



Gospel Lessons From The Old Testament – Part 5

The Provision Through Moses

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Well, there's good news and a great and anticipated promise that God gives us at the end of the book. In Revelation 21, it can be really distilled or at least well summarized with three words where it says in verse 4, "No pain anymore." No pain anymore. That's a good line right there, isn't it? No pain anymore. The context is that there "shall be no longer any mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore." I mean, the idea of thinking about the reality of relief from all pain on every level, at every strata of our lives, that's a big, big deal. And it should come as good news because pain, of course, is a reminder categorically that things are not as they ought to be, that something's wrong. There's a problem. And that as a category, the Bible says when God comes in his glory, Christ is sent and he makes all things right, as it says in that passage, well then the wrong of pain will be extracted and gone. And that's helpful.

But in the meantime, before this new era comes and where he says, "I make all things new" before he makes all things new, we're stuck with pain. But it's not just a category, a simple category where we'll say something's wrong. There are two kinds of pain that need to be distinguished. Both of them can be said to be reminders of something that's wrong. But one of them is part of this particular era that we live in that reminds us that this age is wrong, this period is wrong, that it's laden with sin, that it's infected with sin, and therefore there's going to be pain. But the good news is God, in his management of all things, is going to parlay that, use that, utilize that as a necessary tool that is going to accomplish some good. It's purposeful, it's needful, and it's useful in God's economy, that pain.

And that's the kind of pain that we even sing about. Matter of fact, I think of Jesus' words in Luke 24, when he said that it is necessary that the Christ should suffer. Necessary. So even the things we sing about the Christ on the cross, that's a suffering, painful thing. But we're saying that was a needful part of God's good plan, of course to fix the sin problem, which causes all of the pain. So in our lives we have a series of things that happen in our lives. We say, wait a minute, this is God's measured, decided, planned, set of painful circumstances that God is using in a useful, necessary way in this particular era.

And for that, I guess we should look at it like Paul has maturely chosen to look at it from Second Corinthians Chapter 12 when he says the suffering and pain, talking about a particular kind of physical pain in his life at that point, he says, I'm glad to bear that, I will gladly bear that kind of pain, that suffering. And of course, he goes on to talk about all kinds of other things besides physical pain. But he says that I can choose to gladly deal with.

The other category of pain is like an alarm that goes off. God sends this pain and its avoidable pain, but it's the kind of pain that happens in our lives when something goes wrong, something that we've chosen to walk ourselves into. And that painful experience is something God would like to stop being painful, but there has to be some attention given to it. It's like in the physical realm, you bash your foot into a stone, which, by the way, the Bible says in the kingdom he's going to dispatch angels to make sure you don't even stub your toe. But let's



say you break your foot. If you break your foot the pain of that in the physical realm says, "OK, I can't walk that off." Right? You've got to immobilize it. You've got to mend it. You've got to cast it. You've got to take some time to heal and get through that so that there won't be pain.

Like I've broken plenty of bones in my body and they've all healed and I don't feel the pain and that's the good thing. But I had to stop and make sure I attended to the problem. And that's a kind of pain spiritually the Bible talks about that you and I all experience because we do things in our lives that we shouldn't do. We have patterns that we shouldn't be engaged in. All of it coming back to, by the way, a kind of thinking that we should not have, a lapse of priorities that should be involved as the basis of our lives or we just forget things that are true and we start believing things that are lies. And all of that, the Bible says, will lead us into, as Hebrews 12 says, a set of painful circumstances. A set of painful circumstances that are used to get us back onto the path, the peaceful path of righteousness. And that experience, that fruit of righteousness that comes out of it is God saying, "I'd like that pain to go away."

But we've got to think right. We've got to respond to the problem of that pain with repentance. We've got to figure out what it is and we got to deal with it. So there's pain that is unavoidable, that can be useful that you can, I'm looking at it this way now from Corinthians 12, I can say I will gladly bear that. I can learn to be content in that. I can learn to power through that because I know some other things that are going to help mitigate the profundity of that. But the other kind of pain, speaking of Second Corinthians, Second Corinthians 7, says that pain like the pain caused by the letter that Paul wrote, he says that should lead you to a kind of grief then that deals with the problem and then you come out of it and the pain goes away. That's a kind of pain you've got to give attention to, you got to fix.

So what I'd like to do this morning is have us think about those two categories of pain and to say I want to think rightly about how to deal with both of them. And one of them I want to see is a category that it's, as the old hymn says, "what needless pain we bear." And I would say the second kind of pain that we should eschew that we shouldn't have in our lives is a kind of pain, or at least we should get through as quickly as possible, is a kind of pain that is far more profound than the pain caused by your negative circumstances.

Let's put it this way. The most profound and debilitating pain, the most severe and serious pain that brings us despondency or just deep real depression and frustration, the pain that lingers and hurts us the worst is not the pain that God has given us in the circumstances of life in his sovereign care. It's the pain of forgetting the truth of God. It's the pain of walking down a path where I don't remember the provisions of God, that I don't sense the presence of God, that I forget the truths that you and I say as Christians we believe and all leads to sinful actions. But let's deal this morning with those things.

