

Thanking God for His Generous Provisions

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Preacher: Charlie Davidson

[0:00] Good morning. I'm Charlie Davidson and filling in this morning during Revco's vacation period.

! We're going to read from 1 Chronicles 29, verses 10-19.! It said,
Let's pray.

Father, we give you the praise and the honor and the glory as we've done now in song, as we've done in prayer. Father, we give it to you because you are worthy to receive all praise and honor and glory.

And from your hand we have received all that we have, whether that is in our material wealth, whether that is in health, whether that is in some form of status or service in your kingdom.

[2:47] You are the one who has provided and given it all freely. Help us to appreciate it. Help us to reflect upon your word today. Amen.

Amen.

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may may may I mean, it's very common, I think, especially in our Western society and in our imagination.

You know, the idea of maybe the poor immigrant who came into the United States and over a period of years working and effort has grown a business.

And we all think that's great, that's wonderful, you know. We tend to elevate rich people, wealthy people in our minds, that somehow they're cut above everyone else.

[4:34] But all of this idea, I think, all of this idea of being a self-made person really goes back to a lie. It goes back to the Garden of Eden.

When Satan came and told Eve, you know, hey, did God really say you shouldn't eat of every fruit, every tree? And she said, well, there was just that one, you know.

But he says, well, because God knows that when you eat of it, you're going to become like Him, knowing good and evil. You will become God, in other words. You will become your own God.

And you will be able to determine your present and your future for yourself. But behind that lie, there lies another lie.

Now, that's a lot of lies, isn't it? So, behind that lie is another lie, a more insidious lie, a more, if you will, a deeper lie that says, really is saying this, God is selfish, He's stingy, and He's ungenerous.

[5:41] He doesn't want you to take care of yourself. He doesn't, no, He doesn't want to provide for you. And so, the idea then, in the deception is, well, if God's not going to provide for me, then I've got to do it for myself.

And so, I will become God. And of course, this impacts us, impacts every human being on this earth, always has since that time. In our three basic areas of life, our spiritual life, in our material, our finances, our possessions, our health, and then also in our social life, in areas of status and

reputation, of whatever level of leadership we have in the community.

So, thinking of an example of this, I thought of Cain and Abel. Okay, so Abel, God receives Abel's sacrifice, and somehow He communicates to Cain that his sacrifice is not acceptable.

And the New Testament tells us it's because of faith. Cain did not offer his sacrifice in faith. But what was the response of Cain? He's mad at God, but what does he do?

He kills his brother. Now, why is he taking it out on his brother? But you see how this impacts. I can't have my way.

[7:10] God's not generous to me. I'm mad at my brother, because I'm really mad at God. And so, I think you can see, because we are holistic people, holistic beings, we can't really separate any of these three areas, one from another.

I think in other ways, that we can observe this same attitude, in society in general, would be in several ways, but one, in the non-religious circles, that is, those that might say they are atheists, or agnostics, or they're secular humanists, they would definitely see themselves as the determiner of their future, of their fate.

It's what I'm going to do. It's what I will achieve for myself. But then, also, in religious circles, but I'm thinking here of non-Christian religious circles, religions in general, there's that general belief that there's a spiritual world.

world. And, I have to control that spiritual world in order to control my future. So, this involves, of course, in the time of the Old and New Testaments, the belief in many gods who have to be appeased and appealed to.

In modern times, even in our day, in many cultures around the world, there's a strong, strong belief that there are good and evil spirits. And that these spirits can be manipulated.

[8:45] People resort to witchcraft. And witchcraft is nothing more than rituals and words that ultimately cause the spirit world to react the way I want it to.

So, if I use the right words, if I use the right rituals, if I make the right sacrifices, they will respond and they will bless me. But again, it's the me, the human.

I'm controlling my future. I'm controlling my present. And then I think even in Christianity, sometimes the same insidious idea comes through.

And I know we've all heard this phrase, God helps those who help themselves. Right? I was talking with Bruce Young yesterday. Yeah, some people really believe that's in the Bible.

They do. And it's sort of deeply ingrained. I mean, we think, well, if I don't make any effort, can God really bless me?

[9:54] Can, you know, certainly I've got to do something. But the problem with that statement, that God helps those who help themselves, is simply this. It presumes that you or I are controlling God.

