

# God Over You

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

**Preached on:** Sunday, September 8, 2019

**Truth Community Church**  
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45255

**Website:** [truthcommunitychurch.org](http://truthcommunitychurch.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm)

Today and over the past couple of messages, we've been surveying the doctrine of divine providence and the doctrine of divine providence teaches us that God continually upholds his entire creation and he sovereignly works in absolutely everything that happens and thus directs all creatures and events to accomplish his purposes. I've repeated that definition many many times over the past week or so, telling us something about the sovereignty of God, the way that he rules in his creation. God created the world and now he sustains it and he not only sustains it, he directs it to the ends that he appointed before the foundation of the world. Providence, in one sense, is the unfolding of God's eternal decree about everything that would ever happen in the course of time and so God is sovereign and what we've said about that is that providence is broad. This is review, I need to kind of build up your momentum to go into what we have to say here today with a remembrance of the things that we've talked about already. Providence is broad. Scripture says in Ephesians 1 that God works all things after the counsel of his will. There is nothing in the universe, there is not a molecule anywhere in a remote island or in a distant galaxy that is outside the sovereign control, the sovereign hand and the sovereign direction of God. Everything is under his hand. God's providence is broader than we could possibly imagine. We said also that God's providence is detailed to the point that he numbers the hairs on your head, to the extent that he directs the nations of the earth. From our perspective, seemingly inconsequential detail to that by which history is measured in human terms, the rise and fall of leaders and the rise and fall of nations over millennia, God's hand is in it all directing it all to accomplish his purposes. And we've said that in addition to that, God's providence is personal. Psalm 139 says that he formed you in your mother's womb; that he knit your bones together: that he determined your sex before you were born and intends you to live by that sex. But God's providence is broad, it's detailed, it's personal, it's pervasive, it's comprehensive, it's everywhere around us. It's before us, it is with us, it is after us. It is above us, it is below us. It is in the course of every moment of time everywhere with everyone with everything, it is so broad and comprehensive.

On Tuesday, we saw that providence even includes God's sovereignty over evil, and without going into the details of what we said on Tuesday, there's just a sense in which we can't repeat everything that gets said throughout the course of the week, but we said that God directs even evil sinful things that are done to accomplish good in the end. We saw that from the life of Joseph. Joseph told his brothers, "You meant evil against me. Your human intention against me was sinful and wicked but God meant it for good.

While God was not forcing you to sin against me, He did have an overriding guiding purpose in which that He accomplished; even though you were wicked against me, God was being good to me through that." We saw that wicked men crucified Christ and God used that for the redemption of his people. We saw that God conquered sin at the cross and he will conquer sin again thoroughly and finally in final judgment so that there could never be any question that God is sovereign even over the sinful, wicked, evil acts of men. From the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, we see God sovereignly accomplishing his purposes even through the sin and evil and wickedness of this fallen world. So what we have seen is this vast understanding of the implications of the sovereignty of God in everything that happens in every detail of life, macro, micro, big and small, far and wide, near and close, inside and outside your soul, God is at work in all of it to accomplish his purposes.

Now here's the question for today. We've been talking about God through all of this, right? We've been looking up at God, we've been looking at his word and we have been seeing what God has revealed about himself and now it's time for us, for you and me to respond to that today. The question is this, beloved, in light of all of these things that we have seen indisputably from God's word, these things cannot be denied without denying Scripture itself, the question today that I have for you and this is personal to each one of you, when I say "you" today, take it in a personal individual sense as though I'm speaking to you privately rather than corporately today, the question for you today is: will all of that do you any spiritual good or not? And if it would, what would that spiritual good even look like? What would it look like for you to understand and apply providence to your life? What is the key to making that good, that spiritual good your own? What does trust look like?

