

**Sermon Notes Providence of God in Ministry of Christ Luke 6:1-11; Heb. 1:1-3
Quotations from John Calvin, Institutes, Bk. I, Ch. 16 & 17**

God is God, alone. That means He is Sovereign. He wills what He wants and does what He wills. He proclaims His decrees, and then executes them in works of Creation and Providence. He uses agencies (persons and things) to exercise His divine wisdom and power. The agent of Center-Focus in these decrees is His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, "who is upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). I suppose the expositor of God's word could show this doctrine from any page of Scripture, but this morning we continue in Luke 6.

How does Providence relate to Creation?

"We see the presence of divine power shining as much in the continuing state of the universe as in its inception." "Faith ought to penetrate more deeply, namely, having found Him Creator of all, forthwith to conclude He is also everlasting Governor and Preserver. He sustains, nourishes, and cares for, everything He has made, even to the least sparrow" (Mt. 10:29).

What is Providence?

There is a link between **Providence and Provide**. "Let my readers grasp that providence means not that by which God idly observes from heaven what takes place on earth, but that by which, as keeper of the keys, He governs all events."

Why does knowledge of God's Providence exclude the possibility of "chance"?

"We must know that God's Providence as it is taught in Scripture is opposed to fortune and fortuitous happenings." That people give such power to chance is a "depraved opinion." "Concerning inanimate objects we ought to hold that, although each one has by nature been endowed with its own property, yet it does not exercise its own power except in so far as it is directed by God's ever present hand." What power does "chance" possess?

How is the doctrine of God's Providence necessary by logic?

"We make God the ruler and governor of all things, who in accordance with His wisdom has from the farthest limit of eternity decreed what He was going to do, and now by His might carries out what He has decreed. From this we declare that not only heaven and earth and the inanimate creatures, but also the plans and intentions of men, are so governed by His providence that they are borne by it straight to their appointed end." "Nothing is more absurd than that anything should happen without God's ordaining it, because it would then happen without any cause." "Nothing happens except from His command or permission. Surely He does not conjure up a God who reposes idly in a watchtower, willing the while to permit something or other, when an actual will not His own, so to speak, intervenes, which otherwise could not be deemed a cause." Something must be the "first cause." Nothing happens without a cause.

Does God's Providence excuse people from personal responsibility?

"Providence does not always meet us in its naked form, but God in a sense clothes it with the means employed." God ordained this man to be poor through my thievery. Therefore, my criminal action was virtuous. "If the Lord has committed to us the protection of our life, our duty is to protect it; if He offers helps, to use them; if He forewarns us of danger, not to plunge headlong; if He makes remedies available, not to neglect them." Let us be careful to distinguish between God's decretive will and His preceptive will. We pray, for instance, because "until men are persuaded that all their troubles come upon them by the appointment of God, it will never come into their minds to supplicate Him for deliverance."

How is God's special Providence the greatest comfort to Christians?

"What does it mean for you today to be believing the gospel?" "In times of adversity believers comfort themselves with the solace that they suffer nothing except by God's ordinance and command, for they are under His hand. The principle purpose of Biblical history is to teach that the Lord watches over the ways of the saints with such great diligence that they do not even stumble over a stone (Psa. 91:12)." "God has chosen the church to be His dwelling place; there is no doubt that He shows by singular proofs His fatherly care in ruling it." "Gratitude of mind for the favorable outcome of things, patience in adversity, and also incredible freedom from worry about the future all necessarily follow upon this knowledge." "Without certainty about God's Providence life would be unbearable." **"If you pay attention, you will easily perceive that ignorance of Providence is the ultimate of all miseries; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it."**

If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father... then certainly nothing can be imagined which God did not foresee, or which He could not have hindered. There is nothing so small but the Lord taketh cognizance of it; nothing so evil but He turneth it to good. Exempt anything from Providence, and you weaken that respect which is due from the creatures to God." (Thomas Manton)

From the "random" flight of the arrow that struck Ahab to the number of days allotted to your lifespan; from the timing of the death of Christ Jesus at Passover to the number of hairs on your head, all that happens is appointed by the decree of almighty God and is working for your good if you are a true member of the household of God.