

God Is a Good Father - 2.a Father Who Provides All Our Need

by Zac Poonen

God is a loving father who welcomes us, provides for our needs, and desires a relationship with us, and we can trust him by responding with faith and obedience.

Duration: 59:35

Scripture: Luke 11:13

Topics: "God's Provision", "Trust In God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the loving provision of God for our needs, including physical healing, financial needs, and spiritual empowerment through the Holy Spirit. It encourages trust in God's plan, protection from harm, and grace in times of weakness. The speaker shares personal experiences of God's faithfulness and encourages listeners to seek God's provision and trust Him completely.

Transcript

Praise the Lord that we have another opportunity to come around God's word. A couple of Sundays ago when I was here, I spoke on God as a father. A father who welcomes us when we have messed up our life and ruined ourselves with sin, used up all the gifts he has given us like the prodigal son.

And I mentioned how we need to have such a clear understanding of the heart of God towards sinners. Jesus said more than once, it's not the healthy people who need a doctor, but sick people. And he said that he did not come to call those who thought they were righteous, but he came to call sinners.

But not just call sinners, he says in Luke five, he came to call sinners to repentance. So the father doesn't welcome the son back in such a way that he finally ends up with the pigs again. He welcomes him to sit at the table with him for the rest of his life and to become a very responsible person in the house.

In fact, I believe that that in that story of the prodigal son, the younger son would have had far more gratitude to the father than the older son, because the older son, of course, the father took care of him and provided for him, but the elder son had lost 50% of the father's wealth. See, the father was obviously a very rich man because he had so many servants. And it must have been a huge amount of money that 50% share that he took and went away and he wasted it all.

And he comes back and he must have been grateful for the rest of his life. Every time he looked at his dad, he'd have thought how much I have hurt him, wasted his wealth, and I want to just love him and serve him. There are many Christians who say, I love the Lord.

There are many Christians who like to say, I am a wretched sinner. I was a wretched sinner. I want to say to all of you who say that, the more you say that you were a wretched sinner, the greater your responsibility to love God more than the others around you who are not so wretched as you.

We like to sometimes boast that, oh, we were the worst of all the sinners. Really? And then you should be loving the Lord more than anybody else. And the proof of that love is that you obey the Lord more than anybody else.

Because Jesus said, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments. So I find that a lot of people who say they are wretched sinners is just empty words. They don't really believe it deep down in their heart.

They don't really believe that God has forgiven them a huge multitude of sins. Jesus said, he who is forgiven little, loves little. And he who loves little, obeys little.

And he who is forgiven much, loves much. And sacrifices much for the Lord. And obeys much.

So I can tell you, if I could examine your life, how big a sinner you think you are. Whatever you may say with your mouth, it may be a lot of nonsense. But your life speaks louder than your mouth.

If I see you obeying little, sacrificing little, loving the Lord little, I say you're telling a lie when you say you're a wretched sinner. It's just words to impress other people that you're very humble. If you really believe it, remember the words of Jesus.

He who is forgiven much, loves much. That's the proof. That's the only proof that God's forgiven me much.

I know in my case, God's forgiven me much. And so I want to love the Lord with all my heart. I want to sacrifice everything possible for him.

I want to live totally for him. I want to live more wholeheartedly 10 years from now than I'm doing today. That is to save ourselves from deceiving ourselves.

You know, our heart is so deceitful. We like to get a reputation for humility. And so we use words like, oh, I was such a wretched sinner and the Lord saved me.

Be careful the next time you use it. And remember what I said today. If ever you say you're a wretched sinner, worse than others, please remember, you have a responsibility to love God more than others and to obey him more than others.

That's the only proof of love and to sacrifice more than others. Otherwise don't use those words. Just say, I was not such a bad sinner.

I was just a small sinner. That's why I love the Lord so little. See, I want to get rid of all this super spiritual, religious humbug that comes out of people's mouths.

We must be honest and speak the truth. It's very important. God loves honest people who don't try to pretend in order to get a reputation for being spiritual.

There's another aspect of the father which I want to think of today. And that is a father who provides all our needs. I mentioned it briefly that Sunday too.

But I want to speak a little more about it because we are living in very uncertain days and the economic situation in the world is getting worse and worse. Money is getting scarce. Cost of living is going up.

And those who have plenty of money may rely on their money. Their money will fail them. But many of us don't have much.

How shall it be with us? Well, we have a father in heaven. You know, in many European countries, you don't have to worry if you are poor. You don't have to worry if you lose your job.

I remember a brother in Europe who had nine children saying, I don't know how to work because the government pays me so much for each child. I can just sit at home and earn more than if I go to work. I remember meeting a young man in Australia.

I said, hey, aren't you seriously, he was without a job. I said, aren't you seriously looking for a job? He said, no, I'm okay. The social security system in Australia takes care of me that if I go to work, I'll get much less than I'm getting right now.

So why should I go to work? So he sits at home, lazes around and drifted away from the Lord. That's not surprising. You know, hard work, I tell you, keeps us closer to the Lord.

