
The Stunning Providences of God

Psalm 105

Introduction We worship God with praising and preaching. We have had a season of praising. Now is the time for preaching. The end is the same – to magnify God through love for Him and love for others. We have worshipped God over His Word to us. Now, we will worship God in His stunning providences for us. Join with me as worship the God of the Word. *Read Text*

The Providences of God in Scripture

This Psalm is a celebration of the providences of God. He has moved in our situations and we are moved in our spirits.

The Call to the People

(v. 1-6)

The Psalmist opens with a call, an invitation for the people to see and respond to the hand of God in their lives.

To Respond to their God

(v.1-4)

The first call is to share, to make known out of grateful hearts (v.1). Give thanks, call out and speak up. This is the language of our delight in God and amazement at Him going public.

God's people are called to sing over God's wondrous works (v.2-3a). In our singing we tell about what God has done. Thus our songs may be general over the grand working of God in history. But they also may be particular as they celebrate the goodness of God in personal ways. This singing is a glorying in the Lord.

We are also to respond by seeking the Lord (v.3b-4). We pursue what we prize. We will seek God if we glory in Him. If we glory in ourselves, our strength, our power, our programs then we will ever more seek them. But if we rejoice in God, in His holiness, His fame, His strength, His presence then we will go hard after God. We will go hard after God to see Him in our situations and to seek Him for our good.

To Remember His Works

(v.5)

In order to really prize or value God, we will have to remember and rehearse what He has done. We can revel in who God is – but who God is works out in what God has done. We know God is holy because He destroys the wicked. We know God is merciful for He has spared His people by giving them His righteousness. Just as we know what a man's character is by his deeds, so we know by experience the character of God by His works.

Therefore, we must remember them. We must remind each other of them. We must tell stories, and sing songs and keep records of the mighty works of God on our behalf. Frankly, as a church, we have not done this well in the last 6 years. I am calling

for, in addition to Jonathan Zemmer serving as our church photographer, a church historian – someone who will, record for our reminding, the mighty works of God.

The Character of our God

(v. 7-11)

For Israel and for all of God's people, the character of God is most evident in His covenants. God is manifest to us in the Word, His Son. God is revealed to us in the Word, His Scriptures. God is connected to us in His Word, His Covenants.

Promise Making

So we find that God is a promise making God. He makes promises to both the wicked and the righteous. He promises that He will punish the wicked and destroy them utterly. He promises to hear the repentant. He promises to do good for His people.

The Psalmist and the Israelites are rejoicing in the particular promises God has made to them as they understood them. Those promises were to Abraham to give them a land and a people. The promises God gave them were intended to be a trajectory, a path arriving at the Lord Jesus Christ, and fulfilled in Him. They rejoiced in the trajectory and in the path – we are now able to see and savor the One to whom it was all pointing.

Promise Keeping

Making promises means nothing if promises are not kept. Our cynicism over politicians is rooted in the giving of promises to gain a following with little to no intention to actually keep them or have the power to fulfill them. But we do not have a God who is a politician. He is both a promise maker and a promise keeper.

My study of the word of God indicates that God gives exactly what He promises and then much more and then later even more than could be imagined. In other words, Israel is to remember, rejoice and revel in the already, but not yet giving of their promised land. But we know the promised land was entered more gloriously by the Lord at the resurrection as a greater keeping of the promise. And it will be even more gloriously and unimaginably kept at the day of His coming when all the saints of all the ages enter the new heavens and new earth.

So every promise that God has made for us now that we see fulfilled now, is simply another aspect of the "all-ready and not-yet." If we are healed, it is foretaste of receiving a glorified body. If we have all we need in financial provision, it is a present fulfillment of the future full richness of the new heavens and new earth. If we experience the guiding providence of God now, it is a foretaste of the tender and mighty care of God that brings every saint safely home.

