

Christ's Provision for the Church

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[0 : 0 0] want to see it so so good to see everybody we've been reading together through this book called flickering lamps christ and his church or in the church uh by henry blackaby today i just decided to stick up a picture of old henry blackaby for you um i understand that he's kind of in ailing health these days and not really ministering anymore he must be in his 80s i'm guessing um i put that up just to say that uh you know sometimes we think that you've got to somehow be young and cool and hip and whatever to serve the lord but this guy hit a mini a home run for the lord serving in a tiny little church in canada and uh they began with fewer people than we have and it's a great book and if you haven't been reading it we gave away 30 copies if you've got a copy and you've been saying i'm going to get around to reading it it's a book full of great stories of how god worked through this church and uh you it's just a wonderful book of stories that will build your faith so make time to read it let's go to the lord in prayer then as we begin lord we thank you that you work through all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances whether it's our colombian friends in the jungle standing in a creek or if it's henry blackaby standing in the snow in canada um or whether it's here in moncure working through chicken boxes lord whatever you do you do it well now god help us today to see how you provide for your work in this sun open our ears to hear in jesus name amen well this particular chapter and we only have one more sermon out of this book this is the fifth out of six sermons um in this particular chapter his main point he says the main reason that you have any needs god has a purpose in mind now whatever need that is it might be a financial need a health need a family need a job need what you got a need in your life why has god permitted it god permits needs in our life so that we can learn that he is able to provide and over and over when you experience a need and you wait and then you see how it works out oh we need to keep a record of those and we forget them all the times that god has blessed us all the times he's met our needs but that's why he permits you to have a need he wants you to see he is able to provide now our next slide in james chapter 2 verse 20 we have this very interesting verse that faith without works is dead we know that faith is not based on works you don't get to heaven by doing good works but at the same time the bible is very clear that if you have faith you will be doing some things your faith will be put into action you won't just say oh i believe in jesus and do nothing instead you will say because christ has saved me i am involved in the lord's work and faith is proved not by what we say it's proved by what we do by the action that we take now god will often lead a church to do things that seem kind of impossible if they're really listening to him he will lead them to do things that it's like how can we possibly do that that's too big for us to tackle lord you better give that assignment to a big church somewhere god does that on purpose he wants us to know that he doesn't depend on our bank account he's going to

use his bank account to do his work and he's trying to teach us a lesson in this now in the book of revelation the apostle john as as Jesus appeared to him in a vision and Jesus said write a letter to these these seven churches and each church had a different message i want to look at two different verses that relate to God's provision next slide please so here you see modern day turkey and there's where the seven churches were and some of those cities still exist and the two that we're going to look at today is first of all from revelation chapter 2 verse 9 Jesus says to the church at Smyrna i know your tribulation and your poverty and yet you are rich historically if they go back and dig through the ruins there and look at ancient writings of other sorts whatever they see that this area of Smyrna was a pretty poor area and apparently the church there was very persecuted they were locked up fired from jobs treated terribly and so they were under much tribulation and they were poor so how could Jesus say that they were rich because when it came to doing God's work they didn't have to depend on their bank account he had all the resources of heaven available to them and he wants them to see you are rich if you will trust all the resources of heaven are available to you but then he found fault with this church in Laodicea in revelation chapter 3 verse 17 Jesus said to them you say i am rich i have become wealthy and need nothing you don't know that you are wretched pitiful poor and blind historical evidence digging through the ruins Laodicea was a very rich area and from this letter we kind of get the idea that even the Christians there were pretty rich and you know you can go into different churches some churches are full of rich people and some churches aren't we're in the category that has a little bit of uh some that aren't and nobody that's really rich but a few of us that are doing okay and so just kind of a good mixture here but some churches are extremely poor or extremely wealthy that happens this church was extremely wealthy and Jesus was upset with them because they didn't think they needed anything now i want to talk about this a little bit because self-sufficiency of a wealthy church can kill a church i've seen this happen more once i've seen this happen to churches in Sanford that there would be a big prosperous church and over time a lot of wealthy people have ended up there doctors lawyers business people um you know people with wealth and as some of them start getting old they're beginning to feel like the church there they ought to see them and they're saying yeah we're doing really well why don't we sell a trust fund that will always support this church because you never know what will happen after we're gone this next generation you just never know then you say well Matt that's a great idea why would you do that well keep listening so i mean i've seen it happen i know of at least two churches in Sanford in this category there's probably four or five and so some of the wealthy people get together they'll say okay i'm going to put the church in my will and i'm going to give five hundred thousand dollars when i die and it'll go into a special trust fund and another one would say i'm going to give two million dollars

