

# Jehovah Jirah - God Provides

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Richard. I'm part of the leadership here. It's my privilege to be speaking to you this morning on the theme of God provides.

! Just a word of warning or advice or reassurance. I have 13 slides, which will come up a little bit later on. Twelve of which have scripture verses on them, some of them more than one scripture verse.

And the reassurance is I've already sent them to Mark to send out with e-news, so you don't have to quickly be dashing down the references as we go along, if I go through them too quickly.

Or you can come and give me your email address afterwards and I can send to them if you would like them directly or sooner. So this morning we're looking at another of the names of God in the Old Testament.

And we'll again see not only how that reflects his character, but also how it is borne out in Jesus' life and ministry. The name we're looking at today is Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides.

[ 1 : 12 ] The passage that we have read to us obviously talks about a specific way in which God provided for Abraham, and if you like, and provided for Isaac, because he provided a substitute for Isaac.

And that foreshadows that which he has provided for all of us in Christ Jesus. And that's where we'll be working towards through the sermon and what we look at this morning.

There is, you might find, a fair bit of overlap with some of the themes that Chris spoke about last week, with God as our shepherd, because obviously the shepherd is the one who provides an awful lot of things for the sheep.

And if God is our shepherd, he is providing for us. God is our provider. He provides for us his sheep. So before looking at the particular provision of the ram in place of Isaac, I want to spend a little bit of time looking at the different ways in which God or Jesus has provided for his people in the Bible, in the Old and New Testament.

And I will be not quoting book, chapter and verse, although I have written them down, but have listed a lot of references. And these slides will come up as we go through.

[ 2 : 34 ] May or may not tie in with what I'm actually saying at the time. Not having briefed Sam particularly over when each one should come up. And as I say, there'll be a bit of overlap with some of what Chris said last week.

So I've got to group a number of different needs or ways in which God provides for us, very loosely using something called Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

So those of you who have worked in education or health or social areas may have come across this Maslow's hierarchy. I'm not sticking to it directly.

It's just that within it, this a number of needs as groups, which I felt was helpful for looking at the way God provides for our needs this morning.

So the four groups that I'm looking at this morning are under firstly, food, water, warmth and rest.

[ 3 : 39 ] And I would like to say here, for those of you here last week, that Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes air. Or what also might be known as oxygen.

But I have not mentioned that this morning. The second area is groups together health, finance and safety. The third area lists together friendship, belonging and companionship.

And the fourth area groups together respect, self-esteem and recognition. Maslow's hierarchy of needs does not include spirituality or a belief in a God or any reference to any sort of afterlife.

So that is where I will not be sticking tightly to Maslow's hierarchy. So running through then a list of examples of the way God has provided for either individuals or for his people or groups of people in the Old and New Testament.

And running through probably fairly quickly. So we have under food, water, warmth and rest, the following examples from Exodus, manna and quail in the wilderness for the Israelites as they wandered for 40 years in the desert.

[ 5 : 02 ] God provided with no cattle, no herds, no sheep, no wheat fields, no orchards. But God provided the manna and the quail, the meat and the bread they needed for sustenance.

Jesus in the New Testament, two episodes, the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000. God is able to do it for large groups of people as well as individuals.

In the Old Testament again, Elijah, when he was exhausted, he slept, he was provided a safe place to sleep and then he was fed by the ravens.

In Genesis 21, Hagar, who was the slave girl of Abraham and Sarah, went out into the desert, wandered off expecting to die.

But she slept and God woke her and said, here is a well for you. The widow at Zarephath, when there was a famine in the land and God provided a miraculous refilling of the jar of oil and the jar of flour until such time as the rains returned.

[ 6 : 15 ] In Genesis, God makes clothes for Adam and Eve. He provides the covering that was necessary for them to prevent and cover their shame.

In the second area of health, safety and finance, we have various examples. Again, some for individuals and some in group settings.

We have Naaman being healed of leprosy in a miraculous way by having to dip himself in what he considered to be a dirty river. We have the Shunammite woman's son being brought back to life.

The ultimate health, if you like, cure. King Hezekiah was also another king in the Old Testament who was healed of something that he was expecting to die from.

And in the four Gospels, we have numerous examples of Jesus healing people, whether one-to-one or as they came to him in crowds.

[ 7 : 26 ] We have the miraculous finding of the temple tax found in the fish. There are all sorts of taxes I wish I could go out and just catch fish and find in their mouths to pay my taxes with these days.

Daniel was kept safe from the mouth of the lions in the lions' den. And his companions Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were kept safe in the fiery furnace when they should have been burnt up.

The third area of friendship, belonging and companionship. Right back at the beginning, it was not good for the man to be alone.

God created Eve to be a companion for Adam. In the book of Ruth, many people's favourite book in the Bible, I gather, Ruth commits herself to Naomi when Naomi has lost to death both of her sons.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they aren't the twelve disciples, but in those four Gospels, we hear of the twelve disciples for Jesus.

[ 8 : 33 ] Friendship, friendship group for Jesus. And a particular close friendship for Jesus was Mary, the household of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Whom described as people that Jesus loved particularly.

And in the fourth area, loosely described as self-esteem, recognition, respect and dignity.

We have Jesus talking to people and treating people with the dignity and respect that the general populace had just cast out or ignoring or felt should be punished.

When he talks to the Samaritan woman who has gone to the well on her own to avoid having to mix with other people. Or as it's likely, other people wouldn't go with her because of her reputation.

The woman caught in adultery. He does not condemn her. He encourages her to go away and sin no more. He treats her with respect.

