

11<sup>th</sup> Sun. after Pent.  
August 28, 2011

God Will Provide

Pastor Michael Ewart  
Genesis 41:41-49

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The message today is called simply, “God will provide.” Last week we talked about misplaced trust. We tend to rely on our earthly resources to get us through troubles instead of relying on God. Today we’re going to talk about a similar but different problem... we don’t rely on money, or anything else for that matter. We simply lose hope. We despair. I won’t have enough. I’m not going to make it. I can’t do it. It’s not going to work out. This is going to turn out bad. These are things we say when we doubt that God will provide. It’s not that our trust is misplaced. It’s that our trust is not there at all. We’re thinking God won’t do it!

To help us understand and believe that no matter what we’re dealing with, no matter what the situation or circumstances that we face, God will indeed provide, we will look at three stories that will convince us.

You know how in the movies, sometimes they start at the end or near the end, then they do a flashback for most the movie to explain how things ended up that way? We’re going to try that approach today. The main story of the three is the story of Joseph. Our text is Genesis 41:41-49. Let’s listen, do a flashback, and see how God provides.

**Genesis 41:41-49 So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.**

Just like in the movies, hearing this “ending” brings up a ton of questions. How did a young 30 year old foreigner become the prime minister of Egypt, second only to pharaoh, during a time when God was providing year after year of bumper crops? This privileged, elite young man was named Joseph. And God is clearly providing! So what’s his story? Most of you are familiar with it, but like all great stories it’s worth repeating!

Joseph was the 11<sup>th</sup> son of his father, Jacob. He was the most-loved son. Other sons jealous. One day, coming out to check on them. They decide to kill him. Then on second thought

throw him in a dry well. Traders come by, and they sell him. They lie to their father. Joseph is gone.

The Lord provides? I wonder if Joseph was asking that question. It didn't seem like it at the time. He was taken to Egypt where he became slave to Potiphar. Trusted slave. Placed in charge of all. Mrs. P. took notice of Joseph, though and made advances, which he always refused. One day she got him alone and tried to force him to be with her. He fled, leaving his cloak behind. She accused him of trying to rape her. He's thrown into prison.

The Lord provides? I wonder if Joseph was asking that question. Especially after he remained in prison two full years, you have to wonder if he asked the question. Why did the Lord not provide for his faithful servant? Joseph continued to trust and serve faithfully. Put in charge of other prisoners.

But then the Pharaoh had a dream. No one could interpret. Joseph could. There would be seven years of bounty. Seven years of terrible famine. Must prepare! Pharaoh agrees and puts Joseph in charge. Now we're up to the "present"... to the reading we heard earlier. Joseph is second most powerful. All bow before him. He is provided for richly. And because of Joseph's wisdom and planning, God provides for many others as well.

In fact, God provides for Joseph's family through Joseph too. They come to Egypt because they heard it was the only place to buy grain. Joseph is reunited with his family. They survive the famine and get to live in Egypt in a good place. **God will provide.**

It was a rocky road along the way. There were times in this journey when it seemed like maybe God wasn't providing. But he did! Trust God will provide.

Second story. Again, we'll pick this one up at the point where it's obvious God is providing. It was early one Sunday morning when suddenly the large heavy stone covering a tomb just outside of Jerusalem gets blown away from the entrance. A man, shining brightly, walks out of the tomb. There are healed nail marks in his hands and side, and gaping wound in his side is healed too. The man who was dead is alive and well. It is Jesus, the Son of God!

Flashback: The nails are pounded into Jesus' hands and his feet. He is hung on the cross. He is mocked and ridiculed. During the day it suddenly becomes dark like night. Jesus cries out from the cross. My God, My God! Why have you forsaken me!

The Lord provides? This is his own Son! He trusted and followed his Father perfectly for 33 years. He had done no wrong. He had been falsely accused. And now he hung on a cross like a common criminal. He had been flogged within an inch of his life. He was bloody and bruised. God provides? Really? It doesn't look that way! This man is the Son of God? Why is his father not helping him? Not providing for his very evident needs!

Jesus was on that cross so that God could provide something for you and for me. For our doubts that God won't provide and for every other sin too, Jesus was on that cross taking the blame for us, taking the punishment for us, enduring the pain for us, being isolated from the Father for us. Jesus bought in to this plan. He had his out at the Garden of Gethsemane. But he submitted to the Father's will. He was all in.

Jesus accomplished our salvation. He cried out at the cross, It is finished! And it was. Our guilt atoned for and gone forever. When Jesus burst out of his three day prison that was the grave, certainly God was providing for his Son. But more amazing, we receive the proof that God had provided for you and for me. He had provided the unconditional pardon we needed for our capital crimes. For our treasonous rebellion against our creation, we needed amnesty, freedom and release. And Jesus accomplished it. He provided for our greatest need.

One more story, I'll keep it short. This one is your story. Again, we'll start with the good part. You stand at the gates of heaven. And your heavenly Father is smiling at you. He gives you a warm embrace and lead you into eternal paradise. Your breath is taken away by the beauty, and you know you are really home, and that you will now enjoy life like you've never known it before.

Flashback: The car breaks down: repair bill \$900. And/or one of your kids trips and falls. Arm is broken, but fixable: Cost \$1,000. God will provide? I'm not sure I'm seeing it!

You and your spouse get into a big fight. The "D" word is spoken. How did things get to this point! How will this all work out. Will God really provide?

The boss calls you in. The work just isn't there. He tells you he's letting you go. Will God really provide?

The doctor comes in with bad news. It's cancer. It's not the good kind. Your mind races and you complete miss everything the doctor says about the options you have. Will God really provide?

You hear some noise in the house at 3am. Your heart races and you are instantly awake when you realize someone has broken in. You call 911 and for 4 agonizing minutes, you wait until sirens are heard in the distance. The thief races out with many of your valuable in hand. He gets away. Is God really providing?

You really messed up this time. You were tempted and you caved. It's a grave and serious sin. You are cut to the heart. Surely God doesn't provide!

But God reminds you: **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

You struggle through this world of sin and evil and you trust in God's promise to provide. You cling to God's Son knowing what he's done for you on the cross. When the day comes and you breathe your last, you find your self at the gates of heaven. And sure enough your heavenly Father is there smiling at you. Warm embrace and just like that, you're in paradise. And you shake your head a bit wondering why you ever doubted. God really did provide. Now it's all so clear. God did provide.

Flashback to right now. Whatever you're facing, whatever your heartache, whatever your current circumstance. Dear Christian, listen, know and believe: God WILL provide. Amen.