

## God will supply your every need Part 2

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 10 January 2021

Preacher: Daniel Ralph

[ 0 : 0 0 ] that we read last week in Philippians 4, 19, and then turn to the book of Ephesians for our second reading. So our first reading is in Philippians chapter 4, verse 19.

And Philippians chapter 4, verse 19 says this, now hear God's word, and my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

The second reading is found in Ephesians chapter 2, and it is in verse 10. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10, just a few pages back.

And again, it reads, now hear God's word, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. We are God's workmanship, created for good works, prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Well, if I could just introduce this morning's message by stating that it ties in very much with last week's message and the midweek Bible study. Imagine it this way, that if last week was the frame of the door and Wednesday night was the hinge, then today this message is the door itself, that all three fit together, that all three fit together, but all three are independent. They have a unity in that they are found together, but they each have their distinct part.

[ 1 : 5 5 ] In part one last week, we understood how important it was to be reminded that God will supply your every need because God is able to supply your every need. And he didn't say that God is able, and then we're left questioning whether or not he would. It was a reminder that God will supply your every need. And of course, when that is taken to God in prayer, and we pray things because we feel that we are in need of them, and God doesn't answer the prayer at the time that we have prayed them, then it is a reminder from God that we don't need it, or that we don't need it at the point that we have prayed for it. And God is teaching us through answering our prayers and through not answering our prayers, what we need, when we need it, and of course, why we need it. In the midweek study, we understood the importance of Christ holding all things together. And as Christ holds all things together, we understand this idea of preservation, that God preserves us from one moment to the next, from one day to the next day, from one week to the next week, month to month, year to year, until that day he calls us home into his presence, into glory. And this idea of preservation requires needs to be met.

In other words, if I am to live in the future, then God will need to supply those needs for the future that I am to live in, a future that I'm not completely aware of. And so today, we come to this verse in Ephesians, though reminding ourselves of the verse in Philippians, that we are, in the final analysis, at the end of the day, God's workmanship. As it says in Philippians, that he who began a good work in us will complete that work. He will not give up. He will continue until we are the way that God wants us to be. So God will never give up on you. God is never finished with you. You will one day be complete in Christ, but we're not there yet. We are a work in progress, and the worker is God himself. Now, God uses many means and methods to shape us and to change us, but it is God who is the workman. And God is at work in us in order to will and to work according to his good pleasure. And as it says here in Ephesians, that God has created us. We are his workmanship, created for good works, that we are to do good things, and those good things bring pleasure to God, and they are the things that we have been called to walk in. And so let me try and summarize where we are. God will supply our every need, but we don't always know what our needs are, the timing of our needs, or why we actually even need them. But then as we come here, we must recognize that there is a distinction between our needs and our desires, and the needs that are often associated with our desires. So we may desire to go a certain place, and therefore we need certain needs to be fulfilled in order for that opportunity to take place. And the difficulty is that sometimes it's very difficult to understand and keep the distinction between what we need and what we desire and the needs of those desires.

This can cause the Christian to sometimes be confused about what to pray about, sometimes confused about the future. Why doesn't God act? Why doesn't he help me here? Why doesn't he provide this need? I could do good work there. And yet our desires and our needs are not met because they are not God's needs for us.

And this tells us that our needs are submissive or live in submission to the overall will of God, that God has created us for good works, that he has planned beforehand that we should walk in them. In other words, our work detail has been given to us by God, and that we should desire and learn to desire what it is that God would have us do in his world. This is what it means to come and submit and understand God's will.