Let me just kind of bring you into this a little bit more based on what we've been preaching on over the past month or so. You remember we talked about the doctrine of regeneration, right, that said that you must be born again, and you come today and God bless you and I believe you when you tell me that you say that you have been born again by the Spirit of God. I'm not disputing that, I'm not questioning that in anything that I say today, I'm just setting the context for what we need to respond to God's word here. You say that you are born again by the Spirit of God, God bless you, so am I. You say that you have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, that all of your sins have been washed away and you now have a perfect position before God that rests on the righteousness of Christ and not your own, you've been saved by the blood of Jesus, praise the Lord, so am I, hallelujah. You say that, as we saw in Romans 8 a couple of weeks ago, you say that you are safe in his hands, you believe what God's word says that nothing shall separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, nothing created, no demons, no angels, nothing past, present or future can separate you because you are so thoroughly convinced and you so thoroughly believe in the perfect work of Jesus Christ, you have entrusted yourself to him and you believe with conviction that he is able to keep that which you have entrusted to him until that great day. You believe all of that, right? You say that's what you believe, right? And you say, "I believe these things that God's word says about providence, it's broad, it's detailed, it's personal, it's even over evil and sin. I believe these things about Christ, that I've been born again, that He saved me with His

shed blood." Well, beloved, with all of those things said then whether you realize it or not as you sit here at this moment, there are a procession of consequences that are based on your Christian confession. There are a series of life implications for the things that you have just said to me in the presence of God that you believe and that are your convictions about life. There are implications, there are consequences for that that we cannot be unchanged in light of these things. These things change all of life as I intend to show you.

So my friends, all of the recent messages on regeneration, redemption and providence, have brought us to this point where now we are standing before God, as it were, we are standing before his holy presence having confessed all of these things that he has revealed to be true, now we start to see the implications of this and what I want you to see is that all of this is connected together and it is all connected together for all of your life for all of time. There is nothing about your inner life or your outer life that is unaffected by the confession that you have just made. To the extent that someone might be here and saying, "But I don't believe in Christ," let me invite you to Christ today right at the start and you can enter into all of this right now immediately if you would just repent of your sin and put your faith in Christ. These are the implications of what it means to be a Bible believing Christian that we're going to see here this morning, and what it means is this, it means that you understand and you believe and you act upon this reality. The Christian life means that you are increasingly aware of the fact that God has planned your life and he will accomplish his will in you. God has planned your life. The God who came to earth in the person of Christ who loved you and gave himself up for you, that gracious, good, patient, merciful God is the same God who is sovereign over everything, and that means that the God who saved you is the God who has your life in his hands and that means that it is your privilege, your prerogative and your responsibility to trust him, to trust him completely over everything and in everything.

With that said, I have a question, then. It's why we went to Proverbs 3 that says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight." That verse which some of you know by heart and can recite so easily, we've preached on it here multiple times. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. All of your heart and all of your ways, trusting in him. And the corresponding reality of that is, beloved, is this, is this, is that you trust the things that Scripture says about the providence of God more than you trust your own perception, your own understanding, and your own discernment about your life circumstances. You prefer and you trust the providence of God even over your self-assessment.

Go to Proverbs again. I want you to see it one more time before we dive into the things here, Proverbs 3, because there are consequences to all of this. This is what it means to live the Christian life. Proverbs 3:5 says it there, it says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding." There is a positive dimension, trust in the Lord with all your heart, be confident in him. Trust him as you look to the future and do not lean on your own understanding. You put away the, "But what if?" Or, "But what about?" Or, "But you don't understand." No, I don't need to understand and what I don't understand is not the point of today's message. It's of no consequence today so put aside

that objection in your heart that says, "But preacher, you don't know." I don't need to know and it's not important because even if I did understand, Scripture would tell me not to lean on that in what I have to say to you here today. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."

Now why have I belabored this point by way of introduction and why have I spent almost a dozen messages preparing for this one particular point, this one particular message? I'd better get it right, huh? By God's grace we will. You see, beloved, you and I, if we're honest with ourselves, we don't always live up to the loftiness of the things that we say that we believe, right? We are plagued by doubts. We are plagued by anxiety. We do try to manipulate and control circumstances because we don't trust the way that God's going to do things, and so we need to humble ourselves before God's word, we need to humble ourselves before these doctrines. I see my own need in this in my own life in these past few days. I need this and I know that you need it as well and it behooves us all not to come at this with a spirit of pride that says, "I already know these things. I have this under control. I've got it together." We need to put aside that arrogance which is premised on surprisingly ignorance, ignorance of ourselves, ignorance of our own hearts, ignorance of the way that we actually are, we need to set all that aside and simply ask ourselves, "Okay, what does trust look like, then, in light of these great doctrines that we have seen? What does trust in God look like?" And I'm going to give you five things in rather rapid succession here and in addition to telling you what trust looks like, beloved, I am going to, as it were, hand you the key to a Lamborghini, a spiritual Lamborghini that lets you drive it. I'm going to give you the key that lets you operate this in your life because you know what? At the end of the day you have responsibility for this to make a difference in your life. You cannot live off of my faith and I cannot live off of yours. You have to take these things and apply them and that is the key that I'm going to give to you here today as we look at these five aspects of trust in light of the providence of God. Five aspects of trust in light of the providence of God and to help you remember them, I've tried to alliterate them in hopefully a meaningful way.

