

All You Need

by Lehman Strauss

God is the Provider who supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Scripture: Genesis 22:14, Psalm 104:24, Isaiah 45:3, Matthew 5:6, Matthew 6:32-33, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 3:16, Philippians 4:19, James 1:2

Topics: "God's Provision", "Spiritual Needs"

Description

Lehman Strauss preaches about God's provision throughout history, from providing for Israel in the wilderness to sending His Son for the salvation of mankind. He emphasizes that God's hand of provision is open to His suffering saints, as seen in Philippians 4:19 where Paul assures that God will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. Strauss delves into the importance of understanding God as the Provider, drawing from the Old Testament concept of Jehovah-jireh, the God who provides. He highlights the promise in Philippians 4:19, stressing that God's provision covers all our needs, both material and spiritual, and is given abundantly according to His riches in Christ Jesus.

Transcript

The sovereign Lord is the great Provider. When Israel needed a leader, He raised up Moses. When they needed water in the desert, He supplied it from a rock. When they needed food for their wilderness wandering, He gave it in the form of manna. Man needed a Savior from his sins, so God sent His only begotten Son to die on Calvary's cross.

The hand of God's provision is also open to us in our time of affliction. He has provided for the need of His suffering saints. Paul wrote, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

When we're deep in the vale of suffering, when we've been in God's waiting room for what seems like endless days, it may appear that the storehouse of God's supply is about to be exhausted. We may feel that He can do nothing more for us. But the promise of the Holy Scriptures is that He will supply all our need.

If you are in the valley of affliction, may you experience, as I have with my dear Elsie, the truth of this promise.

One of many promises in the Bible that has strengthened and sustained God's children for centuries is Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." In this verse the apostle Paul was not introducing a new promise. The provision of God for His children had its roots deep in the Old Testament. In fact, it goes back to the very beginning of human history, when God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden. There in the garden Adam and Eve had all they needed.

Our key text for this chapter, therefore, contains an old truth that needs to be recaptured by Christians today. The human source of supply has diverted our attention from God. With higher wages, social security, and guaranteed incomes for the unemployed, fewer people are bringing God into their thinking. In addition, some fine Christian men and women have never learned to trust God for all their needs.

Let us carefully examine Paul's text within its context. In an attitude of prayer, we will try to glean the lessons it has for our lives.

The Provider

The first important truth of Philippians 4:19 is that God is the Provider. The apostle said that the Lord is "my God." When Paul received the Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus, he was brought immediately into a personal relationship with God. I fear that the belief many persons have in the God of the Bible is merely intellectual and academic, not experiential. They believe God is omnipotent--that He has an ability that knows no inability--but they know nothing of a personal, intimate relationship with Him. Sometimes people inside our churches, as well as those outside, know about God, but they do not know Him. Paul knew Him as the provider of all his needs.

In the Old Testament the Hebrew name for God the provider is Jehovah-jireh. It appears in Genesis 22 when Abraham, in obedience to God's command, took his son Isaac to Mount Moriah to offer him for a burnt offering. After father and son had arrived at the designated place and prepared the altar, Isaac said to his father, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:7-8). And that is precisely what God did: He provided a substitute to die in the place of Isaac (v. 13). "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh" (v. 14), meaning "the Lord will provide." But keep this fact in mind: Abraham did not experience God's miraculous provision without first giving obedience to God's command. Abraham was not presumptuous; rather, he displayed implicit faith and obedience. He became acquainted with Jehovah-jireh.

Do you know who Jehovah-jireh is? He is the God who provides. He is the God of the Bible, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through personal faith in Christ that we gain that experiential knowledge of God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Can you say with the apostle that Jehovah-jireh is "my God"?

The Promise

The second important truth in Philippians 4:19 is found in this promise: "My God shall supply." Take note of how this thought follows logically upon the first. The expression "my God," used also by Paul in Philippians 1:3, gives assurance that one who is rightly related to God will have his needs supplied. There is to be no doubting, no hesitation, no apprehension. Our Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). "And all things, whatsoever ye

shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). There is positive assurance in these promises.

