



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship — 18 March 2018

Theme for the Year: "King Jesus Must Reign" (1 Corinthians 15:25)

| | |
|--|---|
| Prelude | <i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i> |
| Call to Worship | |
| *Opening Hymn | 19 - <i>I Sing the Mighty Power of God</i> |
| *Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i> | |
| Scripture Reading | Genesis 45:1-11; 50:15-21 |
| Hymn | 55 - <i>God Moves in a Mysterious Way</i> |
| Tithes & Offering | |
| **† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer | |
| Scripture Reading | Acts 23:12-35 |
| Hymn | TP 121 |
| Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer | |
| Sermon | "Failed Conspiracy and Triumphant Providence" |
| *Closing Hymn | 628 - <i>Art Thou Afraid?</i> |
| *Benediction & <i>Threefold Amen</i> | |
| Silent Prayer & Postlude | |
| Announcements | <i>*Congregation standing</i> |

†Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

††Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 10:00 am
at 47 Davis Road, Attadale, Western Australia

Website: www.covenantbpc.org.au

Contact: pastor@covenantbpc.org.au

God's Gracious Providence Extends to Times of Suffering

Definition

"Providence" is a word that can cause some confusion in the minds of people. What is it?

Importantly, we should not confuse it with provision. Provision speaks about what God provides for us, such as our daily needs.

But Providence speaks about God's rule and direction of his creation.

This is the definition provided by Westminster Confession of Faith V:1 - *"God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy."*

God Rules Everything

Drawing from the definition, we understand that having created the world, God didn't leave it alone. He continued to care for it and made sure things went according to his plan.

God is in control of everything - there is nothing outside of his sovereign will (Psalm 135:6).

Every act by every created being and every interaction that happens is under his control - from the smallest to largest (Matthew 10:29-31).

A good example of this is in the life of Joseph. Joseph was born when Jacob was in his evening years. This caused him to favor Joseph more than his other sons. This made the brothers jealous.

The brothers eventually tried to kill him; but at the right moment, slavers came, and he was sold to them.

When he was in Egypt, he found himself in prison, at the exact time as two influential men. They happened to dream and Joseph happened to be able to interpret their dreams.

Then the Pharaoh had dreams no one could interpret except Joseph. Joseph was made prime minister.

When his brothers came to the land for grain, it was before him they appeared. All this happened so that the family of Israel would be preserved.

These were not coincidences, but proof that God ruled and directed all things.

Human Freedom and Sin?

Does this mean that man is not free at all to make his own decisions? No, man is absolutely free according to his nature to make decisions. But those actions were decreed by God.

Yet God did not force people to make them - they made them based on their own desires. He is not the author of sin (1 John 1:5) nor tempts anyone to sin (James 1:13,17).

A good example of this was the life of Joseph. It was the brothers who left him for dead and subsequently sold him to slavery. Yet it was God's plan.

Even when Mrs Potiphar made the false accusations against him which imprisoned him, it was all in the plan of God.

Is it a surprise that in each of these cases, it was a garment that condemned him? That detail was also God's doing.

And when the butler forgot about Joseph, even after his dream was interpreted correctly, it was all in the plan of God.

But one thing was certain, God never caused them to sin. Yet their works were determined and governed by God.

This was clearly seen in Joseph's words to his brothers in Genesis 50:20 - *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."*

God meant the evil of his brothers for good in order to bring his decrees to

pass. Even *"the wrath of man shall praise [Him]"* (Psalm 76:10).

God directs people to do his will without forcing them or causing the sins they commit.

Our Suffering Is In His Control

Sometimes, God's people will go through great difficulty - suffering.

We learn that these things are not outside of God's control. Rather, God does often leave, for a season, his own children to various trials.

The purpose of this is to, among other things, help them to discover the deceitfulness of their hearts - so that they might be humbled.

This was the case with Paul - God had to give him a thorn in the flesh so that he would not be proud.

And while he asked God to take it away 3 times, God told him simply to rely on His sufficient grace (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

And it is also to draw them closer to himself - to help them to be more dependent on him.

For Joseph, after he interpreted the butler's dream, he was forgotten and was left in prison for a good 2 more years. This surely would have caused Joseph to cry out to God.

It is important to know that God's providence does not only shine when good things happen to us.

We are apt to say when things turn out for good that "it was so providential!" However, do we say that about the bad things in our lives?

William Cowper, the hymn writer, wrote:

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,

But trust Him for His grace;

Behind a frowning providence

He hides a smiling face.

There is such a thing as a frowning providence. And we ought never to interpret our suffering in life by our feeble and sinful emotions.

Rather, we are to trust in God's grace - and to believe that despite the negative turn of events in God's providence, there is a smiling face behind it.