Laziness destroys us. And that's how a lot of young people in many of these countries are being destroyed because they have a lot of money and they don't have to work. Social security takes care of them.

And Christians in these countries, even in America, they have food stamps. If you run short of money, there's social security. Most of these Western countries, well, you may envy them.

A lot of Indians and Pakistanis and all go to these countries because they say our future is secure because our children, even if they're jobless, they won't starve, they'll get free education, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But what about a Christian? I feel that a Christian misses out in these countries of the privilege of being able to trust God to provide our need. They can never do that because when they're in need, they say they trust in the Lord, but actually it's the government who takes care of them.

The back of their mind, they know social security is there in the government. I mean, even if there's no God in heaven, it doesn't matter. But what about us in India? We don't have any social security.

I mean, if the government starts helping the poor people in our country, we'll get bankrupt in one day. There are so many poor people in our land. What is the condition for us? Many years ago, when I stepped out of the Navy to serve the Lord, I decided to give away all my money for God's work and stepped out with nothing.

The reason was I wanted to, God had called me to work in India and I wanted to prove, prove for myself and prove for other people in our country that in a country like ours, without social security and not having much money myself, my father was a poor pensioner from the government. I couldn't depend on him. And not connected to any American organization or Western organization, trusting the Lord, I want to prove in the 20th century, that's I'm talking about 46 years ago, in the 20th century in a poor country like India, that God's promises are still true, which is, if you seek God's kingdom first and his righteousness, all that you

need on earth will be provided for you.

He hasn't promised to make us millionaires. A lot of millionaires become very insecure and money doesn't solve every problem, but he's promised to provide all our needs, food, clothing, shelter. He taught us to pray, give us this day our daily bread, which means how do we get our daily bread? Not by begging, but by having a job.

In other words, in that prayer, give us this day our daily bread is a prayer for a job. And where am I gonna eat my daily bread? Not out in the park, I need a house. So in that prayer, there's also request for a house.

Lord, give me a house to live in, give me a job. And there is also children's education hidden in that prayer because when my children grow up, they need to get their daily bread, how? By begging, borrowing? No, by getting a job. So in that prayer is a request for my children to get jobs.

And if they had to get jobs in India anyway, they need education. So in that little prayer that Lord taught us to pray, give us this day our daily bread, is a request for all our material necessities. That's why he said bread.

He didn't say, Lord, give us this day our daily ice cream or chocolate, it is our daily bread. He's talking about necessities, not luxuries. If God gives us luxuries, that's an extra bonus, but praise the Lord for that.

But necessities, he taught us to pray for. And to whom should we pray? Our father, who art in heaven. Two things there.

One, somebody who loves us intensely more than any earthly father. I'm sure all of you fathers and mothers here, if you had one slice of bread in your home one day, and that's all, you'd give it to your children and starve yourself, I'm absolutely certain. Even though we're not all good fathers, we do that when it comes to food.

We feed our children and go with less ourselves. And Jesus said, you being evil, compared to God, the best father on earth is evil. That's amazing.

So think of the best father on the earth and multiply that by a million, and you think you understand how loving and caring a father in heaven is. That's why Jesus said, before he went up to heaven, in connection with the gift of the Holy Spirit, there's a very important word that he spoke. See, I feel it's very sad that the Pentecostal church has emphasized speaking in tongues as the only main emphasis, as the main mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, I'm thankful for the Pentecostal church of 100 years ago. I think if 100 years ago, I may have even joined the Pentecostal church, but I'd never joined today's Pentecostal church. But they have drifted.

100 years ago, they brought forth the mighty truth of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But today, they've all drifted, like all second, third generation Christians drift away from the truth that their grandfathers believed. So when Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit, here's something he said.

In John 14, he says, I'm gonna ask the father, verse 16, he will give you another helper. And that's the Holy Spirit. He'll be with you forever.

And he's a spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive. But he now, right now, the last part of verse 17, he's only with you, outside of you, with you. But in the day of Pentecost, he'll be inside you.

And that's a wonderful thing. Nobody in the Old Testament could have the Holy Spirit inside. But now, we can have the Holy Spirit inside.

And look at the next verse. This is one of the marks of the Holy Spirit filling us. I will not leave you as orphans.

When the Holy Spirit comes inside, he'll cry out, Daddy, Daddy, Father, to God. It's a spontaneous cry that comes up. I've got a dad in heaven.

That's the wonderful blessing of being filled with the Holy Spirit. And I tell you, that is a million times more important than speaking in tongues. Because if you give me a choice, you can take away, Lord, you've given me the gift of tongues, but you can take it away.

I don't want to take away the knowledge of you as my father. Completely out of the question. Jesus never spoke in tongues, you know that? I don't know whether you know that.

Never in his entire life. But boy, did he know his father. He never had any fear in his life.

Because he knew his father. And he knew his father in the days when he had no supernatural gifts. Don't seek for supernatural gifts first.

