

“PROVIDER:Covenant”

Scripture: Joshua 24:1-25

Graphics: ram, thanksgiving, harvest, covenant, stone monument

Big Truth: God is the provider of everything in our lives. We give thanks for the blessings that we receive from God. Often, however, we stop at giving thanks for the material possessions and circumstances in our lives. God provides all those things, but even more. God provides us with redemption from trouble, covenant promises for the future, and salvation for eternity.

Focus Phrase: Jehovah Jireh provides covenant promises that give me hope in my life through Jesus.

1. Introduction

- A. I'm pretty excited that this Thursday is Thanksgiving. In addition to the usual feast and football and maybe even some deer hunting, the thing that gets me excited about Thanksgiving is the expectation that we WILL spend time giving thanks to God for His provision and blessings in our lives.
- B. I love the tradition in many families that before people dive into the incredible food, they spend time going around the table and asking each person one thing for which they are thankful.
- C. From the youngest to the oldest, everyone gets to verbalize why they are grateful. And the answers will be vary wildly!
- D. Yet, as people of faith and followers of Jesus, our thanks and praise always, ALWAYS, finally, is expressed to a powerful God whose steadfast love for us (hesed in the Hebrew) always results in provision.
- E. Yet, this worship series is about more than the material possessions in our lives. Those can certainly give us reason to give thanks to God. The reality is: everything we HAVE is a gift from Almighty God!
- F. God, however, has SO MUCH MORE in store for us than material possessions. And, church, that's Good News for ALL of us - those who have and those who don't have those material possessions.
- G. God's provision of money and cars and jobs is great and all, but it's God's provision of **redemption** from all our troubles, **covenant promises** for the future, and **salvation** for everlasting life that are the most precious and powerful gifts in our lives.
- H. Our God IS Jehovah Jireh - which is Hebrew for the God who can and will provide for every one of our needs.
- I. Last week, we began with the provision of redemption. As we identify any area of trouble in our lives, and desperately cry out to God for rescue, God delivers us, and we get the opportunity to give thanks to God. That process - which we don't just do one time and done, but many times over our lives - is what redeems us and reclaims us for God's holy purposes.

- J. This morning, we're going to the book of Joshua, to the very end of Joshua's life...as he reminded the people of the promise God made with Abraham.
- K. You'll recall that Joshua was the one who God chose to lead the people of Israel from the wilderness (where they has been for 40 years after escaping from slavery in Egypt) into the Promised Land of Canaan.
- L. Once all the people got to the territories within Canaan that God had allotted for each of the tribes of Israel, Joshua called them all together at a place called Shē'chem.
- M. And it's there, as we'll see, that Joshua not only reminded them what God had provided throughout their history as a people, but called them to choose who they will serve in the future.
- N. The Lord - Jehovah Jireh - provided everything the people needed, especially the promise of a future with hope in the Promised Land.
- O. And God provides that for you and me today. The question is: will you choose to worship and serve the Lord who provides or something else?
- P. If you're taking notes, here's where we're heading today: **Jehovah Jireh provides covenant promises that give me hope in my life through Jesus.**
- Q. Let's pray and then we'll dive into the Word.
- R. **PRAY! (Jesus, You are Lord...)**
- S. Let's all turn together to Joshua 24, starting in verse 1.

2. Scripture

A. **READ Joshua 24:1-25**

- B. ALL the tribes of Israel were gathered together at Shē'chem. No big deal, right? Well...can you imagine over a million people, gathering together in one location in the middle of the desert? And then all the elders and leaders from each of the twelve tribes called to a roundtable with Joshua?
- C. What was the agenda, Joshua?
 - i. First, it was to present themselves before God. So, this wasn't so much roundtable as it was a **worship service**. They presented themselves, together, to God - facing God.
 - ii. And as we read, Joshua then recounted the incredible story of how God had worked in the long history of the people of Israel. He reminded them of all the promises God made to them and how they'd been faithful though it all.
 - iii. They needed to begin by facing God together. **Covenant promises are activated when broken and sinful people face a holy and gracious God.** (repeat).