when i die it'll go into special trust fund now that fund will belong to the church they can't use any of the original principal money they can only use the interest and they can only use it to support the church well you let a church get four or five six million dollars built up like that and they don't need god anymore they don't need offerings they don't need people i was invited several years ago one Sunday to preach in a church that i didn't know that they had fallen into that circumstance but they did and i walked in there and that is a beautiful church it covers almost a whole block and uh they have a family life center they i'm not talking about first they have a family life center and they have a big uh early child care type center and a magnificent sanctuary about ten times bigger than this one i bet it will see 500 a magnificent pipe organ they have got more than one sanctuary that's the big sanctuary where they meet so i was like man i'm really uptown now i'm unbelievable rich i got in that giant basket beautiful sanctuary and the number of people there was less than the number of people sitting here this morning you said how could they keep saying they don't need people they got a trust fund they don't need god you can kill a church if they ever think that they can do everything without god's help because they're rich and jesus was warning they ought to see now we are so blessed because we got needs we've got needs needs are a blessing a church that's active has needs any active church you go to needs more people than they've got and they need some more musicians we need a drummer this morning i was enjoying our drummer who is an excellent drummer but he's not a member of this church he ought to be but that's okay god's got him somewhere else in fact he plays drums somewhere else and i'm i'm picking on him because he's for those of you that are visiting us my grandson so i can pick on him a little bit anyway he knows we love him so well what else do we need and what else do active churches need they need more money because they're trying to do things they need some repairs i wouldn't mind seeing those bathrooms over there repaired amen roger amen you know there's we've got some needs it usually an active church needs more equipment than they've got they usually need more volunteers than they've got i'd love to see somebody sometimes stand up and say i'm going to lead vacation bible school this year we have a need there we need more musicians and just whatever we need we have needs and any active church two weeks ago i was invited to go and preach at another church this was a new church meeting they don't have a building they have a need they need a building they're renting a school auditorium so i went it was uh down in harnic county and i went and i was in that auditorium and uh boy to my surprise they have a couple hundred people there and they were just really excited about the lord and uh the preacher got up and right at the beginning and he said folks let's be in prayer

we need a drummer and i said hey i know where you're coming from you know it's like any active church is seeking god and they're praying and he told the folks he said let's be in prayer about that god has a drummer somewhere and you won't believe it a week later well it actually happened in the same service at the end of the service i was up on the stage getting my stuff together and i saw some guy walk over to the worship leader and i heard him say to the worship leader you guys are looking for a drummer well i i play and i saw that pastor a week later and he said man talk about a quick answer to prayer the same day you were there god provided us with a drummer and so you know god has ways to provide for his church how does he do this well next slide god calls a church to action not based on our resources based on his bank account his provision but what we have to do is to begin by stepping out in faith here's the wrong answer for a church we've probably said this before at our church every church i've ever been around sometimes somebody will have a good idea of a way that we it's even a calling of god and good ideas are not so good sometimes let's say being led of god let's do such and such and the folks when the church will think about it and say well let's wait until we get enough money together and when we have enough money together then we'll start that ministry that is not the way god likes to operate he says when i've called you to do something you start doing it with what you got and then watch me provide that's the way god likes to work now you say matt where are you getting that from all over the whole bible just all over the whole bible joshua 315 i'm not going to put the verse up there but joshua 315 they're coming to enter into the country of israel the promised land they've been wandering in the wilderness from egypt for forty years it's time to enter the promised land and god gives these instructions it's not somebody's good idea god says here's how you're going to cross the river the river is at flood stage the bible said so it's really wide roaring water here's how you're going to cross the river tell the priest to carry the ark we're not only time to get into the ark of god but you know the ark of the covenant if you're a bible person carry it down and tell them to start walking in the water and then you'll see what i'm going to do now if i was one of those priests i would say let me stop on the edge of the water and god then you do it and then i'll walk but god said no you tell them to put their feet in the water start walking that's the step of faith and the bible says as soon as they did that and got their feet wet then the waters parted and the people were able to cross over it took the step of faith it took a step of action god had spoken to them they had to respond and begin to take action they learned that lesson again a week or so later god came and gave them a battle plan an angel appeared and said here's the battle plan to capture jericho now here's the battle plan i would have liked get together all you catapults with molten fire and flaming arrows and battering rounds and go hire another army help you you know