Seek to know him as a father. I'm willing to give up every gift God's given me if I can just know him as a father. So that was my great longing.

To be able to prove by my life, I didn't know at that time, I was only 26 when I left the Navy, I didn't know at that time how long I would live or what God would call me to. But I said, Lord, in my life, I want to prove that there is a loving father in heaven who takes care of me. And who will provide for me.

And I'm gonna trust you. I'm not gonna trust in some organization, I'm gonna trust you. And once I had begun to prove it my life, and when I got married, it was a greater opportunity to prove that God is a father who provides.

Because we were extremely, extremely poor when we were married. Much poorer than all of you who are married now. And we had to trust God.

We had to learn to live simply. We had to learn to live without debt. And I can say our father provided for us enough for our needs.

We never starved for one day. Our children never starved for one day. And then I wanted to prove, now Lord, I proved it a little bit in my life.

Then as we started planting churches in the villages, in some of the poorest villages in Tamil Nadu, I said, Lord, now I've got to prove this is true for these poor people as well. Who are really poorer, poorer than me. I want to prove that they can also prove that a heavenly father will take care of them.

And in the last 30 years, I've seen that. How the Lord has taken care of us. There are numerous people I know whom God has taken care of as they've honored him.

And how God has provided jobs for their children as they've grown up, taking care of them, giving them that daily bread, giving them a house to live in, taking care of them, food, clothing, and shelter, provision

for their need, protecting them from sicknesses. You know, that's one way God saves a lot of money for us. Certainly in our family, we saved a lot of money because we never spent money on hospitals and sicknesses like a lot of people had to.

That's another way God provides for us. And then I said, Lord, I also want to now prove it in the church because every Christian organization in India begs for money. They beg the people sitting in their church for money and then they write letters to so many Western organizations and others asking for money.

And I said, we'll never do it. We started as a church here in 1975 and till today in all our 50 churches, we don't take an offering. We just keep a box.

Those who want to give can give. Those who don't have anything to give, I said, don't give, take care of your needs. God cares for you.

And we never sent a letter to anyone outside CFC, anywhere at any time about our needs. I said, I want to prove that you can do that for me, you can do that for the poor people in Tamil Nadu and you can do it for groups of churches in India. And we approved it.

And not only have we been able to take care of our needs, we've been able to help other poor churches. So what I'm trying to say is that we're now, I at least am now speaking from 46 years of full-time Christian work and 37 years of church work in CFC and at least about 30 years of ministry in other parts of the poor parts of villages, that God is a father who provides our earthly need. He knows what is coming in future and provides for it ahead of time.

I want you to trust this father. I want you to know this God is your daddy. You don't have to live in fear of, oh, will I suddenly get some sickness and won't be able to pay a hospital bill or will I suddenly be stranded without a job or will my husband die and then I'll be left with these little children and I'll be a widow and how I don't have any qualification.

So many fears the devil brings into our mind. I hope by the time you leave the meeting today, all those fears would have gone. You know, fear and faith in a loving father cannot live in the same heart.

That is impossible. You decide which one you wanna let in. Fear and faith both come knocking at your heart and you know, it's like two people knocking at your door.

You decide which one you wanna let in. One has come to destroy you. It's like a thief knocking at your door and saying, come in, let me come in.

I wanna, well, who are you? I'm a thief. Will you let me in? What are you coming for? I've just come to loot you of all your wealth. And you say, oh, come in, come right in.

That's what we do when we let fear come into our heart. He's come to steal all our spiritual wealth and faith is knocking at the door of our heart at the same time and say, hey, let me come in. Let me come and show you what a loving dad you got in heaven who will take care of all your needs.

Will you let me come in? Open your heart to faith always. In the beginning, I'll tell you, if there was anybody who didn't have faith in the early days of Christian life, it was me. Everybody talked about faith and I didn't have it.

So what is this faith? This is something I have to struggle, struggle, struggle to get. I've got to read books on it to get it. No, you don't have to read any books.

You don't have to struggle. How does a little child, how does your little child trust you? Have you seen little one and a half year old babies? Some stranger picks them up, immediately start crying. Say, I wanna go back to mommy and daddy.

Who taught that child? Why does a child find security in his father and mother? This stranger, I don't know what he'll do to me, but my mommy and daddy, if I cling to them, I'm okay. See, that's faith. If you want the simplest example of faith, it's right there.

It's knowing that my dad will care for me. That's all there is in faith. You remember when Peter was going to deny the Lord and the Lord told him, and you often heard me say this, the Lord told him in Luke 22, you are going to deny me three times before the cock crows tonight.

And listen to this, but I'm not going to pray that you will not fall. You will fall and you must fall. Can you imagine? Supposing you knew that somebody was going to fall, would you pray that he doesn't fall? I would.

But Jesus is wiser than me. He says to Peter, I will not pray that you should not fall. And I can expand on the reason for that.

Peter, you're such a proud person. God has tried every other way to humble you. He's not succeeded.

