

“God Makes Provision”
By Ken Avellino
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I want to give God the thanks before the message. He gives and takes away. I want to recognize it. The world doesn't recognize it, they just think it just happens.

This here is what I call a traffic light sermon. You hear of preachers that are sidewalk preachers, and we see soapbox preachers, but I sat down at night and tried to put a message together, I fell asleep, so I kept a notebook with me all week so that every time I came to a stop light I could write down something. And God was able to, through that, put a sermon together. Whatever way you get there, just get there. Everybody has their own style. But I was thinking earlier this morning, and the message constantly kept changing, but the thing is, if we were made in God's image, and God's likeness, why is man so far away from God? Why are we so far away from God? It's because our sins and our iniquities have separated us from Him (Isaiah 59:2).

The Spiritual

Being born again to me was the deciding moment that I realized that my relationship with God was inadequate, incomplete, and still distant. I was given an opportunity to know Him on a personal level that would change my life forever. I was raised in a Catholic church, but I felt God pulling me constantly closer, and I would ask a lot of people, "What do I have to do to be saved?" And I would seek counsel, I would pray, and some answers made sense, some didn't.

But, the first Scripture that I have:

Jeremiah 29:13 *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*

With *all* of my heart. Now, partially, I would seek God, and then go out and do something. I would travel around, I would hitchhike all over the state of New York, looking for answers. I would go to colleges and visit my friends, and end up partying, and doing all the things of the world. But God was still there in all those things, trying to compel me to seek His face. And I did, and I found some answers that were good, and I found some that weren't so good. But, it started with prayer, reading the Bible and asking anyone with any knowledge or philosophy to get me saved, and it was diligent, until I really sought Him with a whole heart, and I was baptized in Jesus' name. That changed my life forever.

Once you're saved, you have a calling and a direction, you have counsel, you have motivation, joy and peace, and a confidence you did not have before. There's a Scripture in Proverbs:

Proverbs 28:1 *The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.*

In this world today, I know a lot of people, and I think of my mother. My brother and I have been trying to convince my mother to move to Florida, where it would be easier for her, because she's always complaining about pain, and such. I said, "Well, move to Florida; you can be there with my brother, and such, and everything would be great." But she doesn't want to go anywhere. And a lot of people don't want to go anywhere in life; they're paralyzed by fear, because they don't know God. They don't have any reassurance, they don't have any confidence. Like, at one time in my life, I didn't have any of that. I had no direction, I had no counsel, I had nothing. But I was paralyzed by fear. You know, there was a few

nights ago, I just happened to be going through some channels, and, I remember as a kid growing up, Evel Knievel, Bobby Knievel, you know, I think he's kind of crazy, but, as a kid, he was sort of an idol to a lot of us kids, and he said, "A lot of people, they never accomplish anything because they never try anything." And I thought about that a lot, you know? God enables us to do things that we thought we could never do. I never thought that I would learn the Word of God and become a Christian, but God's able to do more than we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

We live in a society today that discourages any counsel or any Godly influence, and replaces it with legal drugs, or illegal drugs, and medicine in order to try and stabilize people's anxiety, depression or any other mental disorder. My mother used to say "You have the music so loud that you can't hear yourself think," and I replied "That's the point! Because I don't like what I'm thinking." If that doesn't work, the government or somebody will just form a committee which will just leave us more confused than what we started with. The answer for society is God, because God is truth. People have moved so far away from God; it's not in a lot of things in our life. When we were kids, we just took for granted, it was just there. Everybody had some form of God, or religion, but, now, you can say, "God blessed me," and they look at you like you're crazy.

Romans 8:30-31 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

If God be for us, who can be against us? A lot of us came here from other places, and, I, myself, it was because of the Navy. I never thought I'd make it here; I could have stayed in New York. I could have gone back there, taken over my dad's construction business, or something like that. But I took a chance. I took a chance when I went up to the Center, and this was back thirty-something years ago, and the preacher there that was preaching, he said, "What are you going to do with this man called Jesus?" I didn't know what I was going to do with Him, or, more than that, I didn't know what He was going to do with me. What could He do with me? And, I got baptized in Jesus' name that night. And, God makes provision. And that's not the title of the message; that's more of a topic. But God makes provision. And God will equip us to do His will. To do our will? You know, that gets complicated. We have to seek God. There's many times that, when I have a need from God, I will keep presenting it to God, I will keep praying about it, and, usually when I do something, it's a knee-jerk reaction; it comes with consequences. But when I have time to seek God, God will show me; He will provide a way. He will give me direction. You know, if it's the natural, or if it's the—~~you know~~, maybe it's a situation in my family. You know God will give me direction. I need the works; I need the works because that's the hardest thing. If I choose to do everything my way, even to speak it sometimes, it doesn't come out right; I make quite a mess out of things. But, when I seek counsel from God first, that works out. And, sometimes I may even think, "It's not—if I say it like this, it's really not going to get the point across." But when God gives you the words and the understanding, it comes across right, and it does get the job done. And it's not my way, it's God's way.

The Natural

This talks about the natural things that God provides for us.

Matthew 6:25-26 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body*

than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

You know, I was thinking again this morning, and, I was all set yesterday. I was at Vinnie's house, and we got everything all types up and set to go, but things still changed. Like Jesse was talking last week about the things that come to you in the night, the moment that God really gets your attention. Well, I had to wear a tie today. It's grueling, it's terrible, it's very painful. And, you know, I thought, a simple infraction, like, maybe, a traffic ticket, where you have to go before the judge, to the most hideous crime, you go before the judge, and you want to present an image of innocence. What about when you go before the Judge, the real Judge, the big Judge? The Judgment Day, when you're before God, what are you going to wear? What are you going to be covered with? You won't be able to have a suit, or a nice dress; you're going to be there, pretty much naked before God. And, if the Bible says that our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), our sins and our iniquities are going to be the only things that God sees, unless you have the blood of Christ. That blood of Christ is going to hide that sin. It's going to cover our sins. So, you have to have that relationship with God, the sustaining relationship. And not just a form of religion, but it needs to be with you every day. It's been with me thirty-something years. And I can't see another way of living. I wouldn't want to go through life—life is very difficult, and even more so, these days. It's all the things of society and the computer age... You know, the computer's in our mind. You know, how do we release it? How do we manage it? How do we deal with it? It seems to get tougher all the time, and we have to cast our cares on God, because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). We have to listen to that still small voice, like Bob was talking about this morning. And, most of the time, that still small voice tells me to shut up. That works better than anything else, because my righteousness is as filthy rags, but God's blood is what covers me.

So, that's my sermon today, and I look forward to more opportunities. Thank you, Andy and Parrish, for the opportunity, and it was a lot of fun. Thank you.