Okay? If I do my part, then God's obligated to do His part. And that's a falsehood. Amen. The other way of saying it would be this, God is not willing to do anything for me until I do something.

Now, certainly, we need to work, we have to work, we have to study, we have to take care of ourselves and our health, etc. But, it's not that God helps those who help themselves.

It's all part of this, goes back to this lie that God really is not generous. God really wants to withhold. In the New Testament, in Romans 1.21, Paul writes this, For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[11:14] They did not honor Him as God and they did not give thanks. Why?

Because of the believing the lie. God is really not generous. God is not for me. God is not providing. God is withholding from me so I will not honor Him and I will not give Him thanks.

This, of course, is part of our underlying rebellion that we were born into because of Adam and Eve. And it does affect us. It affects all of us.

But is there a cure for this malady? Is there a cure for this malady that's so deeply ingrained in our hearts? Can we recognize that that perhaps is our attitude when we become discouraged or even angry when things are not working out?

They're not working out the way we wanted them to? When they haven't gone our way? And can we also recognize it when maybe we've achieved a lot?

[12:28] Maybe we have gained a great deal of status in society or in the church. Or we've accumulated a great, well, a fairly great amount of wealth.

I think in other ways that this plays out and think about this, just to illustrate this, this idea that's so deeply embedded in our psyche that it comes masquerading in other ways.

For instance, anxiety about the future. I mean, we all face anxiety, don't we? We all feel anxious at times. But what are we saying?

Why are we anxious? Because we don't believe God can take care of us. We don't believe that God can provide. Matthew 6, Jesus, don't be anxious about what you're going to wear, about what you're going to eat, about this or that or the other.

Because your Father in Heaven, He provides. That more obvious maybe is where I'll be our boasting and pride about our accomplishments.

[13:34] Look what I've done. Look how much I have done. Look how great I am. Look how smart I am. Boasting and pride.

Having that better than I, I'm a better than you attitude. And I think this ultimately shows up too in racism and prejudices that we have against other people.

So racism, my race is better than yours. My people are better than yours. My history is better than yours. Prejudices about what other people do or how they dress or how they talk.

I know in the South, you see things like this on TV occasionally, but you know, people with a real strong Southern accent are seen as sort of being ignorant by other people from other parts of the United States.

But prejudices. And then envy and jealousy. Cain and Abel. Cain, I'm jealous. I'm envious of my brother. And we all face these things, don't we?

[14:45] But I do think that this passage in 1 Chronicles then provides us with a clear direction of how we can find a remedy or see a remedy to this malady of believing a lie and how it can confront and correct our hearts.

So first of all, we're going to look just briefly at verses 10-11. It says that David blessed the Lord. He blesses the Lord. And this idea here of blessing God is to praise Him.

It's to commend His attributes, to extol His person and His virtues. And these are some of the things that David lists as reasons that he blesses the Lord.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all.

Greatness, first of all, greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty belong to God. There's no equal. He has no peer. He's greater than every other, well, He's greater than anything because He's the Creator.

[16:07] And there is no created being, no created object that can be as equal. So all the greatness and power and glory and victory and majesty belong to Him.

Revelation 4, 11, another parallel passage that we're all familiar with where He's praising the Lord, praising the God, who created all things.

And then the second thing that He reminds us of in this extolling God, He says that God owns everything. Yours, all that is in heaven and in the earth is yours.

All of the created universe belongs to God. God, I mean, it's just mind-blowing, isn't it, to think about, first of all, the size of what we, what we at least humanly can see, even with the best telescopes of the universe, that's truly immense in scope, down to the smallest plant, insect, animal, down to the atom.

And you know, it's interesting as astronomers and as physicists studying the physical universe, no matter how far down they go in the atom, they just keep finding smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller particles.

[17:40] There seems to be no end. In the same way with the universe, you go out and out and out, there seems to be no end. But God created all that.

He owns all that. It's His mind that came up with all this. It's not our smartness. We can't even figure it all out.

And then He is sovereign over all. He says, Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all. Yours is the kingdom. You are the head over all. And so we are called to bless the Lord God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, continually to bless Him.

Psalms 103, verses 1-2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Bless Him. To remember who He is is to bless Him. To remember what He has done for us as Christians through His Son, Jesus Christ, bringing us into a right relationship with Him.