[ 6 : 49 ] But that doesn't mean that we are stripped from all kinds of desires, as if that we couldn't desire the right things and that they couldn't be fulfilled. Rather, it's the case that they will be, but they are as we delight in the Lord. So as I said, we can pray at a time and receive, and we can pray at a different time and not receive, and God is teaching us what we need and when we need it, and more importantly, why we need it. The temptation is, of course, to think that we always need something sooner than what we actually need it. Sometimes it's tempting to believe that we need something for purposes of comfort rather than purposes of growth. And so most of our needs can often fall into the category of protective hedges, that I want to be kept from certain pitfalls. I want to be kept from a certain type of future, and I'm asking God to provide those needs that will keep me from my fears. And that's perfectly understandable, but that may not be what God has created us for. God has created us to be his people, to fulfill his plans in his world. And we ought not to want a different type of life. We ought not to want something different than what God has for those whom he has saved, those whom he has created for good works. But of course, we are a people who believe that sometimes our will can live independently of God's will. And this is a hard lesson to learn, but it is one that we must learn.

Now, as we saw in our midweek meeting and our midweek study, that the idea of the future is a very important one. Firstly, we don't know what the future is. Secondly, we know that Christ holds all things together. We don't know what our needs will be in the future, but we know and have been promised that God will supply every need. And so we're able to be positive about the future. We're able to be positive that we will make it through the future, because God will supply every need for that future. What we don't know is what that future is. But the fact that God preserves our life, that he holds our life together, is because we are his workmanship, and we have been created for a particular purpose. And it is the will of God that we fulfill that purpose. And what may look very small and insignificant in your minds and hearts, or even in the eyes of the world, to God is of supreme importance. So much so that he has planned it beforehand that we should walk in them. So this is no small thing, to be in God's work detail, to be in the place where God would have us understand what he wants us to do.

Well, as we come to understand these things in the relationship to our needs, we understand that the world is an incredibly difficult place to live in, even prior to COVID-19 and the lockdowns. Therefore, we are able to understand that it's even more difficult to live in now. And then when we think that we are fairly established in the world, we then turn our attention, because we're not selfish, to our children and to our grandchildren. And we think, well, how are they going to be able to manage in a world that is become increasingly more difficult to make your way in? And this is where we have to come back to God's word and remind ourselves that God's grace is sufficient, that God will supply our every need. And it really doesn't matter if those needs increase, and it really doesn't matter if the needs of our children are four times the amount of what our needs are at this present time, because the promise remains. And the promise is that God will supply our every need. And so in many ways, the difficulty of the situation that we live in is somewhat not important, as we consider the God who is able to supply every need at any time in the future.

[ 11 : 41 ] So the future can have highs, and it can have lows. And we can appreciate Paul's comments of how he has learned both to deal with riches and poverty, that people go through highs and lows, and in both cases, God supplies our every need. But God supplies our every need by giving things and by taking things away.

And this is just another reminder that we don't always know what we need. We don't see often that we need things to be taken away from us. Often, we focus many of our needs on what we want, or what we think we should have. And yet what God is teaching us, that because we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that sometimes we need things to be taken

away. Because we are taking shape, that he who began a good work in us, will bring that work to completion. God is shaping us. And the way that he shapes is the same way that a sculptor might shape, that he adds some clay, and he takes some away. The way the potter works, adding some and taking some away, so that the final product, the final what is made in the hands of God, takes the shape that he wants it to. Well, this is how God works. And this should give us a great deal of confidence, to know that as we sit here in our homes, or wherever we may be, that we can recognize whatever the world throws at God's people, God will supply every need.

And we're able to have the confidence to teach our children, to be able to say, that put your trust in God. Because whatever the world can throw at you, God is able to supply your every need in a future that you know nothing about. So there's a great deal of confidence here to understand these promises properly understood. That yes, we belong to a God who can give and take away, and therefore we have to understand our needs in the light of God's will. We can also have the confidence to say that because God's grace is sufficient, that whatever I face tomorrow, God will supply that need, whatever need that may be. Well, now we need to move on to the idea of God's purposes and our desires. That because we belong to God, we are his workmanship, we are being molded and shaped by God, and God will supply every need. We now recognize that every need that God will supply will always be consistent with the good works that he would have us to do. Many people can tell many different stories about how God has provided for them at the last minute. Just at the point where it looks as if it's going to go over the edge, the tipping point has been reached.

