



THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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Pulpit Evangelist
Matthew Jones,
Personal Evangelist
Garrett Olney, Youth
Hatton Allen, Youth

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 A.M.
Afternoon Worship..... 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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The Lord Will Provide

Keith Kasarjian

One of the greatest statements in the Bible is found in Genesis 22. In verses 8 and 14, we read that “God [The Lord] will provide” (NKJV). To have a better grasp on all the ramifications of that statement, we must understand the context that produced such an explicit declaration of faith.

God had told Abraham to go to Mount Moriah and sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-8). Not knowing that he was to be the sacrifice, Isaac asked his father, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (v. 7). Faithful Abraham replied to his son, “God [the Lord] will provide.” And so Abraham, Isaac and their helpers made the journey to Mount Moriah where, as he was instructed to do, Abraham built an altar, arranged firewood under it, and bound his beloved son as if he were a sacrificial lamb. Oh, the faith of Abraham.

Before the knife could fall, the Angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham and told him not to follow through with sacrificing his son, telling him instead to sacrifice the ram caught in the thicket. Out of gratitude, Abraham called the place “The-Lord-Will-Provide” (Genesis 22:14).

Indeed, the Lord did provide. He provided the sacrifice (Genesis 22:13) so that Isaac need not be the sacrifice. He provided future blessings for Abraham and his descendants (vv 17-18). And let’s not forget that He provided Isaac. Even if Isaac had been sacrificed, it could still be said that God provided. Notice, however, that God’s provision was conditional. It was contingent. The same is still true today.

The Lord Will Provide...

***When we put our faith in Him.** Abraham’s deep, abiding faith in the Almighty caused him to do the unthinkable. Only because he completely trusted God was he willing to sacrifice his son. We know that faith is an absolute necessity to please God (Hebrews 11:6), yet many times we find ourselves lacking in it. We worry about the future, our finances, our health and a million other things because we have not trusted the Lord to provide. Sometimes we want to say, “If He will provide, I will trust him” but all the while God is saying, “Trust me and I will provide.”

***When we obey Him.** Can you imagine the anxiety that Abraham faced the night before he was to leave for the mountain? He arose early (Genesis 22:3) to begin packing. I wonder if it was because he could not sleep. No doubt his pillow was soaked by the streams of tears that flowed from his eyes all through the night. Yet he went. Swallowing the lump in his throat, his shaking hand grasped the razor-sharp knife to kill his son. Why? Profoundly, because God told him to. This is the man who had also given up his home (12:1) and his son Ishmael (21:10-12) for the same reason—to obey God. How far would you go to obey God?

When we put Him first. Abraham put God ahead of feelings, family, emotion and human reasoning. There is no doubt as to who was at the top of his priority list. God has promised to provide our needs when we put Him first (Matthew 6:25-33); we simply need to test (Malachi 3:10) to see that He keeps His promises.

What a great man was Abraham. What a great example he is for us. We serve a living, loving, and providing God, and so we need not worry about the future nor fear man nor live without assurance. If I have put my complete faith in God, have wholly obeyed Him, and have put Him first in my life, then I too can say, “The Lord will provide.”

(Gospel Advocate, November 2004)

The Sheep And The Shepherd

(Psalm 23)

Josh McCrary

In times gone by the children would eat separate from the parents. Johnny happened to be the only child when the parents had guests over for dinner and he was not happy about having to sit alone. After everyone fixed their plates and were seated, Dad asked Johnny to say the blessing. Johnny prayed while upset, and said: "Dear Lord, thank you for preparing this table in the presence of mine enemies."

The God we serve is a good God! He takes care of His children and protects them from their enemies. David wrote about the relationship that God shares with His children and makes reference to the sheep and shepherd relationship. The Shepherd always takes care of and protects the sheep. David wrote:

The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever: (Psalm 23:1-6.)

The writer would like to notice three points in this article from Psalm 23:1-6. The three points under consideration in this article are as follows: (1) CARE, (2) COMFORT, (3) and COMPLETENESS. The writer would like for the reader to notice the relationship that God desires to have with His creation, and also the benefits of sharing this wonderful relationship with God.

First notice the CARE that God gives. The text reads as follows: "**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake...**" God has always promised those who seek Him that He would bless their lives (Exodus 20:6, Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Matthew 6:33). David also wrote: "**For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly**" (Psalm 84:11).

An orator and a farmer each stood before an audience and read Psalm twenty-three. The audience clapped for the orator, but when the farmer read the

people wept. Why such a different reaction of the two? The orator knew the Psalm, but the farmer knew the Shepherd. DO you know the Shepherd today?

Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd: "**I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep have I which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd**" (John 10:14-16). Truly, the best care comes from God and His Son. Why not be right with God and have need of nothing? Many today sacrifice a relationship with God for pleasure and fast living. Will you make the Lord your Shepherd today?

Second, notice the COMFORT that God gives. The text reads as follows: "**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me...**" God is there to protect His sheep in their most vulnerable moment: death.

There is a dangerous valley in Palestine, south of Jericho, from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. It is a very narrow place through a mountain range. The sheep are led up to the grazing ground in summer and led down in the winter. 4 1/2 miles long only 10-12 feet wide at the bottom and drop offs 7-8 feet in places. If a sheep slips then the staff will save the life of the sheep. The rod was used to kill wild animals. David wrote about God protecting him with a rod and staff.

God specializes in comforting His sheep. Paul wrote: "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God**" (2 Cor. 1:3-4). Luke wrote about a rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, but the rich man died and was buried. The rich man could see Lazarus afar off while both were in eternity and the rich man desired that Lazarus would dip his finger in water and cool his tongue. Luke wrote: "**But Abraham said: son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thou good things and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented**" (Luke 16:25). The God of all comfort was comforting Lazarus in eternity. Will you be comforted in your death? Will God's rod and staff comfort you? I pray that it will.

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Third, notice the COMPLETENESS God gives. The text reads as follows: **Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever...**" The Shepherd goes above and beyond to make sure the needs of the sheep are met. As the sheep come in for the night the Shepherd has a bucket of water and a jar of oil. He examines each sheep individually for briars in their ears and lips and legs, also for weeping eyes from dust and scratches. He anoints each wound with oil and gives them water to drink and the good Shepherd stays with them all night.

Jesus described Himself as a Shepherd who COMPLETES the needs of the sheep: **"Verily, Verily I say unto you: I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep"** (John 10:7-10).

Are you complete today? The only place to be spiritually complete is in Christ Jesus. Paul wrote: **"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom ye are also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"** (Colossians 2:10-12). May all readers everywhere obey God and put Christ on in baptism (Galatians 3:27) and find all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). I pray that all of His sheep will continue in His CARE, His COMFORT, and His COMPLETENESS.

(Josh McCrary is a 2007 graduate of Memphis School of Preaching. He presently serves as the evangelist of the Ripley, MS Church of Christ. Married to the former Moriah Ray, they have four children. Josh is the son of Connie Streiber and the grandson of Cecil and Becky Sowell, all members of Forest Hill.)

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