

God Really Does Care

As you might imagine, as I study through these scriptures each week, and continue verse by verse, my mind follows an ongoing account of the nature and the teaching of the Lord Jesus. And as I do that, and as with these particular words given here in this Book of Luke, I can't help but marvel at how truly loving and caring our God is, showing to us the absolute epitome of how a loving Father is to care for His beloved children.

And after the stern warnings that He gave to us in these scriptures in last week's message, warnings about the fears that we should have and also the fears that we should not have, telling us in clear and simple words who it is that we should fear and who it is that we should not, telling us about hell, about who will go there and who it will be that condemns men's souls to spend their eternity there in hell, God then turns us here today to words of comforting loving assurance, words of promise and of intimate care.

And I especially love these truths that we will study today and also over the next few weeks, because it's in knowing truths like these that we learn about one of the most gracious attributes of the Holy character of God, that of His "Divine Providence".

It is in times and circumstances like those spoken about here, about fears and punishment and hell that we are assured that though the world around us is surely lost and in a corrupt condition, we really do not need to fear, that instead of giving way to the fears that assail our emotions, we can confidently trust in the Divine Providence of God for our protection and our relief.

And again, I love those words and those comforting thoughts about "Divine Providence!" It was in pondering the Divine Providence of God that John Newton penned those precious words of the Hymn "Amazing Grace". The words of that Hymn give us such an excellent understanding of God's loving and caring "Providence".

Unfortunately, those words, "Divine Providence", aren't often spoken about within today's culture. And even more sadly, those words, "Divine Providence" aren't often heard even within many of our churches today. Preachers seem to prefer to preach instead about all the many "self-improvement" programs and habits and behaviors that we can develop on our own.

But folks, please know that it is not we ourselves who are “Sovereign” over the events of our daily lives. It is our God who is “Sovereign”. And because He is sovereign, He exercises His Divine Providence over everything that takes place. Everything!

May I take just a moment and remind us of what those words, “Divine Providence”, mean for our uncertain souls. “Divine Providence” is the manner and the means by which God governs, guides and directs all of the matters and events that take place in this world, both in this visible world that we live in and also all of the invisible unseen realms, and even extending to the farthest reaches of the universe.

And though His Providential power and might are vast and great, it remains intimate and caring, especially toward those who are members of His beloved family, you and me and all those who have received Jesus as their Savior and Lord. It is by His Divine Providence, that God saves us from our sins and conforms us to the blessed image of Christ His Son, faithfully guiding us through the many steps of our faith as He works out His purposes in us.

And these words of this passage are just one more example of God’s divine watchcare over us. Listen and consider these loving words given to us here in Luke chapter 12, beginning in verse 6.

6“Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7)

Simple words, but so very deep in their meaning!

In this so very uncertain culture of our day, there are so many questions that fill the hearts and minds of our people. And yes, not only those people who do not know the Lord Jesus as their Savior, but also those of us who do, often asking even the most basic of questions, “Is God really out there, does He really care about what is taking place in this world with all of its many vile and hurtful circumstances?”

Most of all, does He really care about me personally, and about my family? Is He as up-close and intimate as some people say He is, and how can I know that He is?

The answers to those and so many other questions like them are right here in the pages of this Book, in words like these given here in the passage that we have just read.

And today, I want us to spend some time opening up our hearts and minds to God's loving and caring and intimate presence. But how do we begin to do that? How do we join with the Holy spirit and move on forward in our faith, on forward in our embracing of the reality that God really is, that He is real and that He really is fully involving Himself within every matter and every activity of our daily life.

Folks, it's not enough that we occasionally pause to recognize and to say that some isolated event is a "God thing", or even that we "accept" or "agree" with someone that God is "near to us" and wants to be involved in the matters of our daily life.

Our part, our responsibility in our relationship with the Lord Jesus is to be willing to fully "embrace" the reality that He is always, at every moment, present and fully involved in even the smallest, most insignificant matter of daily life, even the number of hairs that we might have on our head right at this moment in time, and will change tomorrow. And He will still know them then.

And may I also ask that we take a moment and think one step further into these words that I have just used, the words "accept" and "embrace". I believe that there might be a far wider gap between their meanings than we realize.

In our salvation, we "receive" Christ as our personal Savior, but do we "embrace" Him as our Savior. Do we respond by reaching forward and genuinely taking hold of the One who has given His life that we might also have life. Or have we instead stood motionless, and emotionless, accepting His great gift of salvation, but with hands and arms hanging limply at our sides.

Perhaps that vision of our emotionless response is part of the reason as to why we have received so very little in our relationship with Christ. With our hands and

arms hanging limply at our sides, a saint has no means to receive the many great blessings that a loving relationship with Christ affords.

And do we think for a moment that that is the kind of response that Jesus wants to receive from us. After all, are we not His bride?

Consider these words for a moment! Visualize them in your mind! As a Bridegroom reaches out and embraces His beloved bride, is it fitting for the bride to simply stand emotionless, with her arms hanging limply at her side, having no response to the One who has given everything for her, a dowry paid for in blood and with His very life.