Through these occasions, our trials are a form of fatherly chastisement. Or through them, God uncovers our lack of faith in him. This is why all things work to the good of them that love God.

When we know how God even led Christ to the cross, according to his providence, we become emboldened and steeled to live for Christ during our own suffering, because there must be good at the end of it, even when we don't understand.

It may be that you are undergoing a great trial. Discipline your heart to see God's providence and to trust in him.

~ Pastor



Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Worship Service Roster

| Service | This Week (18.3.18) | Next Week (25.3.18) |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Speaker | Mark Chen | Mark Chen |
| Worship Leader | Mark Chen | Jimmy Orchard |
| Pianist | Eugene Lim | Merilyn Woo |
| Welcomers | Ian & Merrill Read | Josephine Austin & Wendy Gong |
| Offering Stewards | David Lim*, Ken Chong* Micah Chiang, Steven Lim | John Tan*, Johnny Orchard Kim Leow, Chris Budiman |
| Ushers | Jerome Ng, Jemima Ng | Putri Harapan, Joyce Ng |
| Kitchen Duties | Nancy Lim*, Jackie Hong Debbie Blake | Aliza Chiu*, Lydia Orchard Julian Poon |
| PA Duty | Ken Hong | Joel Chua |
| Prayer Meeting | 23 March 2018 | 30 March 2018 |
| Facilitator | Mark Chen | Mark Chen |
| Pianist | Nancy Lim | Ian Tay |

Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshippers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. Next week's message: "A Clear Conscience before God and Man" (Acts 24:1-27).
3. Next week's Junior Worship message: "Are You Being a Witness for Jesus?" (Acts 1:1-11). Speaker: Jacob Woo.
4. Final Reminder for Bible Conference 2018. Dates: 23-26 April 2018. Speaker: Pastor Allen Beardmore. Venue: Hotel Lord Forrest, Bunbury. Please register with Ken Chong or Ken Hong if you wish to attend, and make payment. Electronic payment option - CBPC General Fund: BSB: 036-031, Acct: 3 1 6 9 4 2, Ref: BC(Surname)(Initial).
5. Visitation this week: David Pang and family by Pastor Mark Chen, Deacon Johnson Lim, and Deacon Vincent Chiu.

Appointments for the Week

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| WED 10:00 am | Craft Group |
| FRI 7:30 pm | CBI & Prayer Meeting |
| SAT 4:30 pm | JF & TF |
| 7:30 pm | Ladies' Bible Study |
| SUN 9:00 am | Sunday School |
| 10:00 am | Worship Service |

Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance

General Fund - \$3,570.40 (*DD - \$200.00, #777 - \$6.00). Missions Fund - \$280.00 (*DD - \$100.00). Building Fund - \$300.00 (*DD - \$300.00).
 Total Tithes & Offering - \$4,150.40.
 Attendance - 154.
 *DD: direct deposit

Building Fund to Date & Bank Account Details

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Available Building Fund | \$86,740.90 | General Fund: | |
| Last Week's Collection | \$300.00 | BSB: 036-031 | A/C: 316942 |
| Total | \$87,040.90 | Missions Fund: | |
| Outstanding Loan | - \$380,000.00 | BSB: 036-031 | A/C: 316950 |
| Amount Still Needed | \$292,959.10 | Building Fund: | |
| | | BSB: 036-031 | A/C: 316969 |

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.
 Deacons: **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682. **Jacob Woo** 0421 212 206. **Vincent Chiu** 0417 929 149.

Failed Conspiracy and Triumphant Providence

Acts 23:12-35

As believers in Christ, we trust that God watches over us. And when good things happen, falling into place at the right moment, we can proclaim God's providence. However, suffering is also in God's providence. God rules - and nothing is outside his will - including our pain.

1. The Threat of Conspiracy in the Name of God
 - a. Their hatred
 - b. Their zeal
 - c. Their dishonesty
 - d. Their ambition
2. The Provision of Help by a Sovereign God
 - a. From small people
 - b. From obscure connections
 - c. From mortal enemies
3. The Triumph of a Providential God
 - a. Providence displayed
 - b. Paul acquitted
 - c. Priest cornered

We have all experienced the providential goodness of God. But what about his providence in our suffering? Paul was delivered, but he too would suffer and die. The times of suffering are for the purpose of witness - as it was for Christ and Paul - it is for us. Suffering produces endurance as well as purity if we go through it.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How have you seen God's providence in your life in seemingly coincidental and timely events? How does this help you glorify God?
2. Why is it that Christians may not like to think that God's providence extends even to our dark sufferings? Why might we try to escape some types of trials when they can be good in shaping our endurance and purity?