What does trust look like in light of the providence of God? First point here this morning, it makes you submissive in your adversity. Trust in God is submissive to him in the midst of your adversity, in the midst of your trials. You submit to God. As Christ said on the eve of his crucifixion, "Father, not My will but Thine be done." There is this submission even in the light of existing or approaching adversity where you bend your will to God. You see, providence lets you do that with a sense of comfort and confidence. Providence lets you yield to God in adversity. You say, "What do you mean by that, yield to God in your adversity?" What I mean is this, is that you look beyond your earthly circumstances and see the hand of the God who ordained them for you. You may be in difficult unpleasant circumstances right now but, beloved, everything that you have confessed about the reality of providence in your life, the teaching of providence and your trust in Christ, means that you have to look beyond, look through that adversity and say, "Oh, I remember what I believe about providence and what providence means is that somehow, for some reason that I don't understand, God has given me this moment in time, He's given me this life right now, and is calling me to trust Him and respond to Him in the

midst of it." Providence lets you do that. The doctrine of providence enables the trusting believer to look beyond his or her circumstances and see the God who ordained them.

Turn to the book of Job with me, just before the book of Psalms. The book of Job. It's familiar enough that I don't need to rehearse it all with you. Satan brought God into a conversation, God engaged Satan in a conversation. Chapter 1, verse 7, he said to Satan, "Where do you come from?" And Satan says, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it," Job 1 as you're turning there. And the Lord calls one of his righteous servants to Satan's attention. "Have you considered My servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Satan says that Job is just serving God for his own mercenary interests and the Lord says to Satan in verse 12, "'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.' So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD." Satan. Remember we said that God is over evil, that means that God is over Satan and God sets the boundaries in which Satan can act even against his people. It's all under the hand of God.

Now you know what happens, Job loses his fortune, his children are killed in an awful calamity, and in verses 18 and 19, you see the climax of it. It says while one messenger was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you." In a series of just a few minutes as messengers come one right on the heels of another, Job's entire life is reversed and from his prosperity and his loving family for whom he prayed night and day, it was all gone. And what did Job do? Verse 20, "Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there.'" Look at it, "'The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.'" Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." And in verse 10 of chapter 2, he says, "'Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?'" He tells to his wife who was a pain in his neck at that moment in time, he says, "Woman, don't you understand what it means to be a believer in the God of the Bible? It means that we accept good from Him when it comes and we also accept adversity when it comes because we are trusting in the God who is over all."

So providence calls you to accept even adversity from God's hand. Beloved, this is so important. God's purpose in your life, for some people this is a shocking revelation, a shocking statement, but it is not God's primary purpose in life to satisfy you and to make your life easy. That is not the primary purpose of God in your life. Many times he gives us blessings and we thank him for that because when we're enjoying those things, we're receiving things that we do not deserve, but God's greater purpose is not to satisfy you but to sanctify you, to make you like the Christ who saved you, to shape your character and affections so that you are loving God like God the Son did, that your character, your life affections are increasingly conformed to the affections of what Jesus Christ were when he was on earth. That's the purpose of God in your life and sometimes it takes

adversity, sometimes it takes some friction to smooth off the rough edges in order to conform you more to the image of Christ. And beloved, that means that God may withhold blessings from you, he may remove them from you for a time, he may bring trials to you in order to wean your affections from this world so that you will learn to love him more. That is God's prerogative as God. That is what a sovereign God is permitted to do. That's what he does. He doesn't need our permission. It's just what he does. And sometimes adversity comes without any warning and with a loud flash and bang and all of a sudden, like with Job, life is completely different than it was just an hour ago. Beloved, the believing response to that is, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away. The Lord is sovereign in the blessing, He's sovereign in the adversity. I trust Him. I submit to Him. I accept it. I don't blame God for being ill-motivated against me." So what does trust look like? If he gives adversity, beloved, you bow before his wisdom and you trust him.