Does not that price deserve a far more loving response than the half-hearted response that we so often give back to the Loving Lord Jesus?

An often quoted verse in these scriptures tells us that "without vision, a people perish". And a bride who does not have the vision for being a bride will surely perish. Perhaps not to the point of completely losing her eternal life, but surely, very much like it.

And we dare not do that! We dare not! From the first moment of our salvation, that first moment that we become the bride of Christ, we need always to have our arms outstretched, always reaching forward to embrace our loving Bridegroom.

But how do we get from where we are to where we need to be, from our dull and emotionless Christianity into the joy-filled happiness of a daily loving relationship with the person of the Lord Jesus? It begins simply by doing as I have been suggesting this morning, by not only accepting, but by fully embracing the vision that Jesus, our Bridegroom really is right here, right now, loving us, embracing us and providing for our every need.

And such an idea should not at all seem strange to us. We are told about it over and over again all through these scriptures. Our minds just don't seem to want to recognize exactly what God is saying to us in His words.

The words of today's text that tell us,

6"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Do not fear therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7)

What do these words say to you about the intimate watchcare of God when He knows every hair that we have on our heads today? And will know how many there are tomorrow and then the next day and every day. That is intimacy!

Folks, God is right here, right now, just as He has been from the very beginning of all that has taken place on the earth. And He has told us so all through these words of scripture. Recall that in the very first words of Genesis chapter 1 we are told, "In the beginning God".

And then the promise from Jesus, "Lo I am with you even until the end of the earth".

And then Jesus' words of promise about the Holy Spirit given to us in John chapter 15,

²⁶" . . . when the Helper (the comforter) comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father . . .(John 15:26)

And then also Jesus' words in John chapter 16,

⁸ And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

¹³ . . . (and) he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:7, 13-15)

Folks, all of these things are taking place with us every moment of every day. From the very first moment of our salvation, the Spirit of Christ has been living within each of our souls, guiding us, directing us, comforting us, convicting us, warning us away from dangers, doing all the things that a loving Bridegroom is supposed to do.

Throughout all of time, and in every circumstance of life, there is one constant truth that always holds true and prevails, and that is that "God is" and that He is ever and always present and reaching into everything that we do and taking part in it.

Jesus truly is . . . the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last”.

Again, as I said at the beginning of our message today, not all churches teach about such things. It seems that many of our churches today prefer to concentrate their message more upon the activities of men. And yes, men and women and angels are God's hands that carry out His plans and His purposes, but that too is a part of God's “Divine Providence”. And because of that, you and I must be willing to do our part.

But we must know this, that the very first understanding that God desires for us to hear and to follow is the one that I have been speaking about here this morning, and that understanding is, that yes we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but it really is God who is working within us to accomplish the things we do.

And if we ever really intend to move forward and be of any benefit to Christ in our relationship with Him, we need first to intentionally “embrace” His moment by moment presence within us and to allow His Spirit within us to actually guide and direct our steps.

The verse that we often quote, “man makes his plans, but God directs his steps” is an integral part of the embracing of God's intimate presence within us.

In many of my prayers, I pray, “God, you have a plan and a purpose in this matter that lies before me. Show me your plan and your purpose and enable me to simply join with you in it. Then and only then will I know for sure that I will do well in it.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we read,

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Folks, God simply, but profoundly “is”! He “is”! And He is always present and at work guiding and directing everything that takes place on the earth.

But more than that, He is guiding and directing you and me personally, guiding all the many intimate matters of your and my daily life.

Do we always allow His plans and His purposes to take place? Unfortunately not! But why, and how can that be? How can “lowly men and women” thwart the plans and the purposes of Almighty God? The answer to that question is, it is because, for some reason known only to God, He has ordained that it would be more holy for Him to allow us the opportunity of “free will”. And with our “free will” we are able to “quench His Spirit”.

In the rush and the confusion of the many circumstances that beset us each day, our eyes refuse to see and our ears refuse to hear His comforting and guiding words. We are as those people warned about in the Book of Ezekiel. Listen! Ezekiel 12,

2“Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people.(Ezekiel 12:2)

Sadly, this is often us, you and me. But thanks be to God, our ways do not discourage Him. He still always remains faithful and fully committed to His plans and His purposes, ever and always presenting us with yet another and another opportunity to join Him in His perfect plan and will for us.

Folks, if we will only open our eyes to see and our ears to hear, we will know that God’s Presence and His Providence is intricately intertwined into every part and fiber of this earthly existence.

He wants you and me to read the pages of this precious Book and to see that His divine providence adorns and accentuates every word, every promise, and every deed, all declaring the character and the presence of God.

And by His Spirit living within us, as we read the pages of this Book, we will see His almighty and loving hand working through all the things that take place in our daily lives.

Each and every day, through His incomprehensible wisdom and knowledge, He is able to know every hair that we have on our heads. And He keeps track of every need that presents itself to us.

May I close our time today with these precious words from Matthew chapter 6,

²⁵“Therefore I say to you, do not worry 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? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? ²⁸“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

³¹“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34)

Let's pray.