Now, the only way to humble you is make you fall because you're boasting. Even if everybody denies you, Lord, I will not deny you. Well, you just have to learn how weak you are.

That's why God had to let him fall to teach him how weak he was. How in the world would he know that otherwise? Supposing he went through that night without denying the Lord, he would have stood at the cross and say, Lord, didn't I tell you I wouldn't deny you? But he stood at the cross with his head bowed, ashamed because he who boasted. You know, whenever anybody boasts about something, I've seen this happen.

People who boast about something in the very area that they boast, God humbles them. He humbles them in their strong points. But the Lord told him, I'm praying something else for you, Peter.

I won't leave you without prayer. I won't pray that you should not fall. You need to fall because that's how you learn a lesson.

But after you fall, when you hit rock bottom, I'm gonna pray that you'll have faith. What sort of faith do you need when you made a mess of your life, when you hit rock bottom, when you reach the level of the pigs? What faith do you need? The faith that my dad still loves me. I can go back to him.

That's what that prodigal son had, faith. And that's the faith that the Lord wanted Peter to have. When you hit rock bottom and you think, oh, you've denied the Lord, he'll never accept me again.

I want you to believe that he will accept you. Still, have you ever denied Jesus? Maybe not directly, maybe indirectly. We've done that, ashamed of him sometimes in some situations.

Will he accept you back? That's faith. Lord, I made a mess of my life, but you still accept me. Maybe you're a believer and you backslid and made a mess of your life.

That's worse than making a mess of your life as an unconverted person. The prodigal son was a son who went away, not some unconverted guy. To backslide and make a mess of your life is worse than to make a mess of your life as an unconverted sinner.

And then to believe that God still loves me, that's faith. Always you must believe that God still loves me. I mean, there may be 101 things I don't know, but one thing I know, God loves me.

He will provide for me, he'll forgive me. Not only forgive me, but he'll make provision for me. That's faith, to believe God loves me just as I am.

He doesn't love my sin, he hates my sin. I haven't seen mothers who hate the sickness in their child, but love the child so much, saying, I wish I could take that sickness into myself. If you wanna know how God hates sin in your life, think of how a mother hates sickness in a child.

That's the best way to think of it. That's the way it's helped me. Why does God hate my sin? Wouldn't a father hate sickness in a child? But the poor child doesn't know the seriousness of a sickness.

Do you think a child knows the seriousness of blood cancer or something like that? It doesn't have a clue. But the father knows it and the father hates that and does everything possible to get rid of that sickness from the child. And that is how God hates sins which I don't realize are destroying me.

A lot of you young people don't realize how pornography destroys you more than blood cancer. If you knew it, you'd get rid of it. Nobody would inject cancer into their blood, nobody.

But that's what you do when you open the computer screen and watch pornography there. It's like injecting cancer into your blood. Only a stupid child would do that.

And the father is trying to save you from injecting that type of stuff into your mind. Because I'll tell you something, you put something into your blood, it's easier to clean it out. You put something into your mind, it's very difficult to clean it out.

So be careful what you put into your mind because it's there forever. Something goes into your memory, it's there forever. And your dad knows that, your dad in heaven knows that.

And that's why he tries to warn you. And in this pulpit, we have warned you again and again and again. You won't find another pulpit where people love you so much to save you from things that will destroy you.

People think it's hard preaching. That's to save you from destroying yourself. A father who provides for us, who loves us intensely, look at this wonderful promise.

This is a promise of a loving father. I wanna read it to you in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. For me in my own life, it has been one of the most wonderful promises in the whole of scripture as a Christian.

1 Corinthians 10 and verse 13. It says here in the middle of this verse, God is faithful. Faithful to do what? Faithful to do many, many things.

But here's one of those things he's faithful to do. He will never allow you to be tested or tempted beyond your ability. But with that trial or temptation will provide a way of escape so that you can come out of it, overcome it, endure it.

That is a wonderful promise because people like us who talk about the ability God gives us to overcome sin, the devil says, I'm just gonna get out of this fellow and make him fall. I'm sure the devil's got massive temptations lined up, which are too strong for me today. But God won't let them come to me.

No. Do you think a school teacher will give a 10th standard Christian paper to a first standard student? Many of you gone through school, all of us gone through school many years. Can you think of a time in any, all of us have done hundreds of examinations in school.

Did you ever in your life get a question paper which was not the question paper for your class? I never got it. Teachers, human beings never gave me a question paper which was beyond my level. If I was in second standard, I got a second standard question paper.

Do you believe God would do it? Have you, sometimes you do believe God will do it. Sometimes you do believe that God is more foolish than school teachers. And I'll prove it to you.

Have you ever said these words? Oh, this is becoming too much for me. Have you ever said it? What do you mean by that? A foolish God has given me a trial which is too much for me. That's what you mean.

That means he didn't, either that or you're not a child of God. If you're not a child of God, then I have no promise for you. But if you're a child of God, sure this is becoming too much for me.