Why can a believer be confident that his need will be supplied? Because the promise is supported by the Provider. "My God" is the all-knowing Provider; therefore, He knows exactly what I need. Twice in one discourse our Lord said, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (v. 32). In contrast with God's omniscience is our lack of knowledge. The apostle Paul reminded us that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Romans 8:26). Because we are inherently selfish, our prayer requests often reflect more greed than need. As I think back over the years, I am thankful that God did not grant my selfish requests.

The writer to the Hebrews was commenting on this truth when he wrote, "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36). I know that it is not God's will for me to be impatient, yet I must admit that I have been woefully lacking in patience. Perseverance has never been one of my strong points. I have been in need of patience throughout most of my Christian experience, spanning more than fifty-five years. For at least thirty of those years I never once prayed that God would supply that need. However, God knew what I needed. To say it as Jesus said it, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of."

There were times when I was baffled about why trials and tribulations had come my way. I would ask God to remove the trial, believing that was what I needed, when my real need was patience. Then I learned that God had sent the trial, because it was His way of producing patience. If this boggles your mind, perhaps the Word of God will make it clear to you. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3). The Provider keeps his promise to supply all our need. I am satisfied that He knows my need and that He keeps His promise.

The Provision

Third, let us examine the provision spoken of in Philippians 4:19. The apostle summed it up in three words, "all your need." Not some of your need, not much of your need, nor most of your need, but all of your need. That is bountiful provision! God can meet the many and varied needs of His children because of His infinite and inestimable riches.

The psalmist prayed, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Psalm 104:24). Notice that it is the earth which is full of God's riches, and it is on the earth where God has put us. The psalmist linked man and God's riches together when he wrote, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they who dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).

The apostle Paul quoted this verse from the Psalms twice. He did this to remind us that the earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:26, 28). The Lord Himself said, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and all the fulness thereof" (Psalm 50:10-12). Our great Provider created and controls all of the provision.

How vast is the wealth of God? How rich is the Provider? I doubt that we will ever fully know in this life the extent of God's riches. He said to His people Israel, "And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the

God of Israel" (Isaiah 45:3). Yes, God has hidden riches in secret places about which we know nothing. The apostle Paul mentioned "the riches of his goodness" (Romans 2:4), "the riches of his glory" (Romans 9:23; Ephesians 3:16), and "the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7). What an amazing provision!

We Christians who read the Bible know all of this, and we know that it is all true. But do we show plainly and clearly from day to day that we live in that personal knowledge of God and His bountiful provision for us? If we do, we need never be anxious, and we must never be worried. If we would really and truly grasp the truth of this great text, then worry, stress, and anxiety would be banished from our lives. In other words, we must bring ourselves in mind and heart and will to take seriously what our Heavenly Father says to us. We must exercise ourselves to rely implicitly upon His Word. We are never alone in our need. We always have access to the Provider and His provision.

The Plentitude

Next, Paul spoke of the plentitude of God's supply. He gives to His children "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God's giving is not merely from His riches, or out of His riches, but according to His riches. Suppose you have an urgent and a legitimate need for \$1,000 and I have \$100,000 in my savings account. We have been friends for a long time. You come to me and tell me about your need. Without hesitating, I write a check in your name in the amount of \$100. I would be giving to you out of my riches, but not according to my riches. And because my giving was so meager, your need would not be supplied. If I were to give to you according to my riches, however, I would write out the check for \$1,000--and your need would be supplied.

God has promised to supply our need according to His riches. This tells us that we cannot have a need too great for God to supply. Our Heavenly Father knows what our need is, and all His riches are made available to His own. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). God, who gave His own beloved Son to redeem us and make us His children, will not refuse to meet our needs. God has underwritten the supply of our every need. He has given His word. Christian friend, let us never question or doubt this great truth. God's unlimited supply and His unailing word should satisfy our minds now and for all of time. God's wealth is at our disposal, and this is a provision beyond calculation. Don't impoverish yourself by refusing to take God at His word. You are His personal property, and He desires to give you His perpetual care.

The words "in glory" have caused a problem for some believers. They interpret them to mean that all our needs will be supplied in the glorious ages of the future--not the present. Personally, I do not believe that Paul was referring here to a future age. The promise in our text refers to the present life--to material and bodily needs as well as to spiritual needs. It speaks of "all" of them; that is, to every one of our needs. The whole context of this passage in Philippians 4 is in reference to the needs of this life. In verse 16, Paul spoke of his personal need, which was most certainly a need he had at that time. No one will argue against the idea that our total needs will be supplied in heaven. Quite frankly, I do not believe that we shall have any needs in heaven.