The Chronicle of His Deeds

(v.12-42)

God's promises & purposes establish the trajectory of His providences. For the sake of time, I will not expand on the particular events the Psalmist is remembering and rehearsing. The theme is simply: *How did God bring us to the fulfillment of His promises?*

Patriarchal Period

(v.12-22)

Here is primarily the story of Divine providence in protecting the fledgling nation during the time from Abraham to Joseph. God kept them from being destroyed by enemies more powerful than themselves. God kept them from being destroyed by a natural disaster, famine. He sent Joseph ahead into Egypt to protect them. He sent them down into Egypt using the famine to do so. All of these providences of protection involved painful trial and trouble. So the mighty providences of God to do good also involve the sinful purposes of man to do evil.

Sojourn in Egypt

(v.23-25)

God's providence in the sojourn in Egypt causes the people to be fruitful and prosper. It also turns the hearts of the Egyptians to fear and hate. So God is at work to simultaneously enlarge their lot and energize their enemies. He turns them into a great nation of people and prepares them to be expelled from the land by force.

Deliverance from Egypt

(v.26-38)

These two stanzas rehearse the destructive power of God over the idols and myths of Egypt and the delivering power of God for His people. Remember, the wrath and destruction of the wicked falls as a result of the promises of God as well. Moses would declare the promised judgment from God and it would fall. Make no mistake about it- a promise keeping God acting to preserve the honor of His Name will eventually destroy the wicked.

For the sake of His Name, God also delivered His people from Egypt. His powerful providences opened a way and so guided their footsteps that not one stumbled on that way. O, brothers and sisters, may God so open the way for us and so uphold our steps that we will walk without stumbling the least bit.

Provision in the Wilderness

(v.39-42)

Now the providing providences of God are remembered. God guided them. He gave them what they needed in water, bread and meat. In the desperate circumstances of the wilderness wanderings, the special care of God even in the midst of corporate chastening, supplied them and sustained them. He did so, not because they were so spiritual, but because God remembered His holy promise to Abraham.

The Consequence for their Joy

(v. 43-45)

Here are the results of the promises of God working out His purposes. The Psalmist highlights the response to such stunning providences

Rejoicing - Its Praise

(v.43)

They sing as God moves them out from Egypt and to the place of His promises. But I want to suggest the possibility that God brings them out with His own joy. God is joyful and His people sing as they are marching out and headed home.

Receiving - Its Portion

(v.44)

What God gave they took possession of. Now listen to me. Again, they take the land in anticipation of Jesus' entering heaven and all of us one day entering the new heavens and new earth. They thrilled at receiving what God was giving. And so should we. Their joy in God helps them to see their God in both the giving and receiving of their portion.

Righteousness - Its Purpose

(v.45)

God's stunning providences were designed to help them obey Him. All the good that God does for us ought to produce careful and diligent obedience. He is working to produce holiness in us.

The Providences of God for Us

The providences of God for His people in the Bible are just amazing stories if we do not see them in our own lives. Those stunning providences are present – God is working in His world for His people. The key is: do we have the eyes of faith to see them? Are we carefully and constantly seeing the invisible hand of God working our good and His glory? Do we remember them so that we can celebrate them?

God's Faithful Provisions

We have experienced the faithful provisions of God in our own life together as a church.

Establishing the church

Clearcreek Chapel came into existence as a gathered body launched by Washington Heights Baptist Church. It was the vision of John Street and a church planting team to see a GARBC church established in the Springboro area. The church would be a blend of contemporary worship, Bible exposition and seeker friendly evangelism. The core theological values were reformed and it was to be elder led. The founders were mentored and influenced by Dr. John MacArthur.

Giving us a place

The church began by meeting in a home and moved very quickly to meeting in an elementary school. The church grew and established a vision for ministry. Pastor John's leadership established a strong emphasis on Biblical Counseling alongside of

exposition and evangelism. We were able to purchase what was then the Batting Cage on 741. The church family settled in, albeit quite squeezed, and continued to grow.

God was pleased to bring us to the property here on Pennyroyal. With the assistance of a local company and the guidance of a Christian realtor, we were able to buy the property and sell it to the company. They then donated our 20 acres back to us. We broke ground April, 1990 and moved into this building in late winter.