I can't bear this. You're accusing God of being more stupid than a school teacher. He's given me a question paper which is way beyond my level.

It's not true. That's why I say this is a wonderful promise. God's provision, his promise.

He's a loving father who regulates the trial that comes into your life. I think of many testings God has taken me through. I've always seen that God has ensured that he's made me strong.

That means he's taught me the subject, then given me the question paper. Much better than any school teacher. He won't give me a question paper without teaching me the subject first and giving me private tuition, best of all.

You'll never get a teacher like God. He gives you private tuition. And then why does he give us a question paper? Why do your children get question papers? You keep them at home on examination day? How many of you keep your children at home on examination day? I never did it.

Even if they got fever, I say you gotta go. Why is that? Because the examination leads to a promotion. And I wanna say every trial that God sends into your life is a question paper that'll lead to a promotion.

And the wonderful thing about God's examination is unlike any earthly examination, the teacher sits beside me and says, I'll give you the answers. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that wonderful that Jesus sits beside me and says, I'll help you through this? I say, praise the Lord. Wonderful, I never knew that God's examinations are like this, where the teacher sits beside me and says, I'll help you.

This is what you gotta do. You can overcome, you can pass. You need never say this question is too tough.

In my younger days, when I was foolish, when I did not have a spiritual father to instruct me like I'm instructing you, I wish I had. I wish that somebody taught me these things when I was 19, when I was converted. But I was not as fortunate as you are.

I struggled for years to find a spiritual father who could instruct me, I never found one. I said, Lord, I was like an orphan, earthly-wise speaking, but the result was I got to know my heavenly father much better. And I said, Lord, well, what I lacked, I'm gonna try and provide for other people.

Teach them things that'll stabilize them, make them mature much quicker than I matured. God is a father who provides. And I'm talking about spiritual provision, that he will never allow you to face a trial in your life that he's not already prepared you for.

You know, if you look at the Old Testament stories, there are little hidden pictures of this. You know the story of Joseph? There was a time you read in Genesis 37 where you know the story where his 10 brothers wanted to kill him. But God had a plan for that young man.

And there's a little sentence there that if you read carefully and you begin to think, if you meditate on God's word, you see something. His brothers were gonna kill him because they were jealous of him. They thought this guy's a favorite of our father.

Father's given him a coat of many colors and we're gonna kill him. They plotted, it says in Genesis 37, 18, to put him to death. And they said, here comes this dreamer.

Let's kill him, throw him into one of the pits and we'll tell dad a wild beast has devoured him. Can you imagine brothers who hate you so much that they wanna kill you? I don't think any of you got brothers like that. This wonderful young man, 17 years old, had 10 brothers who wanted to kill him.

Be thankful if you've got brothers who love you. And then Reuben, he's the eldest of the brothers, he said, no, let's not take his life. I'll tell you something.

Even if people plan to kill you, if it's not God's time, God will arrange somebody to land up there to put some sense into them and say, okay, let's not kill him. That's what I get here. He said, throw him into the pit and maybe, but don't kill him and let's see what happens.

So they just threw him into the pit. But here's the best part of it. This is what the thing I wanted you to see.

They sat down to eat. They threw their brother into a pit. And as they sat down to eat, they looked up and saw some Ishmaelite slave traders coming in camels.

Now you know how slow a camel walks. God had made these Ishmaelites, I don't know how many miles away they were coming from, but God timed it. And these camels must come at such and such a pace and land up near this pit exactly when Joseph has been thrown into it.

Isn't that good of God to send somebody right there at that very time? God planned it long ago when these Ishmaelite slave traders were packing up and maybe he delayed them for lunch somewhere so that they'd land up at this pit just at the right time. God's got amazing things to do that he can do. And they land up there just at that time.

And then God puts it into the mind of these brothers. Why Judah says, why not just sell him to these Ishmaelites and they'll take him off? That was God's provision. That those camels and the Ishmaelites land up there and they sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites.

And where do you think the Ishmaelites were going? Egypt, because that's where God wanted Joseph to be the prime minister. You see how the very thing that people were trying to do to harm him worked out for his good. That is God's provision.

And if you can see that in the little, little events that happen around you, small things like, how did that person land up here at this time? That wasn't an accident. I can tell you numerous stories like that in my own life. I could write a book on it.

How I've experienced God's provision in all types of situations. Amazing. God can do that.

God can do amazing things. He's taken me into countries. When the travel agent didn't tell me I needed a visa, I go to the immigration counter and I pray the prayer I read in a book once.

Lord, when you were on earth, you made blind eyes see. Now please make seeing eyes blind when they look at my passport. And he stamps it and lets you go through.

I didn't go there to make money. I went there to preach the gospel. And if you're going there to make money, you may not get that type of provision.

You may come back to India. But if you're going to serve the Lord, he may do some amazing miracles for you. It's amazing what he does, little, little things.

Now, I thought of that. If I'd gone to the next counter, perhaps, there are so many immigration counters, perhaps that guy may have seen it. But this is a counter that was free.