Look at 2 Corinthians 12 in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 12. Paul is saying, telling the Corinthian church that God had sent a messenger of Satan to torment him to keep him from exalting himself. Paul needed adversity to keep from becoming proud even as an apostle, and in verse 8 it says, "Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me." O God, take it away. God, take it away. God, please take this away from me. Three times he asked, an apostle praying. In verse 9, "He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.'" Paul says, "Oh, it's not about my adversity, it's about the sufficiency of His grace. In the midst of this distressing trial and adversity and this conflict and all of the disappointment of life, I need to learn something about the sufficiency of His grace. Okay, that changes things. Now I have a different focus and perspective by which to live." And Paul says now in verse 9, "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." And beloved, oh, this is so important, this is not the extraordinary experience of the Apostle Paul, this is the pattern for all believers by which we are to live in response to the divine providence. Verse 10, "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." You see, these doctrines have consequences, one of the consequences is that they teach us to be submissive in our adversity.

So what is the key, then? This is a great spiritual Lamborghini to have in your possession to be able to drive because this motor moves in the spiritual life. This moves. This is powerful. And what is the key to it all? I have done all I can at this point and now it is your responsibility to work out your salvation with fear and trembling and you have to do it in this way, you have to say, "Ah, in the midst of this adversity, I remember that God is sovereignly in control; that there is a providence that is directing all of the details of my life." So you have to preach to yourself. At this point I can no longer be the preacher in your life, you now become the most important preacher in your own life and you preach yourself and you look at yourself in the mirror, as it were, maybe literally, maybe only figuratively, but you say, "You remember what you believe about divine providence, right? You must respond to this." You're talking to yourself now, you are preaching to your own heart and your mind and your volition is telling your emotions and your

feelings, "You must respond to the divine providence. We will pray, 'Let God's will be done, not mine. Thy will be done, not mine.'" And you submit to God in the midst of your adversity and you do so from a position of greatly informed understanding premised on the inerrant infallible word of God that says God is at work for good in everything that happens to his children and therefore you believe it even if you don't understand it, and you submit to him. "Father, I trust You. I bow before You. You gave me good things in the past, You see fit to hand me adversity right now. Let me kiss the rod that disciplines me. Let me kiss the hand of the One who administers the discipline because I submit, I trust You and no matter what, I will follow You." That is submission in your adversity. That's how you respond to divine providence.

Secondly, divine providence makes you sincere in your obedience. Sincere in your obedience and let me just preface this point this way, we always need to come back and refresh our minds about what it is that we believe about Christ and who Christ is, the cross of Christ, the Gospel of Christ and what he has done for us. Our loving Lord loved us and gave himself up for us and that same loving Lord directs our circumstances. Well beloved, those are not abstract theological truths out there somewhere for theologians to debate about, this is your life. This is your life blood. This is your daily bread. This is your sustenance for everything that ever comes to you is that you feed on that. "I am here at this point, in this time in history, and I am at this point in my life and it is all by a great and wise and superintending plan of God that He certainly means for my good and I believe that and I love the fact that Christ died for this unworthy enemy of God and made me a child of God, that He adopted me into His family." Those are things, beloved, those are truths, beloved, that shape your heart, that change your heart, that take it away from being hard and cold and cynical and responsive and loving and trusting to the God who dealt with you in such a manner and therefore it makes you sincere in your obedience.

And let me just kind of illustrate how this plays out and then I'll take you to a text, if you want to be turning to the book of Ecclesiastes in chapter 12. You see, do you know what the rough hands of a cynic does with truth like this? Do you know what ungodly people do with this when it comes to temptation, let's say? What ungodly people do is they twist and distort the doctrine of providence in order to justify themselves in their sin. We have a whole society premised on this. "God made me this way and although His word says that my conduct is sinful, God made me this way. His hand shaped me this way and therefore I am going to live the sinful life that I have chosen." And they use God to justify their sin and rebellion against him and we're prone to do the same thing. We're not pointing fingers here outside the walls, we're looking at ourselves in the mirror. Someone might say, "God knew I would be tempted in this situation and here I am, and therefore I'm going to act on the temptation. I'm going to sin against God because, after all, He is in charge, right? He knew me. He knew the circumstances and here I am." No. No. No. No. This is a place where we ought to go back a century or more and have somebody wash out our mouth with soap to stop us from talking that way and then to ask the Spirit of God to use the word of God to change our hearts so we stop thinking that way because our hearts are merely, our mouths are merely speaking what's active in our hearts.