Clarifying our distinctives

From 1993 through 1995, the Chapel went through a difficult time of clarifying our doctrinal distinctives and rethinking their implications. This resulted in a number of families leaving. This, with the mortgage we had at the time, made for some very lean years. It also brought a greater unity in ministry as new elders came on and as God brought many new families into the church.

This difficult period served to refine and strengthen the church. The Biblical Counseling and regular pulpit exposition became cornerstones to the distinctive worship and walk of the Chapel. The unity in doctrine grounded unity in love and practice.

Transition in leadership

In 1998, though much trial and trouble, God brought us (the Kennedy family) back to Clearcreek. It was a great joy to be here and to serve with God's people. The Elders asked me to come onto the Elder Body and to serve. Through the fall, we knit our hearts together and dreamed about what God would do for us. We also began to think about further sharpening of our thinking about eldership.

In 1999, Pastor John accepted a call to serve at the Master's College and Seminary. Through the summer, the elders and church prayed much over God's direction for the teaching pastor role. They saw my coming to Clearcreek and John's moving to California as the providential care of God. John and I were friends. Yet we were different. With great grace, he encouraged the Elders and challenged the church to trust God. The Elders and church prayed much over who they would call. It was my very great joy to accept a vocational call and to serve, in addition to being pastor for worship, as teaching pastor.

Growth in ministry

Over the last 6 years, we have watched at each step as God has guided and superintended growth and change in the church.

- We preached and taught on eldership culminating in a reworking of the Constitution and adopting a new Book of Faith and Order.
- We finished the Moving the Mountain Campaign and paid off our debt.
- We called Pastor Dan to the Eldership as a staff pastor.
- We sent 2 men off to seminary to train for pastoral ministry, now seeing both of them serving the Lord at their respective churches.

- We established a Mission and Vision for the Chapel as a foundation for launching and extending ministry.
- We continued to see the expansion of our responsibility and opportunity in Biblical Counseling to the point that now, we have more NANC certified counselors on our counseling team than in any single ministry in the nation.
- We prayed over and saw the launch of Chapel Ministries International, Open Arms Children's Ministry and the sending of the Ebert's and Cupka's as our church missionaries.
- And recently, in the midst of planning expansion ,we gave away three dear families to All of Grace for the sake of the Kingdom.

We continued to see our attendance grow. We were very concerned that we were beginning to be limited by our facilities and needed formal and functional thinking about expansion. We talked, prayed, dreamed and designed over 2 years, finally establishing the Facility Expansion Team with Tadd Dieringer at its head and the Expansion Funding Team with Roger Craft as its leader. An enormous amount of work has been put in by Tadd and the Elders over these 2 years. We have worked hard in confidence that God was at work.

God's Fantastic Providences

We began to see even further, the amazing providences of God.

Unity for expansion

We crafted and cast a vision for facility expansion. We wrestled with whether to think about going into debt. We saw the grace of God in each of your lives as you sacrificially committed to fund expansion.

When we began to approach builders, Bon Builders was recommended to us by Legacy Ministries. As we talked with their representative, we found in Clark Miller someone who was a brother in Christ, who could see our vision for ministry, and who seemed to desire the best for the Chapel.

Upon your affirmation to move forward, we established a relationship with Bon Builders, continued our talks with the city in regards to building and prayed. We considered selling some of the land to fund expansion. We pursued that briefly with little result.

My own personal commitment was to pray much and pray often that God would allow us to expand for cash – that He would be pleased to show Himself mighty on our behalf. And I prayed, as I know many of you do, that God would give us the money to do all we hoped to do.

Unexpected offer to sell

God was at work. It seems that He has moved to answer our prayers. He has presented us with what appears to be an amazing opportunity to build for cash. Here is how that has unfolded.

Out of the blue, we received a call in early September from a realtor asking if we would be willing to show and possibly sell our property. I agreed to walk them around and show them our property. We met, walked around the building, explaining what we do and how we use the building. We loaded up in my SUV and I drove them along the edge to the center of our whole property. I laid out for them our vision for the Chapel Campus, the CMI Campus and the possibility of the retirement site. As we parted, the lady expressed her very great interest in all of it.

