

Promises – God’s Provision

1. Review

- a. Over the past two weeks we have examined some of the things we should know about using and claiming God’s promises.
- b. We have learned:
 - i. God always keeps His promises. He is unlike us...and as such, He cannot lie, change His mind nor can he deceive us.
 - ii. Faith is not a denial of evidence but a recognition that God is greater than the problem and trusting His resources to meet the need.
 - iii. A promise is only as good as the one who makes the promise. Therefore, our faith really is not really in the promise but the promisor.
 - iv. The more you know someone the easier it is to trust them and god.
 - v. We learned that the way that we pray is a reflection of how we perceive God. (Genie, etc)
 - vi. Prayer and Promises of God are about a call to an ever deepening relationship, and that to know the will of God we must be IN the will of God.

2. Today we are going to look at the promises God has made to provide for our needs.

- a. When you are going through a tough time financially, it is pretty easy to panic.
 - i. All you have to do is to look at your circumstances – if you are without a job or your hours are cut; if you have unexpected bills, if you are running out of food, you don’t have gas for your car...
 1. It can cause you to worry or even despair!
 2. I can still recall when I was in college eating spaghetti noodles with ketchup on them because that was all I had in the apartment.
 3. It feels pretty bleak when you are running out of your own resources.
 - ii. Perhaps you have been there before. Maybe you are there right now.
 - iii. You are wondering “how will I make it?”
- b. This morning, I want you to take a journey with me, back nearly 3800 years, to a person who was learning to believe God, to trust God and to expect God to meet his needs.

3. Jehovah Jireh (Yahweh will provide)

- a. We are going back to Abraham.
 - i. Some of you remember that two weeks ago we talked about how Abraham believed that God would provide him a son...and after trying to help God out by having a son with his wife’s servant, Hagar, he is told that God will provide him a son through his barren and past her child-bearing years wife, Sarah.
 1. You might recall that both Sarah and Abraham LAUGHED when they were told of God’s promise...and we talked about how faith doesn’t have to be perfect to be powerful.
 2. They were incredulous when they heard the promise, yet they believed just enough to act on the words of the angel and sure enough, Isaac was born.
- b. It is through this child of promise that God is going to use to reveal His character to Abraham and to us.
 - i. Turn with me to Genesis 22:6, and while you are turning the pages of your bible, let me give you the background behind the passage we are about to read. Abraham hears God tell him in verse 2, "*Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.*"
 - ii. The bible doesn’t comment on Abraham’s attitude, it simply describes how he obeys.

- iii. We pick up the story in v. 6. *Genesis 22:6 "Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son." 11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." (Jehovah Jireh)*
 - c. I don't know what you noticed in that passage, but there are a few things you should pay attention to.
 - i. He takes the wood and places it on his son, Isaac, who carries it up the mountain..
 - 1. (Can you think about someone else who had to carry a load of wood before his sacrificial death?)
 - 2. Most bible scholars see a strong Messianic arch-type in this story of Isaac.
 - a. The father offering his only son
 - b. The substitute is provided.
 - ii. Verse eight expresses Abraham's confidence that God will provide.
 - 1. *"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."*
 - 2. He is doing more than just hoping against hope as in the case of his barren wife.
 - 3. He now has possession of the promise (Isaac, his son) and is being asked by God to give him up.
 - a. The very command to do this flew in the face of God's promise to Abraham that He would raise up descendents that number like the sands of the sea or the stars of the heavens.
 - b. The New Testament later tells us that Abraham believed that God would raise his son to life if need be to keep His promise.
 - c. He can only deduce that somehow God will provide, because God won't break His promise.
 - iii. Look at how long Abraham has to wait for God's provision:
 - 1. There had been a three day journey from their home away down in the dry, sunny south, a long hike over rough hills, a difficult climb, and a father with a heavy heart filled with hope and a sense of wonder as to what this day will bring.
 - 2. There must be a foreboding growing in the child's spirit.
 - 3. But there was no sign of deliverance.
 - 4. Slowly, Abraham piles together the wood, and yet there is no sign of provision.
 - 5. Slowly he binds Isaac and lays him on it, and still no sign of provision.
 - 6. Slowly, reluctantly, and yet with resolve, he unsheathes the knife, and yet no sign.
 - 7. He lifts his hand, and then comes the provision.
 - 8. This is God's way
 - 9. He drives us up to the very edge of our limits before His hand is put out to help us.
 - iv. Maybe you have seen God provide in that way in your life.