No. No. We humble ourselves. We trust what God has said in his words and it makes us sincere, not cynical so that in Ecclesiastes, after the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes 12, chapter 12, verse 13 says this, "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is this: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." You see, the believing heart in response to divine providence takes a humble posture before God and says, "Your word is my authority. I won't trifle with the realities of Your providence in order to justify a selfish sinful lifestyle, instead God, I'm going to fear You, I'm going to bow before You, I'm going to trust You, and I'm going to let Your word by the work of Your Spirit in my heart shape me into what You want me to be and therefore I present myself to You a living sacrifice that I might prove what the will of God is that which is good and acceptable and perfect." And all of these lurking tendencies toward sin are brought out and repudiated in the light and you respond to Scripture rather than justifying your sin.

So the right attitude about divine providence and sincere obedience in the Christian life is the one who looks to 1 Corinthians 10:13, listen as I read it, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." The believing response to divine providence when it comes to temptation, sin and obedience says, "Yes, God is sovereignly in control and I am in a season, a time, a moment of temptation here. What providence teaches me is that I do not have to yield to this, in fact, somewhere in these circumstances God has provided for me to live in obedience to Him. God, open my mind, give me discernment, give me wisdom so that I can find that path and follow it rather than using providence to justify a life or a moment of rebellion." It makes you sincere in your obedience.

So what is the key to growing spiritually in light of the doctrine of divine providence? You preach to yourself. You preach to yourself. I've said it already today, I'm going to say it again, when it comes to these things, you are your most important preacher. No one else can do this for you. And you take your mind and you speak to your heart and you say, "Listen, God orders your life. God orders my life and therefore I need to honor Him with my response. I need to be obedient. I want to be obedient. That is the proper response to this great divine providence that God has given to me. The providence which rules the universe – watch it, watch this – the providence that rules the universe is going to rule my affections. The providence that rules everything is going to rule my inner man and I will submit in loving trust to Him. I haven't resisted yet to the point of blood," you tell yourself in resisting temptation. Christ did. "I haven't been tested that hard. I'm going to submit. I'm going to be sincere in my obedience. I'm going to plead with the Spirit to help me grow spiritually because that matters in light of divine providence."

Thirdly, how else does this doctrine of divine providence inform your perspective on trust? Thirdly, it makes you sanctified in your planning. Sanctified in your planning. As you look toward the future with your goals and aspirations in life, or as you look at the present in what you want and don't want to have happen, to be sanctified means it's set

apart and what I mean when I say to be sanctified in your planning is this and, beloved, this affects every one of us, this affects every one of us every day that we live without exception, this in some ways may be the most practical message I've ever preached from this pulpit: what providence means is that you recognize that God orchestrates your life and directs it for his purposes and so you do this, providence doesn't mean that you don't make plans, we make plans, yes, we make plans, we'll talk about that more in a minute, but you make your plans with this attitude in your mind, you sanctify your plans by which I mean you set your plans apart to God, you give your plans to God and you trust him for the outcome of your plans.

