

Faith to Expect Providence

- *Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. 22 For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him." 23 So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer. Ezra 8:21-23*

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- Gideon must fight Midian and Amelek with 300
- Gideon had already seen the fleece
- 1st The fleece wet and the ground dry Judg 7:36-38
- 2nd The fleece dry and the ground wet. 7:39-40
- But God saw that was not enough. He wanted Gideon to have faith to expect providence
- *It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Judg 7:9-11*

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- *And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." 15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. Judg. 7:13-15*

Confident Expectation Divine Providence

- God's intervention in our life to bring about His will . Was it only for them?
- *For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6*
- *28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28*
- Do we feel anything thinking about Jesus with us?
- *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Mt. 28:20*

Confident Expectation of God's Care

- We hope for Providence when we pray:
 - For a safe journey
 - For a good outcome in an operation, job interview, or any other need.
 - For opportunities to preach or do good works.
- We Boldly say the Lord is my helper:
- *They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, Heb 11:37-39*

Can we Be Confident?

- God told Israel and Joshua (Deut. 31:6-8)
- *Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."*
Deut 31:6
- *No one shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, Josh. 1:5-6*
- Does this only apply to him?
- *For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6*

Rising Above the Norm

- *I returned and saw under the sun that — The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; **But time and chance** happen to them all. Eccl 9:11-12*
- God more fully revealed the complexity because there are three types of people in the world.
- 1. Those God has given up. Rom 1:24
- 2. Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.
- 3. Vessels of mercy

Those who don't know or Care

- (1) Don't care to know God. They will never obey the gospel. God simply allows time and chance to work.
- Therefore **God also gave them up** to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, Rom 1:24
- the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, 16 who in bygone generations **allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.** 17 Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness Acts 14:15-17

Vessels of Wrath or Mercy

- *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." Rom 9:14-15*
- *Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. Rom 9:18*
- *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, **endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction** 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, Rom 9:22-23*

Only For Vessels of Mercy

God's providence can and does override time and chance.

*And we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.** Rom. 8:28-29*

Are we Vessels of Wrath or Mercy?

- If we seek the boldness of providence we must become and remain a “**vessel of mercy.**”
- *The Lord is in His holy temple, The Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. 5 The Lord tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Ps 11:4-5*
- *9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. Jer 17:9-10*

Are we Vessels of Wrath or Mercy?

- *Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom 2:4-11*

Are we Vessels of Wrath or Mercy?

- *eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God. Rom 2:4-11*

Vessels of Honor / Dishonor

- *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "**The Lord knows those who are His,**" and, "**Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**"*
- *20 But in a great house there are not only **vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.** 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be **a vessel for honor,** sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2 Tim 2:19-22*

God will Suspend Time and Chance

- If we want God to override time and chance for us with His providence, we must be sanctified, useful and prepared.
- Thus a humble walk with God must lead to boldness and confidence.
- *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb 12:1*