2017. 7. 2. Feast of Harvest Sunday Morning Service

Title: God the Father’s Providence

Passage: <John 4: 24>

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

<Introduction>

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, members of over 11,000 branch churches in Korea and all over the world, local sanctuary members, those who are attending the service on the Internet worldwide, GCN viewing audiences, (children of Sunday school),

Today is the Feast of Harvest Sunday. Feats of Harvest is a festivity in which the sons of Israel harvested wheat or barley and gave thanks, giving the first fruit to God. Let us give all thanks and glory to God the Father who has let us bear abundant fruits in spirit and body in the first half of this year, and also for protecting us like the apple of His eye.

How thankful have you been in the first half of this year? David said in Psalm 40:5: “Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done, and Your thoughts toward us; there is none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, they would be too numerous to count.”

This is the confession we should make as well. How many are the miracles, signs and wonders that God has performed in our lives? And how many and how great are God’s thoughts, namely His providence toward us? If we understand this, we cannot help but be thankful.

Brothers and sisters, who would be happier, one who is thankful in all things or one who is not as thankful? Of course, it’s the one who gives thanks very much. And there is a secret in giving thanks a lot. It’s to be changed by the truth as His children so as to understand the heart of God who is spirit.

The more we understand the Father’s heart, the more we understand the good will and love of the Father toward us, and thereby becoming more thankful. In this message, I’ll introduce to you 3 characteristics of those who are thankful based on the example of David’s life. May this message be life to you, so that you will all live a happy life full of thanksgiving, I pray this in the name of the Lord!

<Main>

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

**Those who give thanks, first of all, believe that God the Father gives them only the best things.**

After all, this means that they believe the heart of the Father God is goodness and love itself. God gives us the best things for each of us during the course of our lives. I’m sure you’ve all felt such goodness and love of the Father.

Just as parents express their love to their children, God also expresses His goodness and love toward His children that fill His heart fully. The testimonies you have are the evidence of it.

Of course, when you have weak faith, you sometimes might not believe that God is giving you only the best. Especially, you might feel that way if blessings don’t come to you in a way you expected. But if you try to understand God’s love and goodness, you’d still believe that God is your Father who gives you only the best and give Him thanks.

This was the case with David. David was anointed as the next king when he was just a young man tending the flock. Did he prosper all the time from then on? No. The reality he had to face was that he was wrongfully accused as a traitor, and he was on the run in the wilderness and in other countries. In the face of threats to his life, he even had to pretend to be crazy. While seeking food for his people he was also severely mocked by a rude man like Nabal.

Once, he saved the inhabitants of Keilah from the Philistines, but they informed Saul of his whereabouts. David was betrayed, and once his own men who were following him tried to stone him to death.

So, did David complain against God? No, but rather, while he was going through so many years of trials, he left behind so many beautiful psalms that are loved by countless people. Many of you remember Psalm 23, and it is one of the most beautiful.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

David praised God day and night, no matter what the circumstance, and God gave him the best thing s after all. Namely, God gave him the whole nation of Israel. God let him become a king who was loved by God and the people, and to whom the neighboring countries brought tributes.

Brothers and sisters,

What is the best thing that God wants to give to each of you? **It is the prosperity of your soul.** There might be some trials along the way. However, trials are only a step toward blessings that let you cultivate sincere heart and perfect faith.

Therefore, I hope you will believe in God who gives to you only the best, not only when you receive healing and blessings but also in difficulties; and not only when things are going well but also when it seems your desires are not granted. You should not complain or resent the situation, but you should try to understand why God has allowed to you the circumstances in which you find yourself. Furthermore, you should give thanks from the depth of your heart. This kind of act is an act of faith to earnestly seek God who is spirit.

Then, just as God gave David victory, and just as it has always been the case in the history of our church, He will give you the rain after drought and show you the clear sky after heavy rain. He recovers and heals hopeless people like Lazarus who had been dead and entombed. He plentifully fills the empty container of flour and jar of oil. Above all else, He lets us cast away sins and evil quickly and become His true children. I hope you will believe in this fact and give thanks to our Father God who gives us only good things in every matter.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

**Those who give thanks in all things, secondly, believe that God’s thoughts are higher than theirs.**

Isaiah 55:9 says, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” 1 Corinthians 1:25 first half says, “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

God cannot possibly have any foolishness. It just means that God’s wisdom is beyond any comparison with human wisdom. For example, in doing a certain work, a man who has physical limits can see only one way of doing the work. However, God who is spirit can see 2, 3, or 4 ways or more that are better than the first method.

Those who believe in this God will acknowledge the fact that their idea might be different from God’s. Also, even if God leads them to a way that they never expected, they still give thanks. They don’t complain thinking, “This way looks better, and this methodology seems better, but why does God say they’re not?”

It was the case with David. For example, David wanted to build the Temple and dedicate it to God. He said, “I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains.” He was very sorry that he was living in a palace while the ark of God didn’t have a proper place to be housed. How lovely is his heart?

But God’s will was different. Through Prophet Nathan, God let him know that after his death the Temple would be built by his son, Solomon. The reason was that as a soldier David caused too much bloodshed in numerous battles. Also, God knew that Solomon’s time was the best time to build the Temple.