- iv. Only THEN - when the leaders had turned toward God and were ready to hear God's words - did Joshua begin to speak the words from God. Here's what he said to them:
 - a. Your ancestors - Abraham's father and his sons lived over there (as Joshua probably pointed in that direction) and they serve other gods. They served pagan gods, not the One True God who brought you out of Egypt.
 - b. Then, I took Abraham from his region, through THIS land (Joshua probably pointed to the place they were standing), and made his offspring many. It was a covenant promise from God to Abraham.
 - c. And, then, as we read, God reminded the people of their entire history from Abraham to the very day when they gather together to face God at Shē'chem - Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron, slavery in Egypt, deliverance from Egypt, time in the desert, defeat of multiple armies and kings and enemies.
 - d. God reminded the people that they weren't the ones who did the defeating, but God himself, because of the promise He made.
 - e. Then in verse 13, "I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and olive yards that you did not plant." Joshua 24:13
- v. What Joshua was retelling to the leaders of Israel was the Covenant God made with Abraham.
 - a. In Genesis 12:1-3, we read this: "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" Genesis 12:1-3
 - b. That was the promise that God made...
 - i) God would give him a Land.
 - ii) God would give him children and descendants (even though he and Sarah didn't have any yet).
 - iii) God would bless people for all time because of this covenant promise...which, of course, is true in us today.
- vi. At She'chem, Joshua retold that whole narrative, and then invited the people to choose if they wanted to receive and live into THAT promise...to choose who they would serve from that day forward.

- a. See, the people of Israel had been in many countries, with many different people groups. Almost all of those other nations and peoples worshipped pagan gods. There were NOT people of God's promise.
 - b. It was becoming more and more common at that time that the people of Israel were serving Yahweh God - their God - BUT...they were also serving other pagan gods. They were trying cover all their bases, right? "If Yahweh didn't comes through the way we want, we will appeal to Ba'al or the gods that Abraham worshipped before God got ahold of him. If that doesn't work, we'll find some piece of metal or wood to worship."
 - c. See, Joshua's point to them that day at Shē'chem was this: "Look people, I know, and Yahweh knows, that you will worship **something**. God created us, as humans, to worship. It's who we are. You CAN choose to worship anything you want. God has given us the freedom to choose. So, given all that I've just reminded you about OUR ONE TRUE GOD, you must CHOOSE. Choose TODAY who you will serve. Will it be the gods Abraham used to worship - fake gods. Or the gods of the Amorites whose land this was - powerless." Or will you serve Yahweh, the one true God?
 - d. And then Joshua did something profound. He drew a line in the sand and proclaimed: "As for ME and MY HOUSE, we will serve the LORD...the ONE who made that Covenant with Abraham and who has been faithful to it, even to today. HE wants that promise to be yours as well."
 - e. The main point was that God's covenant promise hadn't ever changed. It was the people who had changed...who were tempted to worship other gods they could see made of wood and metal, in addition to the God of the Universe - the Jehovah Jireh - the Lord who provides always.
- D. The people's response was: "Heck ya...we'll serve the Lord with ya."
 - E. But Joshua's response was a little shocking: "You can't serve the Lord, for he is a holy God." What he was saying was that even though the people wanted to serve Yahweh...they ALSO still wanted to serve these other gods. And Yahweh is a jealous God, a holy God. There shall be NO other gods before me, God commanded in the 10 Commandments.
 - F. The people were starting to get it. They said, "No, we will serve the LORD!"
 - G. Joshua finally relented and said, "OK. But you are witnesses against yourself. Put away EVERY other god and serve the One True God only."
 - H. The people agreed and Joshua set up a stone monument there, so that if they ever forgot, he could point to the monument and say, "Remember what you

promised...that you'd live out your end of the covenant promise God gave to us through Abraham. Remember Shē'chem. Have hope for the future.”

- I. God gave the people a promise that He would give them land, establish them as a people, and give the whole world hope for the future.
- J. Jehovah Jireh provides covenant promises that give me hope in my life.

