

REVIEW: God pursues us, values us, sacrifices for us. This week: God is a loving Father who provides for us.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

- Christmas is about the Heart of the Father providing the world a savior.

1. GOD MAY PROVIDE _____ THAN WE EXPECT.

- Jesus wasn't what the Jews expected for their Messiah.
- The story reveals provision in the midst of poverty and humility.

Matthew 1:18-21 ¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

GOD PROVIDES IN AMAZING WAYS, AND YET:

- Life was hard for Joseph and Mary as they faced family challenges, rejection and judgement, fear, doubt, no place to live, and they were cultural misfits.
- Having Jesus didn't fix all of Mary and Joseph's problems, nor remove them from their circumstances!
- The birth of Jesus didn't change the shepherd's circumstances—they went back to being shepherds, fulfilling their lowly position.
- God's provisions are recognized through faith and lived out in real life circumstances.

2. GOD'S PROVISION OFFERS US _____.

Isaiah 9:6-7 ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace because He alone is able to provide peace:

ABIDING PEACE COMES FROM A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- Peace means we have been pardoned from sin and reconciled to God and others!
- Choosing to focus and meditate on the reality of the Gospel will bring peace.

HIS PEACE PROVIDES US THE ABILITY TO LIVE HEALTHY LIVES—BOTH SPIRITUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

- When we trust God and His promises, we are less apt to fear, control, or escape.

HE PROVIDES US _____ OF ETERNITY WITH HIM.

John 14:27-28 ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say, “I am going away and I am coming back to you.”

- We find peace through hope and certainty of our future in Christ.

3. GOD’S ULTIMATE PROVISION IS _____.

GOD’S PLAN WAS TO SEND HIS SON TO BE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.

John 3:16-17 ¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS JESUS TALKING ABOUT? The kind that Pursues, Values, Sacrifices, and Provides.

Psalms 23 ¹The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- What am I expecting out of Christmas that God’s Story doesn’t promise?
- How are God’s provisions sufficient for me?
- What will I do to live in the peace Jesus gives?

Post Falls Campus has no services Thursday, December 26.

Passages to prepare for next week, Holiday Hangover: Galatians 2:20; Matthew 6:33; Psalm 90