That's also God's provision. Little, little things. I'm just using that as an example.

Ask God, trust him. In those little, little things, learn to thank him for what he did. And see God there.

To see God in the little things. Don't just see him in the big universe he's created. See God in the little things that happen in your life.

His provision for you. Because he loves you. You're one of his special favorites.

I like to tell people, you know I'm one of God's special favorites. They say, you're lucky, Brother Zach. I say, you're also, by the way.

Not just me. Because the Bible says in Zechariah chapter two, he who touches you touches the apple of God's eye or sticks a finger in God's eye. People dare not touch me because they are sticking a finger in God's eye.

I believe that. We are ordinary people. But if you love God, he's got a special care for you.

He'll care for you through thick and thin. He will care for you as you drive down the road and protect you. All types of situations.

In all the 46 years that I rode a scooter, I can think of numerous angels who pushed people out of the way so that I don't have an accident. Never had one. That's God's provision.

Little, little things. His provision because he's got a plan for my life and he's got a plan for your life. What am I saying this for? So that your faith will be built up that as you look at the future, like we sing in that song, his love for me in time past assures me that in the future, he will not let me sink.

He didn't let me sink all these years. Why should he let me sink in the future? He's not gonna carry me halfway through the river and say, oh, I didn't know you were so bad and let me drown there. No.

Before he chose you, he knew every stupid thing that you would ever do. Isn't that a comfort to know that? All the foolish things you're gonna do next year, 10 years from now, you think God's gonna be surprised and say, oh, no, I never knew you'd do that. He already knew, brother.

He still chose you. I sometimes like to ask husbands who've been married a few years, supposing you knew before marriage all the stupid things your wife was gonna do and the way she's gonna behave, would you still have married her? I'd like to know. Perhaps not.

But God knew all the stupid, foolish things we were gonna do. And he still decided to marry us. Jesus says, I wanna marry you.

That's what makes me love him with all my heart because he knew all the foolish, stupid things I would do after I gave my life to him. And he hasn't changed his mind. Wouldn't you love a husband like that? Who says to his wife, darling, I knew every single stupid thing you were gonna do, but I still wanted you to be my wife.

Any wife would love a husband like that. That's why I love Jesus. He provides for us.

He's provided ahead of time. That's what we see here. And I tell you, I could go through the whole Old Testament and give you numerous examples like this.

God's provision. I'll give you just one more. You gotta look for these little things when you read the Bible.

Don't just quickly read through as a story and go on. Here's another example. In Exodus, in chapter 15.

I'm looking for this verse. Yeah, 15, right. Exodus 15.

It says here in verse 22, this is just after they came out of Egypt. They had just come out of Egypt. The Red Sea was open and closed up behind them.

And they came out from the Red Sea and they went into the wilderness. They were three days in the wilderness, Exodus 15, 22. And they came to a place called Mara.

And there was a river flowing there. But as they're all hungry, imagine walking in a desert for three days without water. And as they stooped to drink it, the water was so bitter.

They spat it out. They couldn't drink it. They were frustrated.

And they asked, grumbled, Moses, why have you brought us out here? At least in Egypt, we got some water. And he cried out to the Lord. This is the verse I want you to see, verse 25.

The water is flowing there. It's bitter. All these 2 million Israelites have got no water to drink.

And they are looking up to Moses, the leader. And the Lord says, look at that tree there. Cut it down.

Throw it in the water. And the water became sweet. Is that just a story? When I read that, I ask myself, who planted that tree there in a desert? Who plants trees in the desert? If you see a tree planted in a house, you can understand the man planted it.

Who planted it in the desert? God. Do trees grow up in one night? No, it takes some years for a tree to grow up. Maybe five, 10 years ago.

God planted a tree by that river 10 years earlier when his children were still slaves in Egypt. Why? Because he knew 10 years from now, my children, Israel, will come to this spot and they'll need something to make this water sweet. So I'll put a tree here that's got some ability to make bitter water sweet.

You see God's provision there? That's why I say, don't read the Bible so fast. Stop, think, read, and you'll see stories that stir your faith, that give an answer to your difficult situation when you face one like that. That's helped me.

I mean, I've seen that for 40 years and many times I've thought of that. Lord, now I've come to some bitter situation in my life. I'm looking around, where's the tree? There must be some provision here that you made 10 years ago.

I don't know where it is, but you'll show it to me. And there always is a provision to make the bitter water sweet. There always is a provision to meet our need.

This is the whole Old Testament is full of stories like that. Read the book of Esther. Do you know that the book of Esther is the only book in the Bible where the word God is not mentioned? 65 books have got God mentioned and Esther, the word God is not even mentioned.

But throughout the book, you can see God hidden behind the scenes, working in the little, little actions. There was a prime minister there who wanted to kill all the Jews. What happens that night? God prevents the king from sleeping.

That prime minister wants to kill Mordecai, who is the one who refuses to bow down to him. And the king can't sleep. You know, God has got ways of keeping people awake.