Don't miss the blessing of our text by pushing its promise into a future time. The New International Version translates the text as follows: "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Lenski suggests the possibility that it means "in a glorious manner"; that is, that "God will gloriously supply every need." Whatever the case, Paul was obviously telling his readers that God would supply their needs in the here and now. I am convinced that he was speaking of this life, not the next.

Read our Lord's teaching on this subject in Matthew 6:19-34. He was talking about the material needs of this life--finances, food, fashions, and our earthly future. He used the word "money" in verse 24, a word that represents the material and mundane things of this life. And then He added, "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (v. 32). Philippians 4:19 promises God's abundant supply for our daily needs in this life.

The Prerequisite

A fifth and final thought must not be overlooked. Some prerequisites must be met before we can receive God's provision. It is not mentioned in the text itself. You will not find it in verse 19. But it is there in the context, particularly in verse 18. The two verses are linked with the word but, a conjunction that ties them together.

Beginning at verse 14, the apostle reminded the Christians at Philippi of the generosity they had shown him in his need. He said, "ye did communicate with my affliction." Paul elaborated further on this in the next verse, telling them that "no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (v. 15). In both verses he used the word communicate. If we want to claim the promise and provision in verse 19 we dare not gloss over these verses lightly. There is implicit teaching here, and if we fail to pay attention to it we will miss the blessing. Why is it that so many believers tend to say, "I am a Christian. I believe Philippians 4:19, but it doesn't work for me"? In all probability, those Christians have not carefully examined verses 14 through 18.

The Philippian believers had shared generously with the apostle in the ministry God had entrusted to him. Their giving was not casual, nor did they give only when it was convenient for them. We know this because he reminded them in verse 16, "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity." Paul rejoiced in their giving, not because of what it did for him, but because of what it did for them. Their giving had actually added to their account (v. 17). The motive, manner, and measure of their giving had a definite and direct effect on their being able to claim the promise of verse 19. Because they were in good standing with God the Provider, this gave to them the right to claim His promise. There is no need to argue this point; it is the obvious truth.

All this can be seen in verse 18. Notice how Paul described their gifts: "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." Here the apostle was clinching his main argument, namely, that if God is not pleased with our giving, then we have no claim upon Him. The expression "an odour of a sweet smell [or savor]" is an Old Testament phrase for a sacrifice that pleased God. The term was used frequently in a symbolic sense. If the offering displeased God, it was a "stinking savour" (Ecclesiastes 10:1), or a "stink" (Joel 2:20). But when God was pleased, it was called "a sweet savour" (Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17; 2:9; 3:5, 16; 4:31). The Christians at Philippi gave sacrificially out of a pure motive; therefore, the apostle could say to them, "My God shall supply all your need."

This is the essential lesson in our Lord's teaching to His disciples in Matthew 6:19-34. Let me make this point again. Christ talked about their need for money, food, drink, clothing, and shelter, and He assured them that their heavenly Father knew that they needed all those things (6:32). But the mere fact that God knew of their needs was not in itself a guarantee that they would receive what they needed. Such knowledge about God might relieve any of us of worry, stress, and anxiety. But merely knowing God as the omniscient provider is not sufficient.

What is the prerequisite to a valid claim upon God for our total needs? Our Lord said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus did not speak these words to unbelievers in order to tell them how to become believers. He was telling believers how they could lay hold of all the necessities of life. "His disciples came unto him: And he . . . taught them" (Matthew 5:1-2). He was telling them how to behave as children of God. They would have needs in their lives. Those needs were known to God. But if those needs were to be supplied, the disciples would have to put first things first. So He said to them, and to us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Pursue holiness. Behave rightly. This is what pleases God. It is what moves Him to supply all our needs. The more righteous we are in our behavior, the nearer we are to God's storehouse. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). If you put God and your relationship to Him first, then you have His pledge that all your needs will be supplied.

We must first understand this truth. Then we must take the initial step and pursue it each day. Don't put the other things first, but put God first. We have no right to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (6:11) until we "seek ... first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (6:33). This is the same prerequisite that the apostle Paul was talking about in Philippians 4.

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