

November 10 & 11, 2018



Providence

Ephesians 1:11 *God makes everything work out according to his plan.* (NLT)

God governs all things through His providence.

1. God controls the forces of nature.

Psalm 135:6 *The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.*

7 *He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.*

2. God establishes the boundaries of nations.

Acts 17:26 *From one man (God) made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him . . .*

3. God controls the outcome of elections.

Psalm 75:6 *Promotion does not come from the east or the west or from the desert.*

7 *But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he lifts another up.*

Our Declaration of Independence ends:

“with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.”

Providence governs in the affairs of nations.

1. God replaced the Babylonians with the Persians.

Isaiah 45:1 *This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:*

2 *I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron.*

3 *I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.*

4 *For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me.*

2. God moved Cyrus to release the captives.

Isaiah 44:26 . . . *(I am the LORD) who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,' of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be built,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'*

27 *who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,' 28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of*

Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."

3. God placed Nehemiah as cupbearer.

Providence controls the king's decisions.

Nehemiah 1:11 O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

Nehemiah 2:8 . . . the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Artaxerxes granted Nehemiah

1. a leave of absence
2. a passport for safe passage
3. the repeal of a "stop work order"
4. a building permit to start work
5. the wood for the gates
6. a military escort

Providence guides His people's hearts.

Nehemiah 2:12 . . . I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem.

Providence grants success to His plans.

Nehemiah 2:20 I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success."

Nehemiah 4:15 When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.

Nehemiah 4:20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"

Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

Timeless Lessons

1. After every election, God is still King.
2. The good hand of God is on each of us.
3. God has something to put on your heart to do.

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker

1. Was follow the leader a game you enjoyed growing up, share why or why not?

Digging Deeper

1. Each week you have been challenged to Live it Out. Has God revealed something for you to restore or an area He

would like you to get more involved through this sermon series? If so, please share with the group.

2. During the Nehemiah series, each week has focused on a different “P.” Name as many as you can remember. Has one of the lessons been more impactful than another?
3. In your own words, how would you define Providence? What is the difference between Providence and a miracle?
4. Share with your group as many acts of providence from the life of Nehemiah as you remember. What about your own life, describe any acts of providence?
5. Ephesians 1:11 says, “...*God makes everything work out according to his plan.*” Are there events or happenings that cause you to doubt this statement? If so, identify what those things are.
6. What is your response when you hear someone say, “The Lord led me to do this or that.” Have you ever said those words? If so, how did you know it was the Lord leading you to do something?
7. Can you share in the last month, how you have seen the good hand of God upon you?

Live It Out

1. One timeless lesson shared was, God has something to put on your heart to do. Ask God to make clear what that is and identify your best next step. Come prepared to share next week with your group.