If God keeps you awake one night, you better wake up and say, what are you trying to say to me, Lord? There must be something. So the king woke up and he said, how to go to sleep? Maybe the best thing, the best way to go to sleep is read the boring history books. So he said, bring all the history books.

Let's read that. Let me get some sleep. So they start reading the history books to the king.

And in the history books of the empire, they read that Mordecai at one time saved the king from being killed by his bodyguards or someone. He said, really? I didn't know that. Or I forgot about it.

What have we done to honor him? Nothing. We want to honor him. And at that very moment, that wicked man Haman comes into the king's court, you know, to ask the king's permission to kill Mordecai.

I like the timing of God, how he comes in at that time. And before Haman can open his mouth, the king says, what shall we do to honor someone who has the king loves? Haman thought, of course, that must be me. He says, make him go on a bright horse and let some leading person lead the person on a horse and say, thus will the king honor anybody whom he loves.

He said, exactly. Get a horse and put Mordecai on it. And you lead the horse and take him through.

God's sense of humor. It's absolutely wonderful. This is my dad, by the way, who I'm talking about and your dad.

Do you know him like that? Do you know him as one who provides for all your needs? You know, when it comes to our physical needs, Jesus often used to tell his disciples about, if your child asks you for bread, will you give him a stone? How much more will your heavenly father give good things to those who ask him? That's one thing. I want you to see two statements. They're not exactly the same.

In Matthew seven, he says, good things, Matthew seven, verse 11. If you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. God gives gifts.

He doesn't sell anything. There's a saying that the devil always steals, man always sells and God always gives things free. God doesn't sell, he gives gifts.

If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your father in heaven will give good things to those who ask him? You don't have because you don't ask. I've asked God for many things. Some things he gives me, some things he doesn't, just like a good father.

You know, my children used to ask me for many things. Some things I gave them, some things I didn't give them. Some things I said, you got to wait.

I've sometimes surprised people by saying, God has answered every prayer of mine in my life. Then I wait for that to sink in, where people think, oh, this must be a great man of God. Every prayer of his is answered.

I say, let me explain now. It's like the traffic lights. I said, sometimes it's red.

The answer is no. Sometimes it's orange. The answer is wait.

Sometimes it's green. The answer is yes. Now you tell me, has God answered every prayer of yours? It's not only me.

It's you too. The only thing is when it's red, you think God didn't answer your prayer. He doesn't answer your prayer.

It's to save you from an accident. Why is the traffic light red? To save you from an accident. God is good.

God is a good God. He answers every prayer. Remember the traffic lights.

Sometimes it's wait. You're not yet ready for it, son. I'll give it to you, but you got to wait a little.

I tell you, I would never choose myself. I would let God choose for me. Otherwise, I'd be running into traffic accidents all the time.

I want to stop at the red lights. I don't grumble at the red lights. Not at the red lights on the road and not at the red lights of God.

I say, I'm willing to wait for you to tell me to move, Lord. Then I can move safely. He gives good gifts to those who ask him.

We ask. But in Luke 11, the same thing. Almost a similar verse, but not exactly the same.

And that's also the thing that we need to see. He said, you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. But now he doesn't say good gifts.

Luke 11 and verse 13. If you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask you? Now it's not good things. Now it is the greatest gift of all, the Holy Spirit.

But some people are afraid to pray for the Holy Spirit. They say, oh, if I pray for the Holy Spirit, will I get an evil spirit? I've heard of some people had bad experiences. Well, you get bad experiences if you go to some emotionally charged, Pentecostal charismatic meeting, the way they work you up.

And the pastor keeps telling you to say, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. I remember once when I was ignorant, when I was about 22 years old, I didn't know anything about the Holy Spirit. Somebody said, you got to go to the Pentecostal people to know about that.

And I went there and the pastor said, say hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. I said, I'm not gonna say that. They didn't say that on the day of Pentecost.

He got offended with me. I said, fine. I went home and I said, Lord, I don't want anything of that.

I want what the apostles got on the day of Pentecost. And that's when God gave me the real thing. So don't be afraid because that, Jesus answered that specifically here, that particular question of yours.

You know, in the Bible, the devil is called a snake and a scorpion. Did you know that? Yeah, it's earlier in the previous chapter. He says in Luke chapter 10, verse 19, I've given you authority over serpents and scorpions and over all the part of Satan.

Serpents and scorpions are a picture of Satan's power. Luke 10, 19. And then he uses the same two examples, serpents and scorpions here.

In Luke chapter 11, he says, if your child asks you for an egg, will you give something that looks like an egg, a scorpion? No. If he asks you, verse 11, for a fish, will he give you something that looks like a fish, a snake? No. Then he says, ask for the Holy Spirit.

You won't get anything. You won't get a snake, you won't get a scorpion. You'll get something good from God.

His provision, God's provision for our need. It's really wonderful. Our spiritual need, our physical need, our financial need.

God has got all the money in the world. He's not gonna steal anybody's money and give it to you, but he's gonna enable you to have some way by which you can earn something honestly, legitimately for your

need. I wanna say that to every one of you.