[ 9 : 39 ] For ourselves, for humanity, in Genesis, we are made in God's image. And surely all of us believe that we have a good God.

So he must made us in his image. We must have been made well. Again, Psalm 139, a well-known psalm. You created our inmost being.

And later on, it says, your works are wonderful. So as I look around this place, I see a room full of people who are wonderful.

Who have been wonderfully made. How much more should I respect and treat you with dignity and recognition? And encourage yourselves in your self-esteem to see yourselves as people that have been made by God.

In the New Testament, we are told that as Christians, we have been chosen. We are royal. We are holy. We are no longer the depressed or repressed or beaten down, breast-beating sinners that some would have us believe.

[ 10 : 49 ] God has made us holy. Now, before looking at the passage that we had read to us, I'm going to just say that I hope that all of this is to reinforce the idea that God provides for us, and is able to provide for us in the level of our everyday life and living, our everyday needs, and our fundamental needs.

As people who are not meant to live alone, we're not meant to live in isolation. And just as Jesus tells us that those who have been trusted in small things, that have been trustworthy in small things, will be trusted with greater things.

So if we can trust God for the small things, our life, our breath, our food, our shelter, our safety, how much more should we trust him when he tells us that he can provide for our greatest need, which is our salvation?

And our life eternal. So before we turn to thinking about the sacrifice that Abraham was asked to make, just briefly a reminder that the word sacrifice comes from a Latin word, sacrificium, or it could be sacrificium, depending on your pronunciation, from two words, sacca, holy or sacred.

And faccaire, to make or to do. So sacrifice means to make something sacred, to make something holy. It doesn't mean to destroy it or burn it up or kill it or get rid of it.

[ 12 : 39 ] As in some things, colloquially we say making sacrifices. We tend to think of getting rid of them out of our lives rather than making them holy.

Now the sacrifice that Abraham was called to make, and I was very close to getting caught up in all sorts of complicated theology as I looked at this passage.

I hope to avoid that and I hope I haven't gone too far the other way. But we have, after the Exodus, and with Moses introducing the law and the sacrifices that are instituted in the temple for all different sorts of purposes, for thanksgiving, for sin offering, for forgiveness.

But before that, there was a sort of pattern of an increasing development of what sacrifice might mean. And the very first sacrifice, although it's not explicitly described as a sacrifice, again goes back to when God made clothing for Adam and Eve out of animal skins, which he could only do if they had been killed first.

And as I said earlier, a picture of how God covers their physical shame and a way later that we know he covers our psychological, our emotional, our practical shame of the way we have sinned.

[ 14 : 20 ] Shortly after, in Genesis 4, we hear how Abel brings an offering from the firstborn of the flock. So we're not specifically told that it was a sacrifice, that they were killed or they were burnt, but the emphasis is on that they were the firstborn.

And again, an indication of how further on, the firstborn becomes an important and significant factor within sacrifice. And Jesus as the only begotten, the firstborn in the new covenant.

Later on, after the flood, when God destroys all those who have rebelled against him, all those who are unworthy, Noah makes a burnt offering.

First time a burnt offering is talked about. And again, the point made here is that he burns, makes a sacrifice of animals that are considered ceremonially clean.

So we see sacrifice as coming from worship and a thanksgiving, in Noah's case, a thanksgiving for salvation and being saved through the flood.

[ 15 : 35 ] And then we move to the passage in Genesis 22, where Abraham is called to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac is considered or called his only son, even though we know there is Ishmael.

We certainly know that Isaac was the son of the promise. God had promised to Abraham that through Isaac, his descendants would be innumerable, and that through Isaac, the world would be blessed to know God.

And here God says, sacrifice him on the mountaintop. We don't know what Abraham was expecting. We probably know what he was hoping.

He was probably hoping for something like this. But he may have been expecting that if he sacrificed his son, maybe there would be some kind of resurrection. And that if he sacrificed Isaac, God would be able to bring him back to life.

But on this occasion, God provided the substitute in the ram, so that Abraham did not have to sacrifice Isaac. The person through whom the Israelites would be made God's own special people.

[ 16 : 59 ] And then we move on to Exodus later on, much, much later on, the Passover lamb, where at the time of the Passover, the Israelites were to put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts as protective from the angel of death passing over.

And the angel of death was to kill the firstborn, the firstborn of the Egyptians. But also, if you did not put the blood on your door, on your lintel, the firstborn of the Israelites and the firstborn of the flocks would also be killed by the angel of death passing over.

And that action of putting blood on the door required you actually to do something. It required you to believe that if you did that, the angel of death would pass over.

And if you did not do it, then the angel of death would not pass over, but would visit that household. And then finally, we see in the New Testament in Hebrews, we're told that Jesus offered himself as the unblemished sacrifice, the only begotten, the firstborn of the promise, the spotless, the ceremonially clean, if you like.

And the ritual sacrifices that we're told in the Old Testament that needed repeating, no longer need repeating. But Jesus is the sacrifice that has been provided for us because he is the firstborn.

[ 18 : 41 ] He is the spotless. He is the substitute for us that brings about the salvation and the forgiveness that God wants to offer us.

But just like at the Passover, we have to understand that by faith. We have to believe that it is true and we have to take action to bring ourselves to God in repentance and say, yes, I thank you for your substitutionary sacrifice.

I thank you providing a way out of my sinfulness, a way back into your kingdom and to your love. So just as Isaac, in the end, did not have to suffer death through sacrifice and separation from his earthly father, Abraham, so we no longer have to suffer death and separation from our heavenly father because Jesus has become the sacrifice for us.

for you. Hello. Thank you.