God is able to reverse the trend, that he is able to reverse the situation by providing. And our desire and our faith has been put to the test to see if we hold true to God, or we seek to take matters into our own hand. But what God does is he shapes us through our desires by allowing us to see what his will is in a fallen world. And his will is to shape us so that his will can be fulfilled through us in this world. And here's an example from the Old Testament.

[15 : 36] You might remember when King David, a man of war, a man who had blood on his hands, was very different than his son, King Solomon, who was not really a man of war in the same way, prized with asking God for wisdom and receiving it, though one of the most foolish men that lived, as you consider the decisions he made, the half-hearted king. But King David, you would realize, came before God with a desire to build a temple for the Lord. Now, it was the Lord's will to have a temple built. It was the Lord's will that this would happen in the future.

And David brings himself before the Lord, and what we begin to see is that David's desire is exactly matched with God's will. But not exactly matched with God's will, because it was not God's will that David should build the temple, but Solomon's. David then had to live with perhaps the disappointment of not being able to build the temple, but lived with the encouragement that he would be the one to namely provide for the temple to be built, that that's how God would use him. Now, God had his reasons for why David wouldn't build the temple and why it would be Solomon. The point here is for us to realize that sometimes we can have desires that are completely consistent with the will of God, and yet, at the same time, not completely consistent. David desired to build a temple for the Lord.

The Lord's will is that a temple would be built, but the Lord's will was that it would be built through Solomon, not David. And sometimes that is very hard for us as Christians to accept, to learn and to appreciate that what we want is exactly the same as what God wants, but God is going to do it somewhere else, that God is going to do it through someone else.

And this is where we can appreciate that success and failure is in the hands of God, that we are his workmanship created for his good works. We don't get to determine what we do and don't do. We don't get to determine the success and failure or perhaps the attention we receive from being able to do that, because at the end of the day, it's not our work. It is God's. But we are people with emotions. We are people with feelings. We are people with hopes and desires and aspirations and ambitions.

[18 : 24] And we ought not to seek great things for ourselves, but we ought to seek those great things for God. And so sometimes it's very difficult when we're all praying for the church to be revived, and then God revises it in a different country. Or we have that Robert Murray McShane experience, where he faithfully teaches in his church and then leaves to go to another church, and revival breaks out in the previous one. And then in his second church, he teaches faithfully and then moves on to a next one, and revival breaks out in the church that he has just left, and then not long

after he passes away at a young age. Why does that happen? Is it because Robert Murray McShane would have had a terrible problem with pride, that he would have perhaps come to believe that that work was the work of his hands rather than God's? Well, quite possibly.

And perhaps God was giving and taking away to shape him in a way where he didn't become prideful. Perhaps that's why these things happen. Well, whatever the case may be, God is supplying every need.

But he isn't always supplying it in line with our desires, even if our desires are completely consistent with God's word. And so with that in mind, let's just think about the future.

The future that God has for us is a future that has already been planned beforehand. The future that God has for us is something that he has already determined the good works that we should walk in. All the tools have been laid out. All the paths have been set straight. We are to commit our way to the Lord, and the Lord will act. We are to delight ourselves in the Lord, and he will then give us the desires of our heart. This is why man can make plans, but the Lord directs his step. This is why the rulers of this world are directed by the God who holds them like a stream of water in his hand, directing them wherever he pleases. We may look at the world as if it is out of control, but it is very much within God's control, regardless of what we may believe is happening or why it is happening. Therefore, as a church, we need to consider a few basic things. Number one, that to whom much has been given, much is expected. I would ask you to look at what you have been given.

Look at what you have been given and understand why God has given it to you. And those who have been given much, much is expected. And those who have been given little must prove themselves to be faithful in the little that they have been given.

[ 21 : 33 ] And then God, of course, gives the increase. Those who will be faithful in a little will be faithful in much, but we tend to believe that we would be faithful only at the point when God gives us enough to be faithful. That if I had a million pounds, look how much I could do for the Lord. But if you can't do that with 10 pounds, you are very unlikely to do it with a million pounds. No, God has it right, and this is something we must understand. So look at what God has given you. Given you a wife, children, a church that you belong to, perhaps money, perhaps not. Perhaps health, perhaps not.