1. Many of you are familiar with George Mueller, a man of faith who lived in the 1800's and funded an orphanage in England entirely by prayer, never asking a single person for a single cent, yet God provided millions in support through the dedicated prayers of him and his staff.
2. Over and over again they would be stretched to the limit as they prayed for a meal, prayed for a furnace, prayed for funds...and had to wait to the very hour or minute of its due and God would provide.
3. The temptation to take matters into their own hands...to doubt God, to doubt themselves, to give up...they are all there.
4. But the joy of God's provision would have been missed if they had given up one minute before.
5. So also with Abraham. He doesn't give up, but wonders. He continues. All the way until God provides..
- v. As a result, God's name is revealed here: Jehovah Jireh "God who provides."
 1. I shared not a couple of weeks ago how Kristina informed us that she felt led to go to Panama as a summer missionary.
 - a. My first question was, "how much does it cost?" (instead of questions like, "how has God shown you this").
 - b. Her reply flabbergasted me...she said, "Dad, where is your faith, you're a pastor. God will provide."
 - c. It is so much easier to trust for things that don't affect your family, isn't it?
 - d. But this underlines a principle: **Where God guides He provides.**
 2. Abraham tells us, "The Lord will provide." How do you know that, Abraham? And his answer is, "Because the Lord did provide."
 - a. You can bet Isaac will never forget this experience of God's provision!
- vi. How many times does God want to supply our needs in supernatural ways, but we don't give Him the chance?
 1. We're too busy trying to figure out how to manage on our own.
 2. I have said to Jennifer, "we cant afford that college."
 - a. That is a very self-absorbed statement.
 - b. The statement should be, "God, if you want my daughter to go to THAT college, You can tell me and You can provide for it. As it stands, I don't have the resources to afford it at the moment. But in Christ, I have all of the resources necessary."
 - c. We all need t learn how to depend upon God instead of ourselves.

4. In the Desert – God Provides and Teaches Dependency

- a. During the Exodus from Egypt, and God reveals Himself as the One who Provides for His People.
- b. The Israelites had not yet learned to depend on the God who wanted to provide for their needs. Here in their desert wanderings,
 - i. They had spent the last 400 years or so meeting their own needs with little direct revelation and interference by God.
 - ii. But now something has changed. They are being molded into His people.
 - iii. God is shaping the way they view Him and the way that depend upon Him. But old habits die hard!
- c. Look at some of the times God meets their needs:
 - i. The Israelites found water but it was undrinkable -- and God purified the water. (Exodus 15:22-26)