I can, today I can say that with boldness because I've experienced it for more than 40 years. I wanna tell you, it's a tremendous thing to be able to trust in a heavenly father who provides all our need, whatever your need is. One more thing, healing.

Is God interested in our physical healing? I believe he is. Which father will not be interested in his child being healthy? I believe that God loves me more than any earthly father loves his child. And I've always believed when I was sick or anyone in my family was sick, I'd say, dad, you know this.

You know our need. If you're trying to teach us something through it, help us to learn it, that's fine. I think of the Apostle Paul who, when he was sick, he had a thorn in the flesh and he prayed to God.

Now, I'm not greater than the Apostle Paul. He was way ahead of me spiritually. But even his prayer, God did not answer in the way that he wanted.

He prayed, Lord, I've got this sickness in my flesh which has come from Satan. He called it a messenger of Satan. It's in 2 Corinthians 12.

Take it away. No answer. Maybe I didn't pray enough.

Again, fasting and prayer. Take it away, Lord. No answer.

A third time, take it away. Then the Lord answers, I'm not going to take it away. It's serving a purpose in your life, Paul.

I have used you so much. I have mightily used you. You need something like this to humble you.

Otherwise, you'll be so puffed up that I will have to resist you because I resist the proud. I want to keep you humble, Paul, because I always want to give you grace. And this thing will keep you humble.

If everything goes well, if everything goes well for you, you may become proud. My grace is enough for you, Paul, to help you to serve me in spite of this weakness. It's like telling a person with a handicap, with a handicapped leg, I'm going to help you to win the Olympic Games in the 100 meters.

And you're going to run with these fast runners and you with a lame leg, you're going to win because I'm going to help you. It's something like that. Isn't that a greater thing than if you train for four years and won the 100 meters? So God says, my grace is enough for you.

And I'm going to be glorified that in a week with your weakness, you did something for me, which wouldn't have been such a great thing if you did it for me when you were young and strong. Yeah. It's a wonderful thing.

For example, I find that as I grow older, I'm going to be 73 this year. There's a lot of difference between me serving the Lord when I was 30 with full of energy and being able to do the same thing today. God says, my grace is enough for you.

I say to me, it's a greater thing. So I'm not asking for the help that I had when I was 30. I say, Lord, your grace is enough for me.

So whenever I'm sick, I say, Lord, you either heal me or give me grace. I don't know which is better for me right now. If you think the grace is better, then give me grace.

If you think the healing is going to be better, give me healing. And sometimes He's healed me and sometimes He's given me grace. I leave that to God to decide.

And I would encourage all of you, whenever there's sickness in your life, in your home, pray that prayer. I learned it from Paul in 2 Corinthians 12, where he didn't get the healing, but he got grace. Timothy had frequent stomach infirmities.

I'm sure he learned from Paul too. When the will of God is more important to you than even physical health, and I can honestly say the will of God is more important to me than physical health. And I say, Lord, I always say, you can't leave me, send me empty handed completely.

You gotta give me one of the two, either healing or grace. I'm not dictating to you which you should give, Lord, because you know what's best for me. But I leave that to you.

And sometimes He gives one, sometimes He gives the other. And you'll be able to say, God always answers my prayer. You'll be able to say it.

It's a wonderful thing to see God's provision for us, planning for the future, preparing situations, because He knows that one day we're gonna land up there and we're in need, protecting us from people who try to harm us. I could tell you numerous stories about the way God has protected me from people who try to harm me. Yeah, how God took me, you know how God took away Jesus from Bethlehem where He was born before Herod's soldiers came to kill Him? I've had experiences exactly like that.

Isn't it a wonderful thing to go through? Do you want to go through life without any experiences of God's deliverance? You'll have a boring testimony in heaven. Pray that God will give you some wonderful experiences of deliverance in amazing situations where you'll be able to trust Him more for the future and encourage other people by telling them how God provided for you in your time of need, protected you from evil men, protected you from accidents, healed you from sicknesses, and did not heal you from some other things, but gave you such grace that you became a conqueror in spite of that limitation. It's wonderful.

We are never supposed to be defeated. Jesus was never defeated, never, you know, taken up with, overwhelmed by some situation. He could handle everything.

And we are His younger brothers, and we can walk in His footsteps. I'm not giving you a pep talk like before a football match, the coach whips up everybody. That'll just last for one or two days.

I'm telling you something that can last your lifetime. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, to remind you of the truth that your Father not only welcomes you as a sinner, but provides for your every need. God bless you.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. While our heads are bowed in prayer, the Bible says, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. What you have heard today, even through the mouths of an ordinary man, is the words of Jesus Christ.

Trust Him. Ask forgiveness for the times when you have doubted Him. Lord, forgive me.

I insulted you by doubting you. I'm not gonna doubt you anymore. I trust you.

Thank you for hearing me. Help me to trust you more in the days to come. In Jesus' name, amen.

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