3. Application

- A. God's covenant never ended, yet over time, the people began to walk away from it and worship gods of their own making.
- B. Aren't we (you and I) tempted to do the same thing in our lives? We may not carve gods out of metal or wood to worship outwardly, but aren't we sometimes guilty of putting our trust, faith, hope, and worship in things that God has provided in our lives instead of the One who provided them?
- C. We live in a land - in a culture - that has so many idols and gods, that it's sometimes hard to remember that there's no god but the Triune God of the Universe.
- D. Yet, we are convinced and we proclaim that God has given to us a Savior, whose name is Jesus, and who fulfills EVERY promise that God ever gave to His people. Jesus IS our Covenant Promise! Will you receive that promise and live into your end of the covenant today?
- E. One thing you may not be aware of is that the place to which Joshua called all the people that day at the end of his life eventually became the city of Sychar, as referenced in the New Testament book of John, chapter 4.
 - i. Why is that significant? Well, one day, Jesus was traveling with his disciples through the region of Samaria. The city of Sychar was nearby, which used to be called Shē-chem. It was noon. Jesus sent his disciples to town to get some food, and he sat down at the water well.
 - ii. Soon, a woman came to fetch water from that well, something that usually happened at the very beginning of the day, not noon.
 - iii. Jesus broke all the rules of the culture and talked to this woman. Turns out, this woman was probably at the well because she had a difficult past, with multiple husbands. Yet, Jesus knew that already. He asked her for a drink of water. What he offered her was far more. Jesus told this woman - the first person he ever told it to in John's gospel - that HE is the Messiah - the Living Water that would satisfy every spiritual thirst she would ever have.
 - iv. In the end, this woman at the well came to complete saving faith in Jesus - that he was the Jewish Messiah, the one who would save the world from sin. She ran back to her village to tell everyone about this Jesus...and many from the village - Samaritans! - came to faith in Jesus that day.

- v. Why is this important? Well, the city of Sychar, which was Shē'chem in the OT, where Joshua met with the people that day, was now inhabited by Samaritans who worshipped multiple sets of gods, and also Yahweh God, just like the Israelites had been doing when Joshua called them out.
- vi. Even though Jesus knew that this woman was who she was, he entered into her jaded life, and she became a sold-out follower of Jesus, by grace through faith in Him. From that day on, she put aside **all other gods**, and she followed Jesus into a future with hope.
- vii. The promise that God gave to Abraham - the one Joshua recounted line-by-line for the people at Shē'chem - was not only for the Jews, but was for this woman in Samaria, and it's for YOU too.
- viii. **God's promise has never changed.** We know that His promise is completely fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.
- F. So, like Joshua asked the people at Shē'chem, and Jesus asked the woman at the well, I ask you today, **who will you serve?** Will you serve and worship the idols of this world - that have no power, impotent, are not holy or even real - or will you serve the One who has promised to provide for every one of your needs, both now and in the future?
- G. I don't have a long list of application points today. That's because this is a simple question with a very profound answer...and only you can answer it: choose this day who you will serve, the gods of this world, or the Lord who Provides as revealed to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.
- H. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord! And as your pastor, I want nothing more than for you to join me. Together, we will face God and say, "We will serve you, Lord - Jehovah Jireh."
- I. Everything you have, every good and gracious blessing in your life comes from the Lord who provides. Every one of those brings hope through Jesus.
- J. Jehovah Jireh provides covenant promises that give me hope in my life through Jesus.

4. Conclusion

- A. This week, as you gather in whatever way you will, recall everything that God has and is doing in your life.
- B. If life's a struggle right now, God may just be trying to get your attention and guide you in a new path that leads to deeper levels of holiness and discipleship.
- C. If you find yourself putting your trust and faith in anything but the Lord who Provides, face the Lord and receive the gift of covenant promise from God. It has never changed. Have you?

- D. God's steadfast love continues to call to you today - to us. From the first word of God at Creation to the next moment in this worship service, God has loved us with a never-ending love.
- E. Turn your face to Him and have hope for every future moment because of the redemption, hope, and security God gives us in Jesus.
- F. Happy Thanksgiving, church! May it be the best one ever!
- G. Let's pray...
- H. PRAY!**