Perhaps mobility, perhaps cars, perhaps skills. Look at what God has given you. Well, whatever God has given you, if he has given much, then much is expected from you, because we are God's workmanship. And if he has given little, then this is God's encouragement to us, that those who will be faithful with the little will be eventually faithful with much. But these are lessons to be learned. And so we desire and we pursue God's will. We will not seek great things for ourselves, but we will seek them for God. And we will trust him with our desires, that he will fulfill them, and that he will fulfill our desires that are completely consistent with what is revealed in his word. And so these verses are not just to address individual Christians with their individual skills. It is to address the whole church as a body. That what we have been given by God, and what we have not been given by God, determines what we can do. And the reason it determines what we can do is because without it, we would labor in vain. And we need to be able to tell the difference between blessing and non-blessing, so that we can tell the difference between when we are laboring in vain and when we are laboring in the blessing of God. What God gives in terms of blessing will determine what we can effectively do. And here's the real tension point. And the tension point is this, that God's blessing doesn't always turn up where our hard work is present. It's possible to labor in vain. That God's blessing doesn't always turn up in the place of our strivings. Sometimes God would have us strive and understand the difficulty of the work. But nonetheless, this is an opportunity for us to appreciate and to understand and to cry out to God to bless us, to understand the distinction between our needs and our desires, and the distinction between being able to labor in a work without blessing and to labor in a work with blessing, so that we would avoid the one and do the other.

So as I conclude, let me conclude with a couple of considerations. In light of everything that we have and do receive from God's word, we can be absolutely confident that God will supply our every need. But God will supply our every need in the same way that he has supplied people's every need in the past. To some he has given, to others he has taken away.

To the same person he has given and taken away. And God would treat us in very much the same way. God often takes away from us so that we don't end up trusting in things rather than God, which is a historic problem with God's people. But God is not like the parent who sets his children in front

of the TV because he's busy. And he just needs his children to be occupied with something so that the parent can get on with what needs to be done. That is not how God works. No, we are his workmanship created for good works.

[ 25 : 54 ] What God is doing is what God is doing with us. What God will do is what God will do through us. And this is something that we should have a great deal of confidence and assurance in and excitement that whatever is going to happen in the world will happen through his people.

Now, why does this matter? Well, it matters for this very simple reason. That God's will of what we need is not the same as our will of what we need.

So the needs that God sees are according to his will. The needs that he sees but does not necessarily respond to are the needs of our will. And since we are called to submit to the will of God, then we are called to understand that the needs that he supplies are needs that will seek to fulfill his will through us. And we shouldn't want it any other way. And so let me remind you with this final thought. That it may be very difficult to see your way forward. And it may not be that difficult to see your way forward depending on what age and stage you are. The prayers of a retired person whose mortgage is paid off living fairly comfortably in their home is very different than a young man with perhaps five children, two children, or three children with a wife and a mortgage to pay and lots of other issues.

But whoever you are and whatever situation you're in, you're God's workmanship. And God's grace is sufficient. And therefore, we must understand that what God does in us individually is different than what God does in us as a church. But God is able to work all of those things together because his church is his people. So remember this, that even if the needs of your future are greater than what they are right now, you have been promised by your God, my God, as Paul says to the Philippian church, that he will supply every single one of those needs. So it really doesn't matter how difficult the future becomes.

What matters is will God keep his promise? And the answer is yes, every single time. Well, may God bless you and may God keep you in your home today and throughout this next week.

[ 28 : 30 ] Thank you. We will have our final hymn. And after that, we'll have the final exhortation for this morning. Thank you. Thank you.

Therefore, no, not a single day can go by without the Lord taking care of you. Not a single day.

And so as today and as tomorrow comes, may the Lord bless you and keep you. And may you be encouraged that God will take care of you in those days ahead. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.