



Pastor Nick Bergquist • God's Providential Purpose • March 21, 2021

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. (Psalm 139:1-3)
As fully-known and fully-loved followers of Christ, we know that God has a constant awareness of every aspect of our lives. Why is it important to know that God "has us" in everything that we experience in life, especially as He prepares us for the purpose that He wants us to complete on earth?

Providence of Place – *"When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it." (John 18:1)* **God uses every minute of our walk with Him. The good, the bad and the ugly. We may stray or bounce from side-to-side but He determines our destinations in life. All of us can look at the journey we have made in life and can understand why He brings us to certain places. Where are you in your journey with God during this Lent/Easter season? Are you being sensitive to hear His voice, perhaps showing you the place He wants you to live, serve and grow?**

Providence of Plan – *"Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, 'Who is it you want?'" (John 18:2-4).* **Jesus executes the plan of His Father to perfection. Notice that He makes the first move in confronting the mob that came to arrest Him. Jesus asks them "who they want (or seek)." God is the one that initiates. If there is something that seems dark or distant, troubling or discouraging in your life, think about God's providential care for you. Can we face OUR reality better, perhaps with more confidence, knowing that God himself will protect us in the will that He initiates?**

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the father. (John 13:1)

Providence of His Power and Position – *" 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am He,' Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground." (John 18:5-6).* **Be careful what you ask for. You may get it; but a great spiritual lesson may come right along with it. Jesus was willing to be humiliated, beaten, mocked, spit upon, flogged and crucified but He took one last chance to establish His credentials. The picture of the arrest mob stumbling backwards is not accurate. Think more of the reaction of a crash dummy when a car slams into a wall at 50 miles an hour. They were literally blown away by God's glory. Can you think of a time in your life when God's love and power literally blew "doors" open, blew obstacles out of your life at exactly the right time, obliterated a habit or hangup or simply caused you to repent and turn to Him?**

This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' (Exodus 3:14b)

Providence of Protection – “Again he asked them, ‘Who is it you want?’ And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ ‘I told you that I am he,’ Jesus answered. ‘If you are looking for me, then let these men go.’ ” (John 18:7-9)

...Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-the name you gave me-so that they may be one as we are one. (John 17:11b). **How is spiritual unity with God and man ultimately foundational in providing the protection that God wants us to enjoy from His hand?**

Providence of Purpose – “Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, ‘Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?’ ” (John 18:10-11). **The Trinity was hard at work during this time of trial and atonement. God’s purposes would not (and will not be denied). How are you being “light and salt “ in your world of friends, family and community this Easter? Is your first inclination in life to draw the “sword “ or to simply abide with the Lord while His plans are unfolding?**

For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep... (Acts 13:36)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)