

Devotional Aid for 6 July 2020 – 12 July 2020

Dear church family,

This week, we are considering the providence of God. The providence of God, as the catechism teaches, means that God sustains the whole creation by His power moment by moment and rules over and directs it in every detail so that “all things come to us not by chance but from God’s fatherly hand.”



**UPPER
HUNTER**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Do you believe it? There was a time when I struggled with this. While I vaguely believed in God who was mightier than I (as He must be if He were to save me from my troubles), I did not think of the world as something that was under God’s complete control and direction. It took some faithful bible teachers and God’s patience for me to finally come around to the picture the bible was painting for us. But when I did finally realise how far and deep God’s control went, and embraced this biblical teaching, it was a transformational experience.

Kevin DeYoung explains, “For many Christians, coming to grips with God’s all-encompassing providence requires a massive shift in how they look at the world. It requires changing our vantage point—from seeing the cosmos as a place where man rules and God responds, to beholding a universe where God creates and constantly controls with sovereign love and providential power.”

That massive shift, is what I pray for you all (if it has not happened to you yet). The biblical teaching of God’s providence means God is neither a tyrannical despot who oppresses us nor is he a freedom fighter with limited resources. Instead, God who rules and directs the whole creation does so with infinite love and wisdom, especially for us who are His children in Christ.

As you consider and meditate on this topic of God’s providence this week, I hope you are filled with thankfulness to God and prepare you for the difficult days in the future, as they will surely come.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (0425 270 854 / tim.wonil.lee@gmail.com) if you’d like to pray with me or for any other needs.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM¹

Lord’s Day 10

Q27) **What do you understand by the providence of God?**

- A) Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God
by which He upholds, as with His hand, heaven and earth and all creatures,
and so rules them that
leaf and blade,

¹ The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.

rain and drought,
fruitful and lean years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
prosperity and poverty—
all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from His fatherly hand.

Q28) **How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us?**

A) We can be patient in adversity,
thankful in prosperity,
and for the future
we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father
that nothing will separate us from His love.
All creatures are so completely in His hand
that without His will they can neither move nor be moved.

PROVERBS 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Seemingly random events are not random at all. From a flip of a coin to complex weather patterns, God is sovereign over them all. As Proverbs 16:33 says, we might be casting lots (or flipping a coin), but the result is determined by God always. In teaching this truth, the bible does not force us into a fatalistic thinking. God is not telling us that He is in complete control of all things so we might as well despair and give up on trying anything. Instead, God is like a father reassuring his daughter when she is afraid to jump into the pool. We can take on adventures in our lives rather than feeling disempowered, because we can trust God wherever we go and whatever we attempt to do. Not only that, we can also have confidence that our lives are meaningful, because nothing happens by chance, but everything is designed by God.

ROMANS 8:38–39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Most of us would readily accept the idea that God will always love us. Christians would certainly confess that God's love for us in Christ will never cease. But how can we be sure? As we live through our lives, we will have some dark and trying days. On those days, we might be tempted to doubt God's love for us. Now, Romans 8:38–39 tells us that nothing in creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ. These are two mighty verses that should defend us on those difficult days. But these two verses would be empty words if God were not indeed almighty and in control of all things. Should God be unable to keep us in love, these words would be empty promises. Is God mightier than death? Is God in control of angels and demons completely? Is God sovereign over time and whole creation? Yes, He is! So we can be sure, as Paul says here, that nothing can separate us from God's love for us in Christ.