So, how did David react to it? He didn’t resent God’s decision nor did he try to go against God’s will thinking, “I have the wealth and power to do it, so why wouldn’t God let me do it?”

Through the inspiration of the Spirit, God let me know the confession of David’s heart that he offered up to God at that time. It is also in my book *Tears*. Let me introduce to you a part of it.

“Father, because I know God’s will, I do not insist upon my desires. I am satisfied with the fact that the Father accepted my wish to offer a temple that contains my heart to my beloved Father. How much is the grace that the Father has given me, and how could I not understand the Father’s heart and the Father’s will in it? The Father has always been faithful to me; He is my Father who loved me and opened my way.” Amen.

Although he couldn’t dedicate the Temple, he prepared the materials for the construction as well as the organizations such as the choir and voluntary workers for the Temple. David was a spiritual child.

He was good at strategies, but he still inquired of God for the minutest details. When he went against God’s will without noticing it, he humbled himself and repented as soon as he realized it, and he then immediately turned from his ways in accordance with God’s will. His humbleness didn’t change even after he became the king and the nation became strong to enjoy great honor.

He always sought the will of God. Psalm 25:5 expresses this attitude of David very well. It says, “Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.” David asked the will of God in whatever he did.

Now, how is it with you? When you’re in a low position in spirit and body, most of you’d easily admit that your will can be different from God’s. But as you become more experienced and your positions become higher, your heart is also lifted up. If you become a teacher or a leader, you are likely to become a spiritual adult. Rather than asking God’s will all the time like David did, you think you know the will of God and insist upon your opinion.

Brothers and sisters, this church today was not made by men’s will or wisdom. It was made only in the providence of God the Father. From the time God called me as His servant and let me open this church, there was hardly anything that was in agreement with men’s thoughts. And yet, I always followed the will of the Lord and not mine, and I always sought the will of God the Father.

Now, as I am the leader of a global denomination that has 11,000 branch and associative churches, have I changed my attitude? There is nothing that has been changed. God’s will always come first. Of course, because God commanded me to act on my own to fulfill the providence of the end time, now there are more things that I have to decide on my own. However, even for this I am only following the will of God. As for me personally, I find it much easier just to follow the guidance of the Father.

Of course, if your fleshly natures or ego do not die away, and so if you have fleshly thoughts, it is something very difficult. But for those who denied themselves and are ready to take the cross, it is the easiest thing in the world to follow the will of the Lord, which is the will of God the Father.

We can understand this just by considering the situation I am in now. How good would it be if we can just evangelize the whole world and build the Canaan Sanctuary and Grand Sanctuary as quickly as possible! But as you see, I can’t see well, I can’t hear well, and I’ve lost my memory power.

So, should I complain about it? Or should I impatiently try to accomplish my own will? Never! I only seek the will of the Father. When you pastors, leaders, and also laymen members do your church duties, and also in your everyday life, seek the will of God and not your own will.

How should you seek God’s will? You have to believe that God’s thoughts are higher than yours, and you have to pay attention to the word of God and the voice of your shepherd. Also, you have to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit by praying at all times in Spirit. In doing so, may God’s will be beautifully accomplished in your lives, I pray this in the name of the Lord!

Dear brothers and sisters,

**Those who give thanks in all things, thirdly, obey the will of the Father God.**

Those who believe that God gives them the best things and His thoughts are higher than theirs, they will obey God’s will once they learn what it is. It was the case with David. 1 Kings 15:5 talks about the reason why God let the nation of Israel have the best times under David and Solomon. It says, “because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.”

Of course, we know that David thoroughly repented of taking Bathsheba and letting Uriah die, and he cast away the sinful nature of it going through the punishment of God. Through this, God established David as a noble man in heaven who enjoys honor forever as well as a famous and excellent king on this earth.

Brothers and sisters, those of you who have experience it must know how beautiful the fruit of obedience is. When you obeyed the Bible, when you obeyed the words of God, and when you obeyed the teaching of the shepherd, what was given to you? It was answers to prayers, blessings and your prosperity.

It is as Isaiah 1:19 says “If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land;” In the second half of this year, there will be many areas from which you will harvest your fruits through obedience. For starters, we have the leadership conference and the summer retreat soon.

God the Father said, if you trust the 99% of the justice filled up by the shepherd, and if your faith does not waver that He will give you the answer, and furthermore if you prepare for them with true repentance, prayers or fasting, then He will definitely give you the answers to your prayers. Therefore, I hope you will receive the answer you desire through willful obedience and offer up thanksgiving. Also, I pray in the name of the Lord that you will always live a life full of thanksgiving.

<Conclusion>

Dear brothers and sisters,

Who do you think God was in David’s life? For David, God the Father was the good God who was full of love and who gave him only good things. Also, the LORD God was the wise and great God who had many thoughts and great plans toward David, and who guided him personally. David loved this God so much that he always had to obey God’s will.

Now, who do you think David was to God? He was a man after God’s heart. God fulfilled His plan through this David. And in the process of fulfilling His will, He always expressed His love for David. David lived a life full of thanksgiving, being able to offer up his praises to God even in the valley of the shadow of death. I pray in the name of the Lord that you will be able to offer up the same kind of thanksgiving as those found in the Psalms.