[18 : 49] To remember that God has given the best that He could ever give, His own Son, the greatest gift. When God created Adam and Eve and they were in the garden, His purpose was to take care of them and to provide for them.

He placed them in a perfect world with abundant provisions. They lacked nothing, neither in the physical or in the spiritual realm, but they were deceived and they believed the lie that God was withholding from them the one thing that would really complete them.

and they believed this lie and therefore they lost a great deal. But God has not changed His desire. Even in their rebellion, His desire expressed to them and to us throughout the whole of the Scriptures is to bless and to care for.

So remember that God is pouring out His blessings upon all mankind and in particular upon you, upon us, upon the church. When you feel rejected and forgotten by God, when your best efforts have failed to produce the results that you had expected, when your anxieties or the anxieties of life seem to be overwhelming you, remember to bless the Lord because He has not changed.

He has given you in Christ every blessing. The greatest blessing is to know Him and to be in fellowship with Him. So bless the Lord.

[20 : 28] The second thing that David tells us in verses 12 through 16 is that everything comes from God. Both riches and honor come from you and you rule over all and in your hand are power and might and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

And now we thank you our God and praise your glorious name. But who am I and what is my people that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you and of your own have we given you.

For we are strangers before you and sojourners as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow and there is no abiding. O Lord our God all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.

now when David says that everything has come okay what constitutes everything?

First of all he mentions riches I think most logically here is material wealth possessions verse 14 David recognizes says all things come from you and of your own have we given freely and then in verse 16 all this abundance that you have provided for building you a house comes from your hand and is all your own.

[22 : 03] Every material possession whether it be great or maybe not so great in comparison to others comes from God.

It's his gift. gift. It's given freely generously and then honor. The other thing that constitutes everything is honor.

God gives honor verse 12 and in your hand are power and might and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all to make great and give strength to all.

So whatever recognition that you might have received in the past are receiving our hope to receive in the future from other people from society from in the church it's all from God.

God. I think David understood this very well personally. Remember who David was? He was the shepherd the youngest son probably not from a wealthy family king.

[23 : 12] And yet God bestowed his favor upon David and raised him up to become the king and really the I would say after Saul really the most important king for the nation of Israel and for their people.

But everything David accomplished whether it was defeating Goliath or becoming king and unifying the kingdom of defeating his enemies and the Lord's enemies the riches and the wealth that he accumulated they were all the result of God's provision.

David did not deserve any of that. In our small group we've been going through the part of 1 Samuel and sometimes David shines brilliantly if you will spiritually and then there's some times that David's not so sharp.

He's making some foolish decisions and of course we know of his ultimately his worst decision was with Bathsheba and Uriah.

So David was not worthy of anything that he received from God. It was all given freely. In the book of Daniel if you want to turn there you'll remember this story but Daniel chapter 4 verse 29 following we have the story of Nebuchadnezzar.

[24:48] This is one of those you know you just need to go and read every once in a while. So at the end of starting at verse 29 it says at the end of the days no sorry let me go back let me just give you the background okay remember Nebuchadnezzar he's already had this vision and Daniel interpreted the vision and told him you're going to be humbled before God unless you recognize that God rules.

So in verse 29 he says that at the end of 12 months he was walking around on the roof of his palace and he's looking out over the city of Babylon and he says to himself is this not is not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty and then God intervenes a voice comes and boom he's reduced to the level of a madman an animal if you almost it talks about him going out and eating grass like cattle but at the end of the in verse 34 at the end of the days at the end of that period seven years he says I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up my eyes to heaven and my reason returned to me and I blessed the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever for his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom endures from generation to generation all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand or say to him what have you done

Nebuchadnezzar had no grounds for boasting although he did and God humbled him to instruct us and in the end God would re-exalt him would re-raise him up and restore to him a right mind and he recognized this is God God God's sovereign he raises up he puts down so thinking about these then we also need to realize that every spiritual blessing that we have comes from God freely it's part of the riches of God's grace and power made known to his people 1st Corinthians 3 verses 21 through 23 Paul writes so let no one boast in men for all things are yours whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future all are yours and you are Christ and Christ is God's don't boast there's no boasting in the spiritual realm then in the chapter 4 to emphasize this point Paul writes for who sees anything different in you what do you have that you did not receive if if then you received it why do you boast as if you did not receive it oh yeah right what boasting can I make what boasting can you make in the spiritual realm in the physical realm everything you have has been given to you by God everything has been provided by God everything it's not given it's not given reluctantly by the Lord it's given generously freely so if we see these questions and think about them what do you have that you did not receive this will produce a deep humility and then

