

Sermon Series: "I Am" Part 3
"The Father's Provision"
Pastor Dale Campfield - January 16th, 2011

Intro:

Matt 28:19 *"Go and make disciples of all nations..."*

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Intro:

Today we continue with our sermon series entitled: "I Am".

The Goal of this series: To fall more in love with who God is, becoming a passionate follower of Christ, desiring to walk in obedience to His teachings.

How will we do this: By Learning Who the Father Is.

Jesus asks the question of Peter...

Mark 8:29

"Who do you say that I am?"

Let me ask you again: "Who do you say that He is?"

Last week we looked at The Father's Love; and the fact that the Great I AM loves us beyond measure; no matter what we do, think, say, etc. His love is unconditional.

Today's Sermon Title: "The Father's Provision"

Because of His love for us as a FATHER; He will protect us. But not only protect us, He will fight for us as well! That's what we dealt with last week. This week, is about His Provision.

Many of us have heard the phrase: Jehovah Jireh. The origin of that phrase is found in Genesis chapter 22. God tested Abraham's obedience and faith by instructing him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac as an act of worship. Isaac ... sharp boy that he was ... noticed that they had failed to bring along a lamb for the sacrifice. Listen to Abraham's response as we read our scripture text:

SCRIPTURE READING: **Genesis 22: 7-14**

Perhaps the most moving and heart-wrenching account of God's provision is found in Genesis 22. Let me give some background. Abram was called by God when he was 75 years old from the area that is now Iraq. In Genesis 12, he is told to leave what he had always known and live in a land that God would later show him. To let go of all that was familiar to him demonstrated incredible faith. God then promised him that the entire world would be blessed through his offspring. But when time passed and Sarah was still not pregnant, Abram took things into his own hands and fathered a child by his wife's servant. He compromised then but he was also courageous when he went on a rescue mission to get his nephew Lot back from the bad guys. Abram demonstrated a lot of positive qualities like appealing with God to not destroy Sodom but we also know that twice he lied about his wife in order to protect her. Finally, after 25 years of waiting, the son of promise was born to them. When he and Sarah got the news they both started laughing, and so God gave the boy the name Isaac, which means laughter.

Abram's name was changed to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude of nations." Now the promises of God could be fulfilled through Isaac. I imagine that the household was filled with laughter and joy. According to Genesis 21:32-34, Abraham was even experiencing Perhaps the most moving and heart-wrenching account of God's provision is found in Genesis 22. Let me give some background. Abram was called by God when he was 75 years old from the area that is now Iraq. In Genesis 12, he is told to leave what he had always known and live in a land that God would later show him. To let go of all that was familiar to him demonstrated incredible faith. God then promised him that the entire world would be blessed through his offspring. But when time passed and Sarah was still not pregnant, Abram took things into his own hands and fathered a child by his wife's servant. He compromised then but he was also courageous when he went on a rescue mission to get his nephew Lot back from the bad guys. Abram demonstrated a lot of positive qualities like appealing with God to not destroy Sodom but we also know that twice he lied about his wife in order to protect her. Finally, after 25 years of waiting, the son of promise was born to them. When he and Sarah got the news they both started laughing, and so God gave the boy the name Isaac, which means laughter.

Abram's name was changed to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude of nations." Now the promises of God could be fulfilled through Isaac. I imagine that the household was filled with laughter and joy. According to Genesis 21:32-34, Abraham was even experiencing shalom with his neighbors. But God still had some things he wanted to teach Abraham.

INTRODUCTION:

We are told in vs. 14 that Abraham called that place, “Jehovah Jireh,” which means “The Lord will provide.”

Jehovah Jireh is more than words to a catchy song. It is a principle of daily life. This is the primary way we show that we actually have faith in God, and it works out in our lives in a number of ways. In the same way that Abraham discovered Jehovah Jireh, we too are called upon to discover that God is the source of all our Provision.

[Three Lessons Surrounding Jehovah Jireh – The Lord Will Provide](#)

Lesson #1. THE SOURCE OF PROVISION: PROVERBS 3:5-10

That is a hard lesson for Americans to learn. We are taught early on that, above all, we are supposed to be self-sufficient.

Remember the story of The Little Red Hen from the Children’s Golden Book Series? The Little Red Hen kept asking other barnyard animals to help her gather and prepare food, but they kept giving excuses. Over and over the Little Red Hen replied Then I’ll do it all by myself! The Little Red Hen did all the work all by herself, then rewarded herself in the end by eating the whole feast: “all by myself”.

We grow up hearing phrases like:

- there’s no free lunch,
- I’m the cause of my own effect,
- I am the captain of my ship, the master of my fate,
- God helps them that helps themselves.

Well, let me tell you, none of that is in the Bible. Look in Proverbs 3:5-10 to see what IS in the Bible:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your path straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” Proverbs 3:5-10

Cathi and I have learned to practice this throughout the years of our marriage. Our desire is to learn even more; to truly learn and live our lives knowing that the first principle of Jehovah Jireh is to understand that God himself is our provider. This isn’t just a mind game we play, it’s the simple TRUTH. Until we really believe Jehovah Jireh, we will not be able to move forward in faith and obedience. But once you actually trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, then you’re ready to learn about the SIGN of OBEDIENCE.

Lesson #2. THE SIGN OF OBEDIENCE: HAGGAI 1:5-11

In scripture, stewardship is the sign that we truly believe Jehovah Jireh. Specifically the scriptural sign of obedience is “tithing.” The principle of the tithe is found first in Genesis 14:19 when Abraham gives 10% to the mysterious High Priest Melchizadek. The principle of the tithe continues throughout the scriptures as a way of acknowledging Jehovah Jireh.