a nail in the middle of the night or something an attack i would have liked that battle plan but his battle plan was go over to jericho everybody just march around it and then go back and then do that for seven straight days that's the dumbest battle plan i've ever done i said but on the seventh day do it seven times then shout i'm sure the seventh day the people are thinking our leader joshua has lost his mind we've been doing this for seven days good thing the people inside this city are laughing at us what in the world but on that seventh trip around because they had stepped out in faith and started doing what god told them to do then god showed up and the walls fell down and they took the city god had a plan they needed a step of faith first and it continues through the bible let me skip to the new testament peter's in the boat jesus is walking on water now peter had a good idea but he didn't just say i've got a good idea i think i'll walk on the water he didn't do that instead he said lord tell me to come out there and then jesus said okay come on now he had a word from god you see the difference presumption is when we have a good idea lord we're gonna go buy a food truck and we're gonna start ministering in the neighborhood please bless it that's we might have a good idea but when jesus said okay come then they had a word from god and so with the word from god peter starts stepping out of the boat man if it had been me i said i'll tell you what jesus build me a platform right there first go ahead just make a platform get right there and i'll step out on that but no he had to step out faith in the word of god the word of god was come and here was the step of faith oh my goodness can you imagine oh it's working well we know the rest of the story he took his eyes off of jesus but he stepped out in faith here's another real good example lazarus has died somehow when i said that i felt like i was the beginning of the christmas story marley was dead okay lazarus had been dead for four days jesus shows up and he says to the family move that stone out of the way that's just about the craziest instruction you could ever give to a grieving family can you imagine somebody showing up at a funeral and telling the family um four days after the funeral going to the grave stop and the family say dig it up that's what he's asking them to do and lazarus sister says lord i love you but he's been dead for days it's going to smell bad maybe you want to go in and look at him or something but it's going to smell bad and jesus says believe roll the stone away they could have left the stone there and lazarus and still be dead and in the grave today it took their step of faith they heard the word of the lord the word of the lord roll the stone out of the way they had to take a step of faith in action

[20 : 13] he hadn't been raised yet it would have been easier if they heard lazarus inside beating on the wall and yelling let me out of here that would have been easier it wouldn't have taken any faith to say he said move the stone all these people here we're going to be the laughing stock of the whole community let's roll the stone out of the way and when they rolled it out of the way you know the rest of the story when jesus said lazarus come forth and they got their brother back alive from the dead amazing miracle over and over and over in the bible in the bible god calls his people to take a step of faith not to wait until it doesn't take faith anymore take the step of faith will you ever fail?

sure, you'll fail sometimes sometimes you're going to try something and you really didn't hear from god or you didn't really do it the way that you that he kind of had in mind you know but overall if you'll do this God's going to be providing let's look at how he does this next slide here's how god kind of leads a church what we've just been talking about number one a need becomes obvious or an opportunity comes up i'm going to use two or three examples two or three examples we've had recently in my prayer i mentioned chicken boxes well now that was an opportunity we found out that there were going to be free chicken boxes being made in siler city they needed somebody to help pack them and so as a church sees an opportunity they begin to pray about it and you say Lord is this something you want us to do and then God raises up a leader in this case it was Roger Pasture and then God shows how to do it so we began to talk about it in deacons meetings and stuff we begin to say well how do we do this how many people are we going to include

Mount Olive Church are we going to do the whole community how do we find out who needs chicken boxes and we began to God was kind of showing us how to do it and then God provided the resources the resources meaning enough people showed up to pack 10,000 boxes in two hours and then the resources some people from our church in this case Steve Tybersky and Mark Mathis, young Mark showed up over there and picked up the chicken boxes and brought them back here and then he provided the other end people like some of you that came and picked up boxes and took them to people that needed them and distributed them this is how God works it began with in this case an opportunity sometimes you hear about or see a need it might be a need in your own community here's another one we're going to have prayer in a little while because we're sending 11 people to New York City this Thursday we first heard about this I guess when was it September or something that it was in August it was in August it was in August that there were a group of Baptist going to go to New York City and give away coats to homeless people winter coats can you imagine how cold it must get in New York have you heard on the news how many immigrants are in New York?

how many refugees? I'll bet you those people that came up from South America or wherever they probably don't have a winter coat I know some of you wish they would go back home but look they're in New York and they're cold and so we're going to go up there now one of the first things about doing that was you mean flying in an airplane?

some of our people had been in an airplane before so like you mean like really? you mean flying in an airplane? or New York City? that place, have you seen what's happening in New York City?