The realtor called a couple of days later and told me that they were interested in buying all of the Clearcreek Chapel property, including the building and some of the contents. They were beginning to structure an offer and would like confirmation that we would entertain an offer.

What an amazing thing! We laid all this out with the Elders who affirmed that we would be interested in seeing what they would offer. We researched the value of the land. We established some benchmarks for a value based on appreciation, first in our general area and then in Springboro specifically. The numbers seemed impossible. How could anyone offer us anywhere near 2 to 2.8 million dollars for this?

God was not finished yet. First, let me tell you a bit about the potential buyer. They are a business that serves to plan and do weddings, video production and other related services to church ministries. They were looking for a wedding chapel. They had looked at a number of buildings and churches. This, this is what she wants. Yes, they will do some remodeling in here. While we were walking around the building, she was already putting things where she wanted them, thinking where the gazebos would go in the yard, how wonderful the side rooms are and so on.

They are structuring their finances with investors who will buy the whole property and then sell what we think of as the Chapel Campus back to them. The investors are interested in the rest to develop for a retirement community or something akin to it. God had brought the investors in at the right time with the right interest and connections.

Therefore, we have received a letter of intent to offer. Having sent them our requirements, they responded to those requirements and are intending to make a full offer in the next two to three weeks. The realtor has assured me that most of the offer is already funded and they are going to make an offer that will allow us to relocate and build for cash.

Now, let us remember that we are seeing something unfold. What we have now is a letter of intent. We do not yet know what they will finally offer. We believe that God is in this. But we do not want to get our hopes and expectations up so high only to have them dashed with this falling through some way.

So, why are we announcing this to you now? Here are our reasons:

- We need your prayers. We want you to focus your praying on God's providing the full amount we would need to buy and build. We want you to pray for wisdom for us as the Elders. Pray for the individuals involved that they will all seek the face of God and do the will of God.

- We wanted to be open with you since we have received this letter of intent. There is an enormous amount of work and thinking that is going on now. We wanted to let you know about this now so as not to be working on it in secret. It has already been very hard.
- We wanted you to join with us in our stunned amazement at God. We could not keep this to ourselves – it was bubbling over. Now it may not come to pass. But I love to revel in God in His possibilities. So we have our hopes, we have our God and we will submit to Him even as we *see* Him moving.

Let me say a word about Biblical decision making. The Bible teaches us that we are to seek the will of God from the Word of God. This establishes the wide field of wisdom fenced in by the precepts of the Bible. Within the field of wisdom, we must unite the principles of the Scripture with the particulars of our situation and choose wisely. We pray for that wisdom, confident in God's promise that He will give it. Then, we rest in the sovereign providence of God to carry us through. That we sell and where we locate are wisdom decisions – we can be out of God's will by relocating somewhere else only if we choose sin or to sin in doing so. We will trust in God's provision of wisdom and His providences once the choices are made.

Now, I am sure a whole raft of questions come to your mind. We have probably had every one of them as well. Let me address some of the major concerns as we thought about them.

Why would we consider selling and relocating when God put us here to start with?

We believe that the providence and provision of God may have given us this property for this moment – that is to fully fund our next step of expansion. We do not have a theology of holy places. While we may have sentimental attachment to here for lots of personal reasons, wisdom simply dictates that we should not go into debt to expand here if we can expand on another location for cash. The realtor and buyers know that they have to offer enough to do that.

How much will we be involved in the final decisions to sell, where to locate and what to build?

We will proceed as we always do. The Elders will pray much, seek counsel, try to plan wisely, arrive at a proposal and then ask you, the congregation, for affirmation. We will lead where we believe God has providentially provided.

How much are we asking?

We have not given them a price. We have given them appreciation tables based on a 1990 appraisal at 6.5%, 8% and 11%. We are expecting them to offer between \$2 and \$2.8 million.

If this property sells, where will we meet until we buy and build?

The buyers have offered to allow us to use the building on Sundays at least until March, 2005. We will need to lease office space for week day ministry.



