippians 4, which makes sense to me. Paul says, "You Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

To me, it's a clear follow-through from Luke 6:38. Because the Philippians had been the most faithful givers, Paul knew that God would give back to them. And he said, "Because you have given well, my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory."

I've been in many services where people have needs and they'll pull out that Scripture: "You promise to meet all of our needs!" The Philippians were able to bank on that promise because they had invested, you might say, by giving already. God help us to be faithful givers so that when we need something, He can supply our needs as well.

A couple more encouraging passages. Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread." Psalm 145:14–16, "The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing." So, how's your faith?

When you think about the fact that Jesus grew up reading stories about all that we have read up to this point as far as Elijah, Elisha, children of Israel, Abraham – this was Jesus' faith. So when He was confronted with two situations, such as those found in Matthew 14 and 15, He knew that God would miraculously supply food.

"Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, 'I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling

to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.’ And His disciples said to Him, ‘Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?’ And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, He took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks He broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.”

Notice they didn’t even ask Him. And He took care of them anyway. In the other situation there were 5,000 people. He took 12 baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And I think there’s a lot in the fact that He took the bread and He took the fish and, having given thanks, He broke them. It was His blessing that produced the miracle. When I read that story, that’s what I see.

Jesus is able to take our little pieces and magnify them. I need help with this as well, because I see things getting difficult in our world, and I’m ready to go start getting stockpiles of food, and learning how to store water, and do I need a generator. Perhaps God may lead us to that, but I think more importantly, we need to look to Him as our source of all things. God will provide. God is our provider – Jehovah–Jireh, the LORD will provide.

We’re going to close by praying Psalm 111:4–5, “The LORD is gracious and merciful. He provides food for those who fear Him; He remembers His covenant forever.” Thank You for these incredible examples of how You took care of Abraham, You took care of Noah and his family, You took care of Elijah, Elisha, You took care of the children of Israel through the wilderness, millions of people, as well as individuals. And Jesus told us to pray for our daily bread, so we pray to You now. Give us faith, give us what we need, and help us to remember to continue to pray to You, Who is the great Jehovah–Jireh. Give us our daily bread, Father. In Jesus’ name, amen.