- ii. The Israelites ran out of meat and bread -- and God provided both in abundance. He sends Manna, food daily for them. They must only go collect it. It sustains them for 40 years in the dessert. (Exodus 15:27-16:15)
- iii. The Israelites had no more water -- and God provided plenty. (Exodus 17:1-7)
- d. But in time of need, the Israelites “complained” about the lack of these things to Moses
 - i. They were bitter and angry toward him and angry toward God.
 - 1. What is at the root of this bitterness? I think they were not ready to depend upon God.
- e. Power of Complaints
 - i. **A complaint ignores the desire of God to meet your need:**
 - 1. When we complain, we are making a statement that God does not desire to meet our needs.
 - 2. A complaint assumes wrong motives or wrong affections on the part of God, who alone can meet our need.
 - 3. In doing so, we tarnish the character of God who is holy, good, and righteous in every way.
 - ii. **A complaint discredits the ability of God to meet your need:**
 - 1. When we complain about a physical need in our lives, we are also stating that God does not have the power to meet that need.
 - 2. We mock the very nature of God who, as the Creator, created all things (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16).
 - a. As the Psalmist said, *"I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth"* (Psalm 121:1-2, NIV).
 - 3. If He can create all things from nothingness, how much more can He provide for you from what He has already created?
 - iii. **When complaint demands satisfaction it brings God's discipline:**
 - 1. When our complaint comes in the form of a demand, we put God to the test.
 - 2. Our complaint assumes that we have some inherent right to this thing we are demanding and we put ourselves in a position of ordering God to provide it.
 - 3. In other words, we reverse roles with God... and act as if He is here to serve us.
 - a. That behavior and attitude, which the Israelites in the desert also had, must be changed in order to become God's people.
 - 4. Romans 8:32 says, *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?*
- f. So when we say, “that attitude must be changed in us” what are we saying?
 - i. We are saying that we will experience the discipline of God.
 - 1. Discipline means to train.
 - 2. **God's provision for the needs of your life is a means of training you in your spiritual journey.**
 - ii. God has to discipline us to learn how to live with a Heavenly minded view of life.
 - 1. We all become Christians with a mind-set that we have been raised with...and it is a mindset that the world has taught us.
 - 2. We need to be renewed in the way that we view life and that we think so that we can see things from God's perspective.
 - iii. Consider Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25 *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father*

feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 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, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt 6:25-34, NIV)

1. Jesus is telling us what the Christian's perspective on God's provision must become.
 2. **Discipline** is a means of learning.
 - a. Learning what is important!
 - b. Learning how God works.
 - c. Learning to live with your eyes on Him instead of upon your circumstances, yourself or others.
 - d. Learning to give your worship and attention to God.
 3. Philippians 4:6 *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God"*
 - a. This is the response of one who has been trained by God to trust and depend upon God's provision.
 - b. We must learn to depend upon God.
 - c. We must learn to let God be God.
 - d. Then our lives will reflect Him!
- iv. **This is because we were not created to be self-sufficient** –
1. We are dependent upon other people...in fact, our children are born totally dependent upon their parents, teens learn independence.
 2. We are dependent upon the laws of our government, the structures of our society, our police to provide order and safety, our roadways, etc.
 3. There is no one who can say that they need no one.
- g. **Contentment is the remedy to Complaining**
- i. *I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength* Philippians 4:12-13.
 - ii. **Ownership – Ownership determines responsibility.**
 1. The van story:
 2. We all carry the weight of our needs because we "own" our stuff.
 - a. We don't see life from God's perspective.
 - b. Its supposed to be His Stuff.
 - c. But when we buy it without asking Him first, I guess the ownership issue becomes muddled, doesn't it?
 - d. How many of our financial problems are self-inflicted?
 - i. (Ie. debt, poor spending habits – going out to eat rather than cooking the meal at home, buying electronic toys instead of finding contentment, etc).
 3. In truth, we do not own anything.
 - a. I don't really own my house, my car, or my children.