Look at James 4 after the book of Hebrews. James 4, beginning in verse 13. James 4:13 says, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.'" We're going to go to the city, we're going to spend a year there, we're going to engage in business and we're going to make a profit, all of these contingent plans building contingency upon contingency, speaking as though the outcome were guaranteed because that's what I have planned and determined to bring to pass. Scripture gives the lie to that, verse 14, "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." You see, an understanding of the providence of God is welded together like two sides of a coin with an understanding of your own mortality and frailty of life, and you realize, "Do you know what? If a truck runs over me, I can't survive a truck hitting me, sometimes I trip in the dark and fall flat on my face and I think I'm going to determine what life is going to look like a year from now? Who am I kidding?" And we kind of have to step back and a little bit laugh at ourselves and the pride and the arrogance of our heart. Then in light of the divine providence, we look and say, "Oh, God is the One who brings things to pass, not me. I'll make my plans but, Lord, I do it with a sense if this is Your will, I submit to You, I trust Your will for how things work out." And part of dependence in planning, part of being sanctified in your planning, beloved, is this and sometimes ladies have a particular need to hear this, although I'm not picking on anyone by saying that, part of dependence in planning your day and part of planning in dependence in life is this, it's to recognize that God may very well for his own good reasons thwart your plans and not allow them to come to pass. Even your good plans may not come to pass. Even the things that you plan for the Lord and with good intention wanting to serve and honor him may not come to pass. That person that you wanted to share the Gospel with might not live long enough for you to have the opportunity. You say, "Oh, but my heart was sincere and I wanted this and it was for the Gospel's sake," and yes, God's in control even of that so that you understand and you live life from a perspective, this perspective, and this affects day to day life, this affects what you're thinking about when it comes to where you're going to go have lunch in about an hour, your plans are subject to the providence of God. Your plans are subject to how God directs you. Proverbs 16:9 says, "The mind of man plans his way," that's a good thing to do, it's good to plan, "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."

Now those of you that are a little bit older, a little bit more mature in life, you're increasingly accumulating disappointed plans, disappointed relationships, death and loss have intruded themselves upon your lives in the places that are the most vulnerable areas of your heart, what can we say to that? If you are dealing with long-term discouragement because life has not worked out the way that you planned it to, beloved, I say this by way of encouragement to you: drink from the fresh water in this well, drink from the fresh water of God's providence, the fresh water that goes into your soul, so to speak, and refreshes you and invigorates you and says, "Even though this is a great disappointment, there is something transcendent in this that gives me hope. Even though I don't understand why things worked out the way that they did and why they are working out the way that they are, I have hope that this great God who is providentially over all that happens in the universe, whose providence is broad, it's detailed and it's personal to my life, I trust Him. Even though I can't see the outcome, even though I don't understand, even when my heart is breaking, He, my Pilot, helps my soul and I trust Him. I trust Him for those losses that can't be retrieved. I trust Him for those plans that will never be fulfilled. I trust Him as I watch my prodigal walk off into the sunset, perhaps never to return. And with tears streaming down my cheek," you say to yourself, "I trust the providence of God here no matter what."

So what is the key? I'm starting to repeat myself, aren't I? There's one key throughout all of this is that when your plans fail, you preach to yourself, you look at yourself in the mirror and you say, "No, this is okay because God is ordering my life, God has planned my life according to His wise and good will, and I trust Him even though His plans are evidently different than what mine were and what mine are." I mean, ultimately the place where this is really tested for us is in life and death matters, isn't it? And this means that you can go to the deathbed of a loved one, you can go to the gravestone of a loved one, and you can say, "God, I trust You even here." You can be on the gurney being wheeled into life critical surgery as your consciousness is fading away under the course of the anesthesia, your heart can breathe out serenity, "Lord, this is not what I planned but I trust You even here. I trust You on the gurney, I trust You in the graveyard, I trust You in the sobs of my soul, O God. Your providence, Your glory, Your goodness transcends everything in life for me, God." And you preach that way to yourself, and what I hope that you're starting to see is that there is no place in this realm of thought for that nasty three letter word, but. "But, but, but..." No. No. No. Just put that word, when it comes to the realm of providence, put that word out of your vocabulary. "God, I trust You but this is really hard." Why does hardness have anything to do with it? That has nothing to do with it. "But God, this was the one person that I most had my heart set on." What does that have to do with it? Does that overturn the 66 books that testify to a wise and good providence of God? Does your disappointment in time overturn the word of God that is eternal, that will never pass away? No, it doesn't. Let me answer the question for you, it doesn't and therefore that means that you go and you bow and you say, "God, this is so hard but, God, it's okay. I am going to trust You anyway. I'm going to trust You anyway." I have a mental image in my mind, that's why I'm pausing, from many years ago. The mound of dirt, the one I loved buried under it, and even then, beloved, not that this is the way I was thinking at that moment of time, even there your mind, you take your mind and say, "God, I trust You even here. And when this dirt settles and grass and flowers

grow up over it, God, I'll come back and I'll come back and I'll still be trusting You here at this great point of disappointment. I will trust You even here."

