

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



The Puzzle Of God's Providence

Philippians 1:6

Sunday, September 29, 2019

Think of your life as a puzzle piece. You are shaped with your own individuality, thoughts, preferences, gifts, and talents. Now think of God taking you and carefully, painstakingly fitting you together properly with every other life on earth to form the bigger picture of your destiny and His great purpose.

Though your life may at times feel and look like a jumble - a puzzle of a mess - God wants to assure you that **"God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."** (Philippians 1:6 NLT)

CONNECTING THE PUZZLE PIECES

It would seem foolish to cast the box aside when working on a puzzle, yet some people actually do it. This is unfortunate, because the picture is a valuable resource. It gives important clues such as colors, patterns, physical objects, etc., to guide toward completion.

In a very interesting way, we all are sitting in the box and cannot always see or understand what the Lord is after as He works in our lives, but He has given us something that will help us if we allow it to.

He has graciously given us His Word. It gives us the big picture – the thing that He is driving toward.

Ephesians 1:10

And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. NLT

Of course, Providence does not give us the specifics about everything He is doing in our lives, but one thing is still clear – He is actively at work "24/7" using our thoughts, attitudes, actions, and decisions (every part of who we are) – to bring glory to Himself and blessing to us!

PROVIDENCE AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST

God is sovereign, which means that He does whatever makes Him happy, and He is perfectly right in doing so.

What is stunning about His providential choice is that He took 100% of Himself and took on the limitations of man, placing the second person of Himself into the hands of a couple of Jewish teenagers. He became helpless and defenseless in order to meet the requirements for saving the whole world from sin and the entire creation from its effects.

Why, in God's name, would He do such a thing?

Paul, being blown away by this, exclaimed in wonderment in **Romans 11:33**, "**O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!**"

In the course of time, the Lord sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and instructed him to move his wife and child to Egypt.

Can you hear the puzzlement of Joseph's mind when he must have ask himself how would he, a young man, be able to follow the Lord's instructions and sustain his family in a foreign country? Why cross (or go around) the Red Sea and hide from Herod in a country that at the very least would not be welcoming?

Nevertheless, God gives him this strange instruction, and he and Mary obey. And with perfect timing, strangers from a far country just show up!

Matthew 2:11

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: / and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

God was at work behind the scenes reminding them through the gifts who Jesus was, what He had come to do, and what it would cost Him! God was also miraculously providing valuable assets that would be used by this family as provision.

What about Herod anyway? Isn't God all powerful? Isn't God in complete control of the world? Did you ever wonder why the Almighty God chose to move Joseph to Egypt when He could have just killed Herod?

Matthew 2:15

and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." ESV

This was fulfillment of a prophecy through **Hosea 11:1** - **"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son."**

Don't even try to figure out how God is going to solve your dilemma. He has already provided!

All Joseph knew was that the Savior of the world had been in Mary's belly. He is inside your belly, too!