



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 23.04.2023

“Providence and Community”

Preacher

Ps. Glen Cochrane

Scripture

“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?”

Matthew 6:30

Thought

We so often quickly forget God’s miraculous provision to us. This verse reminds us of the reality of God’s provision in our lives. That He is for us, He cares for the details.

“Providence” is a word that we don’t hear much these days, but it’s a powerful description of God’s provision. God’s providence spans from His creation of the whole world, right down to looking after the little details in our lives. It is all-encompassing.

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:31-32

Ultimately, providence brings us to the understanding that God is for us. This is not always our default - maybe we’ve been raised to think that God is



angry, distant, uninterested - but the scriptures tell the story of a God who provides everything we need, who is for us in every way - not just salvation, but everything.

*"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?"*

*2 My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.*

*3 He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;*

*4 indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*5 The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;*

*6 the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.*

*7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;*

*8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore."*

Psalm 121

This Psalm of ascent applies to the totality of our lives. It doesn't mean nothing will go wrong; it means when it does, God has you. Jesus on His way to the cross knew this. He lifted His eyes to the hills, He knew where His help came from.

This beautiful psalm guarantees us of God's constant watchfulness and vigilance. It promises that He will be with us wherever we are on life's road. It infuses us with hope for the future.

It also strikes at the heart of 21st century individualism. It's a recognition that it's not our own sufficiency or cleverness or strategy, but It is only because of God's providence that we can do anything.



The New testament was steeped in deep community. It flies in the face of our modern self sufficiency, but we are ultimately called to love one-another, and to be relied on by one-another, carrying each other's burdens, and sharing Christ's providence with each other.

So, today, may we have the boldness to lay down our individualism. To surrender the idol of our self sufficiency and to take hold, with both hands, the community of Christ by which His Providence freely flows. May we revel in the joy and grace of His love for us, sharing with and receiving from each other as we live lives of selfless gratitude.

Discussion Points

1. How do we see God's providence expressed in the early New Testament Church? (Acts 2:42-47)
2. How can we better foster a healthy habit of gratitude for God's provision in our lives?
3. Reflecting again on the community of faith being the primary conduit for expressing and receiving God's provision - how can we, in the 21st century, live out the fullness of a Christ-centred faith community?

Personal application + Prayer

Dear God,

Thank You for Your Providence, that in You and through You all things hold together. Thank You that You chose to pour out Your blessing and Providence in my life in so many ways, and so often through the community of faith. May I grow ever deeper into relationship with others and may I be ever mindful and grateful of your Providence in every season of life.

Amen