So providence reinterprets the grave for you even when someone is taken before their time, but sometimes not all of life is like that, is it? That's the great thing about it, sometimes your plans do work out and you do see the fruit of your labor and you do see the fruit of fruitful happy relationships and a prosperous lifestyle and a prosperous business, and your relationships are all going according to the way that you want them to, and life is just great, and I daresay that more of our Christian life is like that, if we really thought about it, than the darker shades of gray that sometimes intrude upon us. What do you do then in light of divine providence? Well, when your plans do work out, you say, "God, thank You. This was not of my wisdom. This was not of my power. You have blessed the labor of my hands. I recognize it as a gift of Your providence and I thank You for it," so that whether it's adversity or it's the happiest times in life, providence is informing your response. The gratitude is premised on providence, the sorrow, the grief is premised on providence, "Either way, Father, You've given, Father, You've taken away, either way, Lord, it's Your hand and I bless Your name." That's what providence teaches you to do. This is not a matter of personal opinion. So what is the key? You look at your life, you look at your disappointments, you look at your happiness and you say, "Hand of God. Blessed be the name of the Lord. God, I want to identify with that Old Testament saint Job whom You commended as being righteous. He responded in his adversity in this way, You said he's righteous, he was righteous in all that he said, I want to identify with him. I want to identify with my Lord who looked to You and submitted to You and trusted You in Gethsemane. I want to be like that, Lord, and I can, I can because providence is true. It's broad, it's detailed, it's personal, it's over sin, it's over death, it's over life, I can."

Fourthly, what else does providence do? It makes you serene in your need. Serene, peaceful. The doctrine of divine providence brings you a sense of tranquility and serenity even in your times of lack, even when the time is urgent, you remember that God provides for you. Providence, get it? Providence, God provides, you see the connection of the terms? God provides for you.

Go back to Philippians. You say, "I don't know if I can find Philippians in my Bible. It's been so long since we ever studied from there." I know but this was important and in the providence of God. Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Verse 19, "my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Beloved, God's over all. Yeah, there are some urgent matters going on right now. Okay, not diminishing that, not dismissing that, not saying it's not important, not denying sympathy in your time of need, just saying that today at this point that's not the focus. The focus is that God is over all, that God supplies our needs even if we don't see where it's going to come from, and his providence and his loving care for us is the guarantee of that.

So what is the key for you in your responsibility spiritually to live in light of divine providence, what is the key for you in your time of need, your time of desperation? What's the key? Let me guess: it's to preach to yourself. That's it. You preach to yourself. You remember the divine providence and you say to yourself, "No, I will not panic here. No, I will not get frustrated here. God, my God is watching over me. The God who is sovereign over broad things, detailed things, personal things, the God who orders the falling of a sparrow, the God who counts the hairs on my head, oh, how could I ever think that He would let anything that is necessary to me fall outside of His care?" You preach to yourself, you say, "You will, my soul, you will be at peace. You will be at peace."

You say, "Really? You talk to yourself that way?" Look at Psalm 42. This is how the Bible teaches us to deal with ourselves. We move beyond that realm of life where we just let our emotions carry us away into all manner of anxiety and panic and dissatisfaction, we pull ourselves back to Scripture, Psalm 42:5, and you talk to yourself this way, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence." He's speaking to his own heart. He's speaking to his own soul. From the position of divine truth, he speaks to his inner man and says, "Why are you in despair? What's the deal here? Why are you like this? Why are you disturbed? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him." Verse 11, he repeats it, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God." Psalm 43:5, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God." You preach to yourself. You say to yourself, "This panic, this sense of disorientation is not permitted here, not in this heart, not in this heart that reveres God, that loves Christ and believes His providence. Oh, I'm in need right now, I don't know what's going to happen to the immediate need, but I do know this, I do know that God is over all, that He won't abandon me, I'm safe in His hands, and therefore one day in one manner or another, I'm going to praise Him again. I'm going to be at rest now because I know what the future holds even in my need." So you preach to yourself. You tell your soul, "Soul, you be at peace, you be at rest, all, you be at rest. Hush. Hush, my soul. Hush, be still. Your God is watching over you and He hasn't changed."

