

Weekly Update

November 20, 2024

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

This November, as we've been learning in the book of Ruth, we have talked a lot about God's providence. But what exactly is providence; and why does this doctrine matter to us in our everyday lives? Wanna go a little deep into some theology today?

"Providence" is the word followers of Jesus use to talk about the way God works in the world. It refers to God's sometimes hidden - but intentional - direction and guidance in shaping events for His perfect purposes. Theologian Brad East says: "Providence begins and ends with God, his identity and activity. God alone is maker, sustainer, and savior. 'For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens' (Ps. 96:5). Loving what he has made, God rules wisely over his creation. As part of his rule, he orders all things to their final end in himself."

But, like it did for the characters in the book of Ruth, the doctrine of divine providence raises many questions. It can make us wonder if God determines the small minutiae of our lives. Is God really in charge of every seemingly insignificant detail? Did God choose the socks I put on this morning? Did God decide that car was going to cut me off in traffic? Did God make my coffee taste weird? Is God in charge of the World Series? What about little league games?

Or worse, the doctrine of providence can make us wonder about the big things. Does this teaching imply that God chose that my cousin would die as a teenager in a car accident? Does providence mean God wanted people we love to wrestle through terrible illnesses and injuries? Did God give a stamp of approval when 227,000 people died in the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean?

Theologians have wrestled through these questions for thousands of years. And we won't solve it in one weekly update article. But here are some things to consider:

First, as followers of Jesus, we hold two truths together. 1) that God's providence is all-encompassing – nothing escapes His notice, and nothing happens that He does not cause OR allow. And because God is holy, He can never be the author of evil. Also: 2) humans sin. We go against God's will, turn from His love and frequently embrace evil. When we see both of these together, we conclude that God sometimes permits rebellion, brokenness and evil. But that brokenness is not ULTIMATE! Evil will never have the last word, God has not abandoned us and is working all things in accordance with His good and final purposes.

Second, the truth is that we rarely know the significance of events that happen to us, good or bad! We may never understand what God is planning through the ups and downs of life because God's thoughts are beyond our thoughts and his ways beyond our ways (Is. 55:9). But God CAN BE TRUSTED! We never know how God may work out the circumstances of our lives to bring His purposes about. We are only human, we are creatures and we don't get to know WHY God does things. But we get to know WHO He is. He is holy, loving, good, kind and completely sovereign – His providence means we can trust His character, even when our circumstances are inscrutable.

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THERE'S STILL TIME to order a poinsettia. Call or email the church office by Friday, November 22 and let us know your color preference. The color options are red, white, pink, marble or speckled. The cost is \$7 for a 4 ½ inch pot. The flowers will be displayed December 22 and Christmas Eve. You can take yours home following the Christmas Eve service.



LET'S DECORATE!

We will be decorating the church for Christmas this Sunday, November 24. There will be no 2nd Hour classes/discussion groups.

The main areas for decorating include the sanctuary, the Gallery, the hall way and the Fellowship Hall. If we split into groups we can have it all looking Christmas-y in no time. We hope you will stay and join us. December 1 is the First Sunday in Advent.



Ladies! On Friday, December 6 let's gather together at the church at 6:30 p.m. Bring a salad or dessert and a wrapped Christmas item to exchange.

Christmas Eve Service
December 24 8:00 p.m.
Who can you invite to
this special service?
Tell your friends,
your neighbors,
Your family .
Everyone is welcome.

PRAYER

Please keep these people/situations in your prayers.

The prayer needs listed in **BOLD** are new to the list.

Praises

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Military Service:

- Shannah Swinehart - Army National Guard
- Christa Nelson - Navy
- Rusty King - Army
- Ryan Chabak - stationed in Alaska
- Isaiah Styer - stationed at Camp Lejeune in NC
- Gaven Bee - stationed in Dayton, OH

Prayer Needs

- All victims of Hurricanes Helene & Milton

Health Concerns:

- **Roger Stroud continued healing**
- Jenny Miller's Uncle Joe
- Rachel - healing
- Tanya Chupp - continued healing
- Dale & Tonya
- Edna Wade's sister - back pain
- Julie - health concerns
- Paula Shrader - broken hip
- Pastor Albert continued healing from accident
- Tiana - prayers for her and baby
- Wendy Scott - health concerns
- Jane Heilman

Battling Cancer

- **Susan Halliday - battling cancer**
- Judy Pinnick - colon cancer
- Janet Lee - lung cancer diagnosis
- Mary Hardesty - entering hospice
- Waldo - cont'd prayers for remainder of chemo
- Landon Sommers - Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- David
- Keylee - leukemia
- Dale James

Condolences

- The family of Tim Petrie

The Deacons encourage you to send cards or notes of encouragement to those in the church family experiencing prayer needs.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (continued from page 1)

So, what does the doctrine of providence mean for us in everyday living? First it means that wisdom is to stop asking "why" and to start asking "who". We don't know why things happen, but if we know who God is (good, holy, loving, faithful), and who we are (redeemed, adopted, forgiven, children of God) we can TRUST without knowing all the whys. It also means that wisdom is to persevere. To keep going even when God has allowed hard or difficult things, knowing that God is in control, and He will never leave us or forsake us.

I think providence is the key doctrine to understanding the book of Ruth, and it is a key doctrine to understand our lives; especially when they are hard. "Providence, in short, makes a promise. It says that human history may sometimes seem like one long crucifixion, but at the end of it lies an empty tomb. Confidence in providence thus begets perseverance. It takes God at his word no matter how dark life becomes."

East, Brad, "The Consolation of Providence" – Christianity Today, Nov/Dec. 2024. This article has a lot more to offer on the topic of God's providence – I recommend the read!
https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/11/the-consolation-of-providence/?utm_medium=widgetsocial



November 22 - Faye Graham
November 22 - Ea Kidd
November 22 - Zach Stevenson
November 27 - Molly Parrot

VOLUNTEERS FOR NOVEMBER 24

Greeters	Janine Schlauch Tanya Chupp
Ushers	Cody Daugherty & Adam Swinehart
Café	Connie Herman
Nursery (Worship)	Kim Morrow
Nursery (2nd Hour)	Help us decorate!
Kidz Jam	Sherri Machamer
Kids 2nd Hour	Kids & parents help decorate
Elder Assist	Claudia Ward
Safety Team	Angie Chapman

Congregational Meeting There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday Dec. 8 following the worship service. The purpose of the meeting is to elect officers for 2025.

Office closed The church office will be closed Thursday November 28 and Friday November 29 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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Our Deacon Of the Week!

Jim Kinney

Favorites

FOOD: Lobster/Crab Cakes

COLOR: Green

BIBLE CHARACTER: Paul

Hobbies

Beekeeping, gardening, sailing, camping

Free Day Fun

Go cycling on Rails to Trails

Overseas Vacay

Switzerland

Something Interesting

I used to crew on the Tall Ship, Niagara!

Quick Hits

Mountains or Beach
Chocolate or Vanilla

Baseball or Football
Mexican Food or Chinese Food
Late Nights or Early Mornings