- b. The Christian perspective is that all I have belongs to God...He has simply given me the job to manage and enjoy it.
 - c. Therefore, if I lose something, I didn't really lose it because I never owned it.
 - d. If someone needs something, they are just as welcome to it as I am because I don't own it -- the Lord does.
 - e. If the Lord knows they need it – He can tell me and it will be theirs.
4. It is vital that I begin with the understanding that God owns everything.
- iii. Control – **God controls everything.**
- 1. God is not only the owner but also the controller.
 - a. When I used to fly RC planes, I would hook up a buddy-box so another person could learn to fly. Flip the switch and they would get a chance to be in control for as long as I held the switch down. If they got in trouble, I would let go of the switch and I would be in control.
 - i. Who was “really” in control of that plane while the student was flying?
 - ii. The student was maneuvering it...but they weren't in control of it.
 - iii. I had the master control.
 - iv. So it is with God. He is in control. We think because we have a measure of control that we are...but we are misled. He holds the master control.
 - 2. If you know God owns and controls everything, then you will not put your hope in things and you will not fear for your needs.
 - 3. God knows what you need -- *He will provide all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Phil.4:19b).
 - 4. He will take care of everything that is necessary for your life. God will dispense to you what He knows you must have in order to invest in His kingdom.
 - 5. That is not your worry. *Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want*
- iv. Provision – **Provision is the result of ownership and control.**
- 1. If it belongs to God, if it is controlled by God, then it will be provided for by God.
 - 2. The word Provision is the combination of two words: Pro and Vision.
 - a. I believe that God is pro-life, and He is also Pro-vision.
 - b. His provision comes when our vision is His Vision.
 - c. When our decisions line up with His, we can experience His provision.
 - i. How many times have you bought something without asking God about it?
 - ii. Or dated someone without asking God?
 - iii. Or bought on credit instead of waiting on God's provision?
 - iv. When we snatch up ownership or control or refuse to wait for God's provision, He is clear that we will reap what we sow.
 - v. We will get what we wanted. Control, worry, stress, fear, doubt that comes with wanting to take His place.
 - 3. **But...God's will, done God's way with God's provision brings God glory, and brings us peace.**
 - 4.
5. God is PRO-VISION
- a. There are some things coming up in next year or so that are going to have a profound effect upon our church:
 - i. Plain Dealer Monday (article on the board) Strategic Focus City SBC 2006-2007 –
 - 1. Mission teams coming to make a difference.
 - 2. Our church and our community is the mission field.

3. Imagine hundreds of Christian volunteers coming to stay at our church and helping to work at whatever outreach projects we have heard God call us to design.
 - ii. Women's Conference, Fall 2005 – hosting a major conference this year which will result in changed lives and new people finding life at this church.
- b. But you may have noticed how we are running out of space to accommodate folks who are coming in to the church?
- i. Our parking lot is nearly full.
 - ii. We do not want to say, "sorry, but God doesn't have room for you."
 - iii. Last week, during our business meeting, the Deacons recommended and the church passed a motion to begin the paving work on our parking lot and the tie-in to the township sewer.
 1. We decided that we must accommodate the people God is bringing us.
 - iv. We believe it is God's will that we do so.
 1. 40k, 60k additional needed.
 2. We are getting ready to hire an Engineer
 3. We will do the work in stages so as not to incur debt.
 4. It is our goal to complete the greatest part by end of summer.
- c. Why are we doing this?
- i. Many of you are aware of how quickly we have grown over the past year.
 - ii. There are quite a few of you here today whose lives have been changed by God at this church.
 - iii. You are growing in Christ and learning how to walk and you are seeing the difference in your life and in the lives of others.
 - iv. I am not wanting to embarrass anyone, but if you started coming to HHBC in 2004, would you stand up for us? Look around folks. These are some of those changed lives you are seeing.
 - v. It is for folks like these...and for folks that you haven't even met yet, that we are doing this for...to invest in changing lives.
- d. Raise the funds:
- i. No manipulation, no pledges. Between you and God.
 1. We believe that God will stir your heart to sacrifice to make this happen. Plan on making a sacrificial gift for the next year.
 2. Going out to eat – cut out for one year, give to this fund.
 3. Some will put aside \$1.00 a week.
 - ii. Don't reduce your tithe, this is sacrificial giving for the future.
 - iii. How to give.(envelopes).
 - iv. Won't emphasize the money...we will emphasize God's provision and the vision.
- e. Eph 3:20 *Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think -- according to the power that works in you –*

I would ask today that you would consider what God has done in your life at HHBC and what He desires to do in people's lives...people that we have not even met yet. God will meet this need through each person here, as they listen and hear Him. You won't need me to harp on this. God will encourage you and guide you.

Prayer: Let's pray.

Invitation: This morning we are coming to our ministry time. Maybe you have shut God out of the ownership or the control portion of your life...and you have realized that today. You can give it back to Him today. You can ask Him to take control, to take ownership of your possessions, your family and even yourself. You can begin the first step of "walking by the Spirit"...that is listening to His guidance as you make decisions today. Come and respond, come for prayer. Let's stand.