David closes this section in first chronicles by praying he prays for himself he prays for the people and he prays for Solomon just very briefly the hardness of our hearts is such that we really do continually need God to soften them with this truth we do need to pray we need to reflect and pray we need to think and pray we need to remember and pray and ask the Lord help us help me help me to understand whatever whatever I have wealth riches wisdom or don't have is still all a part of your wonderful plan your generous wonderful plan for my life so David acknowledges that God sees our innermost being and he understands what motivates us David here I don't think he's bragging in first chronicles but he says you know I I freely offered all this to you

[29:58] Lord for the future building of the temple so are we able to give freely second he didn't ask God that his grace would be in his people so that they would always manifest by their giving freely and generously that that would be a characteristic of their lives that their motivation would be prompted not to give for for self glory but to give because they know that God is providing for them and then he prays for his son Solomon that Solomon would walk in God's commandments bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me so thinking about these things of course what I've tried to really focus on here is God's generosity God's generosity to you and me continual persistent ongoing never ending what other adjective can we throw in there that

God is just he's giving he gives he gives free he's not in Spanish we have a word for person who's stingy and it's tacaño but there's another word too that's more of a slang but they use it this is your elbow your elbow okay but it's also used in terms of being codo is to be stingy tacaño give you some Spanish there okay God's not tacaño he's not codo he's generous let's give you another Spanish word he's generous he gives so freely continually and God's this flows out of God's grace and God's grace flows out of his being he's a life giving God even in our fallen state God gives freely to his creatures good things they do not deserve and the greatest of these is his son Jesus Christ what a wonderful wonderful truth God gives freely don't believe the lie so let's do away with this false idea that we become self-made people that somehow we achieve things on our own

power and might and effort strength and wisdom all of that all that strength and health and wisdom and abilities every ounce of it comes from the creator and in particular God through the Holy Spirit in the believer's life let us give thanks to God for his generous provisions in our lives for his protection and care let's reflect often on God's greatest gift his only begotten son I don't know how many of you remember the illustration from last Sunday's sermon anybody the last illustration about the

Iranian woman yeah alright I really like that story but he read it was I guess I don't some had been written about her or she wrote it herself but she was an Iranian doctor in Iran and well known well respected earning a good living and she somehow came across a Bible and read it and she realized this Bible is the truth she was very Islamic very committed to Islam and she converted she became a believer and then she had to become an exile with her family she lost everything humanly speaking she lost everything her wealth her status her importance but if you ask her according to the illustration if you ask her how did you give up so much she would look at you and say

I didn't give up anything I gained everything I gained the Lord Jesus Christ another example of this comes from Tim Keller in his book on counterfeit gods he relates this story that in the midst of the financial crisis in 2008 and 2009 he heard a man named Bill recount that three years before he had become a Christian and his ultimate security had shifted from his money to his relationship with God through Christ and he said if this economic meltdown had happened more than three years ago well I don't know how I would have faced it how I would have kept on going but today I can tell you honestly I've never been happier in my life so how about you are we looking for our security in what we have and who we are are we looking for it in

[35 : 31] Jesus Christ whether we face difficulties or whether we face great successes where is our true happiness found and can we recognize that God is providing us with everything we have let's pray father we ask that you again would eliminate illuminate our hearts and minds that we might continually remember this truth not to believe a lie that says you are stingy and kodo but that you are a generous creator sustainer and savior you have given us and do give us all that we need providing for us day by day we ask that you would strengthen us now in this that we might bless your name and give thanks to you forever and ever in the name of our lord jesus christ we ask amen because he has given us everything we give back to him with our hands with our feet with our lives with every breath with every heartbeat we offer him praise we offer him service we offer him our lives away away oh oh

I love you, Lord. With my hands and my life, I love you, Lord.
Because you have been precious for me. That's why I love you, Lord.
Because you have been precious for me. That's why I love you, Lord.
With my hands and my life, I love you, Lord.

[38 : 42] With my hands and my life, I love you, Lord.

Because you have been precious for me. That's why I love you, Lord.