[24 : 19] the news is crazy up there sometimes so you know there was some doubt there about whether or not how to do it and then here was another little challenge they suggested that for every person that was going to go you ought to have at least 30 coats so we would have 11 people going from our church that would be 330 coats and I remember thinking good man there's not 330 coats in Lee County Jordan can correct me if I'm wrong because she works at the association office by the time our church threw in about 225 or so and other churches and other churches the total I think was around 700 and 846 846 coats 846 we were praying for 330 and God says I've got a provision I've got a bank account in heaven that is my pockets are so deep step out in faith and say you'll do it and watch me provide so we're going up there our association to send with our team 870 coats somebody say praise the Lord praise the Lord well we got another opportunity we just got a gift of five bushels of sweet potatoes now that's an opportunity and so in two weeks while the ladies are eating cookies that's alright ladies enjoy your cookies save a few for us men folk

Becky Becky don't you come home without some cookies but we're asking for the men or children whoever's not involved we're going to gather at church two weeks from now on a Saturday morning what time is it Glenn?

well actually we're going to try to do some breakfast before we take them out what time is breakfast? 830 830 we're going to get together we'll eat breakfast and then we're going to pack bags John's already ordered 50 bags and we're going to put potatoes in those bags and we're going to spread out in this neighborhood and we're going to knock on doors and say hi we're from Moncure Baptist Church we wanted to give you some sweet potatoes Merry Christmas Happy New Year God bless you we love you and you know just bless the community just bless the community we have an opportunity God's provided a leader for it he provided Susan and Mike were the leaders on getting the New York idea going somebody else was the leader on the sweet potato idea but anyway God blesses and leads and then he provides the resources we just need to go now the one thing maybe that we could definitely improve on I'm sure there's more than one we probably don't pray together enough as a church

I know y'all pray individually but our church doesn't really have like a prayer meeting so that was a need really a prayer meeting we ought to have a prayer meeting and so I've been praying about that some of you have been praying about that waiting on the Lord and then I should have asked him what I could have mentioned his name but I will God laid it on Glenn's heart we ought to have a prayer meeting he's on the prayer team and so he talked with John and me about it and we're going to discuss it again with the deacons tomorrow night but starting in January on every second and fourth Wednesday night at 630 Glenn's going to be here any of you who can I'll be here as often as I can but we're going to open up the church and we're going to get together and just pray we're going to pray and say Lord bless and use our church for your glory what projects would you have us to do who can we help Lord bless

Lord yes we'll pray for the sick but it's not just to get together to pray for the sick Christians that's easy to do we will really be praying for you know pray thy kingdom come thy will be done we're going to focus on that well my last slide I need to hurry and wrap it up this is another important principle when you're doing things for God he's also going to ask you what's in your hand now any of you familiar with this verse of scripture where does it come from?

[28 : 59] Exodus Exodus and whose story? Moses so God called Moses to do the impossible he was 80 years old I'm about to fall down the stairs because I'm almost 80 years old when you're 80 almost 80 be careful anyway he's 80 years old and God says Moses go down to Egypt the most powerful richest country in the whole world the most powerful military in the whole world and go to their king a dude that they call Pharaoh and tell him let your slaves go all million of them or however many there were and Moses said what you or I would have said God you've got the wrong man there is no way in the world I am a shepherd I don't know anything about anything I cannot possibly do it and if you re-read it's like it's in Exodus chapter 2 and 3 right through there he came up with every excuse in the world and finally God just said to him hold it right there what have you got in your hand?

and he said a stick good we're going to use that and with that stick you might remember he turned the water into blood he released all ten of the plagues using his staff he came to the Red Sea and he held his staff out and the waters opened when they were fighting whoever the Midianites are about somebody as long as he held his arms and his staff up they were winning God used that staff he hit the people who were thirsty he struck a rock and water came out and gave the people water God used his stick to defeat the greatest army in the world so the principle there is not only does God provide but some of his provision he says what have you got?

are you using what you've got? and I looked down a list of our membership and all and I thought okay what have we got? we've got a pretty good building we've got a lot of willing people there's churches three times this big that don't have as many workers as we've got I mean workers we've got people who will work praise God for you, I love you we've got good worship we've got biblical preaching and then I looked down at our membership and I realized wow we've got a bunch of teachers a bunch of really good cooks a bunch of handymen a bunch of mechanics a bunch of electricians we've got some computer guru experts we've got some artists we've got some musicians and singers we've got some accountants we've got some people who have been managers we've got some truck drivers we've got some medical workers I'm sure that God is looking at us and saying what's in your hand?