What’s really sad is that the majority of church people have not discovered Jehovah Jireh in their lives. All we have to do is look at some recent statistics to see this is true. In America today, across denominational lines, 60% of church members contribute nothing at all. Another 20% contribute something, but at a level well below a tithe. Only 20% of church members actually tithe from their incomes.

That shows that, like the Little Red Hen, many church people actually believe they are doing it all by myself! I think this is one reason why so many in our nation are in deep financial debt. We tend to think of indebtedness as a purely financial problem, but it actually has spiritual roots. People who haven’t discovered Jehovah Jireh have cut themselves off from a marvelous promise of God and instead are living under a self-imposed curse.

God told the Israelites how this works in the book of Haggai. After the Israelites returned from Babylonian captivity, they tried to reestablish themselves in their homeland. Unfortunately, they were trying to do it, all by themselves. They did not return to keeping the laws of God. Haggai the prophet explained to them the real source of their dilemma in Chapter 1, verses 5-11:

Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat but never have enough. You drink but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it...

You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home I blew away. Why? Declares the Lord Almighty. Because of my house which remains a ruin while each of you is busy with his own house...” Haggai 1:5-11

These people actually impoverished themselves by failing to honor God. No matter how hard they tried to get ahead, they always wound up behind.

I’ve seen it so often. It is hard to imagine how a person can earn what seems like a decent salary, but in the end it seems like their purse has a hole in it. There always ends up being too much month left at the end of their paycheck. I wish everyone could understand that what seems like a financial problem is actually a spiritual problem with a spiritual solution. The fact is that God himself can plug the leak in their purse, IF they will begin to trust in Him and acknowledge Him as their provider.

Occasionally people tell me, “I can’t afford to tithe. It would ruin my finances. I couldn’t pay my bills.” I learned a long time ago that I can’t afford NOT to tithe.

I was fortunate to grow up in a Christian home where I learned to tithe at a young age. My

parents explained that my tithe was the sign that I really trusted God and depended on Him for everything. My dad would pay us a certain amount on the farm, and then we would tithe on that amount. Because I got an early start, it came natural to continue tithing larger amounts when I became an adult.

I have found I can make it on 90% with God's blessings. Understand, I'm not saying things haven't ever been tight. I'm not saying I haven't occasionally had financial worries and pressures. And I'm not saying I've never made financial mistakes. Butch and I have had our share of woes in finances; but through it all, God has NEVER let us down!

But I AM saying I would NEVER want to try to make it on 100% without God's blessings. I am 100% convinced that everything works out better when I depend on Jehovah Jireh. I believe He actually does plug the leaks in my purse. Therefore, I am not the captain of my ship, the master of my fate. And I sure don't try to do it all by myself.

The sign of God's covenant is our tithe mingled with His grace, and, believe me, His Grace always outweighs that tithe! You see, God ALWAYS keeps his promise to pour out a blessing so great we can't hold it all.

Lesson #3. THE SUPPLY OF ABUNDANCE: MALACHI 3:8-12

We find an astounding warning and a corresponding promise in Malachi 3:8-12. God Himself speaks directly to His disobedient children. Look at what He says:

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse, the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour you out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty.

Normally, it's not a good idea to “put God to the test.” But in his one area, the Lord invites you to put Him to the test. Most people see tithing as a test for the Believer --- and a HARD test at that! But God calls tithing a test of Him and his ability to provide, and he invites it.

“Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour you out so much blessing you will not have room enough for it.”

It's a simple test. Giving a tenth of a paycheck is not complicated math. Just move a decimal point one place to the left and you will know what your tithe is. And God invites every one of you to take up the challenge. Personally, I hope you'll do it, because I KNOW without doubt that God will come through on his part of the bargain. And I KNOW without a doubt that your own faith and confidence in God will grow by leaps and bounds.

CONCLUSION

The key to releasing the Provisions of Jehovah Jireh.... OBEDIENCE.

There are over 7,000 promises available to those who follow Christ mentioned throughout the scripture. The fact is, with each promise, there is a premise. We do our part, and God will do His. It's the same with Jehovah Jireh; when we walk in obedience to what He is telling us to do, we will receive His blessings! Beyond what we could possibly think or imagine!

Let me ask you this question today: "What Is Your Issac?"

Abraham was blessed because of his obedience to God, to take his only son up on the mountain to sacrifice him. Out of that obedience, God provided for him. Not only was his son spared, but he became the father of more than those counted on the sands of the seashore. God blessed him with riches beyond man's count.

What is it that God is asking you lay down so that you can receive His blessings? Are you willing to walk in obedience to what God is saying to you? Is there anything in your life that you have not given to Him? Possibly your job, the ten percent of your paycheck, your life, etc. What is your Issac?

The first thing you may lay down, is your life. You must be willing to give Him your life. We do this by asking Him to take control of our lives; forgiving us of our sins; becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. You may not have done this before, but today can be your day. Your day to lay down your life and receive Jehovah Jireh!

And as you do.... You wait, you watch, you'll see!

Coming up...

Part 1: I Am Your Father - and because of this...

Part 2: I Am Your Protector - He will fight for us.

Part 3: I Am Your Provider - He is our source.

Part 4: I Am Your Companion - He is our friend, who will never leave us.

Part 5: I Am Your Teacher - He teaches us all things that ensure our success in life.

Part 6: I Am Your All - There is nothing or no one like Him. He is our I AM!