Finally verse 5, you put all these things together and gather them up into this one overarching point, I guess, that divine providence makes you satisfied in all things. Satisfied in all things. So we said that it makes you submissive in your adversity, sincere in your obedience, sanctified in your planning, serene in your need, and verse 5, satisfied in all things. You see, ultimately the doctrine of divine providence makes us thankful. It fills us with gratitude when we meditate on it, but God's hand is in all things. In one way or another even when people are sinning against us without excuse, somehow God is working out a greater purpose even then. So 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." A thankful, grateful disposition in everything that says, "God, even my enemies are under Your hand and if they are afflicting me, it's only because You have somehow sent them to achieve a good purpose

in my life, even if they are doing so in a wicked way just like they did with Christ in Acts 2."

So what is the key? You preach to yourself. That's the fifth time I've said that. Five points, one application. Five points, one thing to remember. Submissive in your adversity, you preach to yourself. Sincere in your obedience, you preach providence to yourself. Sanctified in your planning, you preach providence to yourself. Serene in your need, you preach providence to yourself. Satisfied in all things, you preach to yourself. What does that look like? You say to yourself, "I'm under the care of my heavenly Father. I am not going to grumble here. I have so many reasons to give thanks. Father, from a position of trust and belief, I thank You. Yes, this is hard but I thank You that I'm under the hand of a loving guiding providence that has Your glory and my good as its ultimate destination. I know where this plane lands. This plane lands in Paradise. I will disembark in glory and providence in my life is geared to that end as one born of the Spirit, trusting in the blood of Christ. So Father, yes, I can be thankful even here." You see, beloved, your heavenly Father is directing all the details of your life to accomplish his purpose so that you will be blessed in the end.

I'll close with a couple of words from Charles Spurgeon who said this, and you'll be encouraged by it. Charles Spurgeon said this in his message on providence found in the "Treasury of the New Testament," volume 1, after rehearsing some of these things presented in different ways, he was concluding in this way to his readers, to those who heard. He said, "We are to say, let others say what they please, we are to say, 'I know God is here. I am His child and this is all working for my good. I will not fear though the earth be moved and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.'" And then Spurgeon concluded by stating his purpose in preaching that message which is completely identical to the reason that we have done what we've done over the past month and a half here at Truth Community Church. Why did I go to all of this effort and say all of these things to all of you at a time like this? It's because I believe you needed what Spurgeon said so well and I quote the great Baptist preacher, "O, I would to God that some of you who are so full of worrisome care and anxiety could be delivered from it by a belief in divine providence."

Let's pray together.

*Father, we take a moment to check our hearts before You. We all in one sense feel convicted by this because we know that we're prone to anxiety and disobedience and distrust, all of which is unworthy of the things that we believe. So forgive us there, Father, but Father, I pray that in Your mercy in the same grace that sent Christ into the world to save sinners, in that same divine mercy, that same divine grace, that same divine patience, love and kindness, that You would take all of these things and apply them with power to each heart here. For the unbelieving heart, Father, may the greatness of Your being cause them to bend to Christ and put their faith in Him and His shed blood for their salvation. Help them in that way, O God. Father, in like way for those who are here in Christ, so many so often crushed under the weight of their own anxieties and their own fretful cares, Father, in grace and mercy, in kindness, deliver*

*them from them all with a recognition that what they have said they believed and what they have genuinely believed over a period of time, Father, would now come to their hearts with power that they would be delivered from that fretful anxiety, delivered from all of the past regrets, delivered from the fear of the future, and having a sense of contentment and satisfaction on the sheer simplicity of being in the divine hand from which no one can snatch us. Make that the mark of the people who identify with Truth Community Church, Father, not that we might be known as noble or brave or anything like that, that we might be classed with those who are esteemed by the world, no, Father, let us be classed with those humble believers throughout the ages who looked in trust to Your divine hand and saw Your provision faithfully, consistently worked out over the course of time until the angels carried them into glory. Let us be like that. O God, it would be the greatest mercy if You would number us with the believers like that. Please do so in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Thanks for listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. You can find church information, Don's complete sermon library and other helpful materials at [thetruthpulpit.com](http://thetruthpulpit.com). This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.