**WILL OF GOD
SLIDE**

What about the Facility Expansion pledges?

The budget calls for \$4,970 a month to be moved from the general fund to the Facility Expansion Fund. We will continue to do that until we decide as elders and as a church to do differently. We will have needs moving into a new facility that the pledge can go for. The pledge for increased giving should continue for now. When we know for certain what we will be doing, we will make a proposal to the congregation concerning the pledge, both whether it is needed and what it will be for.

Who is our realtor?

We are using an attorney to review the documents. We have no need of an agent to sell this property. We had not secured one because we were not seeking a buyer. At this point in the process we need someone familiar with real estate law. A realty attorney is the right person needed to help us complete this process wisely

We will be discussing this at Flocks this week, aiming then to answer your questions. We probably do not have all the answers – in fact, I know we don't. I am sure you will ask questions that we will respond to by writing them down and then discussing them together as Elders. Please be patient as we wait on God and seek His wisdom.

Unusual possibility for relocation

So God may be giving us an opportunity to relocate. What are we planning to do?

God's providence has also been at work as we have researched a number of properties in the area. Tadd Dieringer has investigated 12 possible sites within our local ministry area. Many of them were unsuitable either by price, access, visibility or zoning. We have focused our search on properties that would allow us to build the OACM homes on them, but not exclusively so.

We struggled with discussing the particulars of this possibility. Our primary concern is that someone would know of our interest, go in and buy the land and then try to sell it to us at a higher price. However, we also were very concerned with not telling you that we had a good possibility for a location if the sell of our property took place. In the interest of our own openness with you we are taking that risk.

We are presently narrowing our attention to a piece of property located between I-75 and Clear Creek Woods on Fourth Street. It is located across from where Conover Street T's into Fourth and is in Franklin. The property right now is very overgrown and unattractive to the eye. However, it is easily cleared and would provide a beautiful setting for the church with the possibility of Interstate visibility, a location in which there is only one other church, neighborhoods dense with families and is easily accessible for most of our families.

We have had conversations with zoning, city engineering, the realtor representing the owner and everything is favorable at this point. Our builder has walked the property with us and is quite excited about the site, the possibilities for ministry and designing a new building wrapped around our ministry. There are two parcels, one around 10 acres at the street and another around 7 acres connected by a narrow strip of land. We would take the lower 7 acres only if the owner would donate them.

As always, there will be likes and dislikes about any particular site we choose. We want you to pray with us that God gives us wisdom. We want your counsel. We are not inviting you to offer your likes and dislikes – we are asking for carefully considered, Biblical based, wisdom focused counsel. Some may not like the location. Some may want the church within walking distance of your house. Some may see this move as an abandoning of our present neighborhood. All of these questions and concerns have been discussed and largely settled among the Elders. We will continue to move forward until God makes it clear that the trajectory we are on is unwise.

Our Future Possibilities

What is next? What are the possibilities that God may have in store for us?

To Move to Clear Creek

God may be at work to allow us to move Clearcreek Chapel to a new location and to build for cash. I don't know about you, but that is exciting. That a property is available where our name even makes sense is amazing.

To Minister to Community

We have driven around the neighborhoods there. What needs are there just like here! People, lots and lots of them, needing our Savior and a church that will love them, teach them the Word and help them to worship and walk with God.

To Magnify our God

No matter how this turns out: whether God is pleased to bring this to fulfillment or is pleased to do something else, we will magnify Him. We will acknowledge that He is good, wise and sovereign. We will exult in Him and sing praise to Him. We will bow to Him, seek His wisdom and revel in Him and His goodness.

As we close, we want to challenge you:

Challenge

IN OUR PRAYING:

- Pray believingly for wisdom for your leaders.
- Pray humbly for unity in the wisdom God provides.
- Pray diligently that God will provide and we can move forward without debt.

IN OUR INTERACTION:

- Ask questions, accept answers and expect the best from one another.
- Give counsel so as to impart wisdom.
- Expect God to be at work in the opportunities we have and the decisions we make.
- Rejoice in the stunning providences of God.