and it makes me wonder how will God use these resources and I think we have to keep our ears open as we pray Lord, you've put together this group of people with all of these talents what would you have us do in the kingdom of God and in this world to make this world a better place?

we need to focus on the big kingdom not our little church the big kingdom of God I just think it's neat what we prayed about this morning and what Steve said about Steve Tybersky and Phil Stone Phil Stone are both preaching at other churches now, you can look around and say we've got too many empty pews we're pitiful I'd rather see the pews empty if you're out ministering somewhere in the world hallelujah what a day it would be I mean, it's not going to happen we're probably not all called to do this but what a day it would be that one of us would show up and there's nobody here because everybody else is out somewhere ministering that would be a church in action it's also good to come together and worship but you know the main way the world tries to decide if your church is successful or not they count beings in other words, they count people how many of you got coming to church?

[33 : 20] that's all man, you guys are failing God, the Bible never ever talks about that it's important how many people come together for worship what's important is are we hearing the Lord?

is he directing us to take action? and are we by faith stepping out and doing it? and if we're doing that it doesn't matter how many of you and how many of me and all there are are we serving the Lord or not?

and somebody will say so good, I got time to talk about the budget and then I'm going to hush out okay I grew up very Baptist my daddy was a Baptist preacher they used to do this thing filling out pledge cards how many of you have ever been in a church where they filled out pledge cards?

okay, you know what some of you know what I'm talking about how much money are you, if God provides it how much will you promise to give this year? so everybody would fill out the pledge cards the finance team committee would get that together and add it all up and say okay, we've got \$200,000 that we're expecting so how are we going to spend it?

well, this much will go for the youth and this much for literature and this much for children and this much for that and the pastor and this and then, oh, we're running out of money let's, okay, we're going to take some back from the children and we're going to put that over here on this and oh, we can't spend quite as much on that revival meeting so we'll move it over and they play around with here's how much we're going to get that is a ridiculous way to run a church budget now, the way we run a church budget you know, I always say, Lord, don't let me be bragging but Paul said, I will boast in the Lord so now I'm boasting that this is how the Lord has let us invite you we get our team leaders together and we say, what are you all planning to do this year?

[35 : 23] and they say, well, like the children's team we're going to plan to do this and this and this and this we've got an activity about every other month for the children, you know and so how much money will that take? oh, about \$900, okay, put that down what's this team, they owe about \$2,000, put that down what do we think, what's the electricity, gas, probably going to run, the heating bills, etc.

oh, about, okay, put that down we got any special projects we want to do? yeah, we need to repair this or that or buy some equipment write that down and when we get all through, we say, oh, plus we're going to support all these missionaries how much is that?

okay, put that down we get through, we add it all up and we say, that's the budget this is what God has called us to do and then I like this it's no way to run a business but I like this if something else comes up during the year that we didn't expect instead of saying, well, it's not in the budget the deacons, the pastors, we'll talk about it, we'll pray about it and we feel like this is really needing to be done we'll say, just go ahead and give money to that project let's just do it and it'll work out somehow, God will provide and we've done that many, many times and God's always provided and we've never now Gay's been here longer than me and she's been our treasurer a long time I'm getting ready to say this since I've been here, I don't think we've ever come up short we've always been able to pay all of our bills and Gay, if I'm lying, don't tell anybody it makes a better sermon is it true?

I think since I've been here, we've never come up short of paying a bill it's been, it's been good good so, God has a way of providing you use your resources and God will provide and don't look at Him to what you think you can afford how will we ever win the world to Christ if we only use the resources that we have we have to use God's resources to win the world to Christ so, that's today's sermon and thank God that Henry Blackley wrote that better than I did in chapter 5 in his book you ought to read it so, musicians, if you will come I'm going to lead us in prayer Lord, we just praise you and thank you that you are able to provide give us faith, help us be a people of faith and God, if I have bragged where I shouldn't have Lord, let us not become proud of all we know that it's only because of you we completely depend upon you we completely depend upon the blood of Jesus forgiving our sins we completely depend upon you providing the monies and the opportunities and the needs and God, it's all about you and it's not about us and Lord, we are small and we are few help us to have new dreams and help us to attempt to do things and watch you provide in Jesus name we pray

Amen Let's stand together