And I want to illustrate it the way that Stephen is illustrating it here in his sermon in Acts Chapter 7, we're going to look at verses 30 through 36, which is the third season of Moses' life, which deals with the exodus from Egypt. How hard it must have been for 400 years for the Israelites to have increasingly difficult circumstances. Those were the external



circumstances, which God, by the way, had planned, sovereignly planned for them. And in that plan for them to go through all of this pain, what he wanted to make sure they never forgot were the truths that should give them peace in the midst of all of that pain. To say, I know God has a plan, God has a promise, he's going to get us through this and we know where we're headed.

That kind of assurance, that kind of faith, as we've been talking about through this series, is a kind of faith that should change the way that they go through that pain. But unfortunately, they let the pain of that oppression and that slavery lead them to what the Bible calls a broken spirit. A broken spirit that made them look squarely at the truth of what God had promised and say, I don't believe it. I don't receive it. As it's put in the Scriptures, I don't listen to it. And that's the real challenge for us as Christians to make sure that we listen to the truth of God's word. We apply it. It leads us to righteous living and faithful living, the kind of living that says, I don't doubt God when he makes a promise. I don't doubt God when he says he'll be there through the midst of the difficulties that I incur, even though they're not done when I want them to be done. And I know that he's going to provide for me, that he says that, he's going to get me through from point "A" to point "B."

So with all that introduction, which is quite lengthy and at a more rapid pace than the last two weekends, if you've noticed, let's turn, if you haven't turned already to Acts Chapter 7. We're going to look at verses 30 through 36. We're going to remember this is the third season of Moses' life. It's the season where he's called back from the desert, working for his father-in-law, to go back to Egypt and lead the people out of Egypt. It's a very short summary of all that. But you follow along as I read it for you. Please look at your Bibles, not at my face, and read this text with your own eyes. And let's follow along, as I read it, beginning in verse 30.

"Now when 40 years had passed," we had the first 40 years in Pharaoh's court, that was Moses, and then 40 years in the Midian desert. And now he's going to be called to go back to Egypt. "When 40 years had passed, an angel appeared to him," that's Moses, "in the wilderness of Mount Sinai," adjacent to Mount Sinai, "in a flame of fire in a bush," the burning bush. "When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight and as he drew near to look, there came a voice of the Lord: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham,'" now think of this as 600 years earlier, the God of Abraham. The promise is there in Genesis 12, "'and of Isaac.'" He reiterated those promises to Isaac, "'and of Jacob.'" And that's how this all started, "as the promises drew near" and one of the promises was I'm going to give you a land. And he said that to Abraham in 2000 B.C. I'm going to give you this land in Canaan and it hadn't happened. Now they've been slaves in Egypt, living there for 430 years. And now it's time. And I'm thinking, well, it would have been great if it were 429 years ago. But now God is saying, "I'm going to do it. I'm going to get this done." And he reminds Moses that he's the God who is as present in the past as he is in the present. And he says, I'm the God who made those promises, I'm about to fulfill them.

Moses, and we read all about it in Exodus Chapter 3 and 4. But it says "he trembled and didn't dare to look." Verse 33, "Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals,'" you remember this famous line, "'from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy

ground," which is a little bit of the undercurrent of them saying you're speaking against this holy place. This is the holy place. Remember the Sanhedrin who is standing there, the court that Steven is speaking to? They're concerned about this little piece of real estate over their shoulder, which is important, there's no doubt about that. But here's another reminder. Here's holy ground in the western Arabian desert in Saudi Arabia. And this, I mean, God is appearing here. God is here. That's holy ground, which is an interesting kind of undercut at the accusation against Steven.

And God says this, "I've surely seen the affliction of my people," which I'm sure they doubted at some point in the midst of their pain, "who are in Egypt, and I've heard their groaning," which I'm sure they're thinking, God, why aren't you answering me? How long are you going to keep us down here? But he's heard it all. He's aware. "And I've come down to deliver them." Good, finally. Right? But that's the thing. They had to wait for this timing. "Now come," God says to Moses, "and I'm going to send you back to Egypt." Which if you read Exodus 3 and 4, you might remember that didn't go over well. That was hard to think. Moses thinks, "I spent forty years in Pharaoh's court. I killed this Egyptian trying to save an Israelite. Now, my face is on the, you know, the post office wanted posters. And so now I'm over here working in the Midian desert for my father-in-law and it's been kind of a cool, easier life. And now you're going to call me back to where they want my head on a platter."

And the answer is, "Yes, I'm going to send you back. You're going to go back and you're going to deliver." Now, Steven gets back out of this narrative and he says in verse 35, "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and judge?', as we saw in the last passage, well 'this man God sent both as ruler and redeemer,' that was God's human agency to get them out of this mess, 'by the hand of the angel who appear to him in the bush. This man,' Moses, 'led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt,' We know all about those plagues in Egypt, 'and at the Red Sea,' we know the parting of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian army, 'in the wilderness,' then he travels around for, '40 more years,' before he dies and hands the baton to Joshua, who then goes in and they finally get into the Promised Land.

So the sequence of God's deliverance here through Moses is all falling into place and that plan is being worked out. Which we've talked a lot about. I don't want to belabor this first point, but as I look at verses 30 through 31 and God saying, "Hey, 600 years ago I made a promise. OK, we're going to start putting into practice that fulfillment. You're going to leave Egypt after 430 years and you're going to go into the Promised Land. I got Moses, I got a plan, I'm working it out. I prepared him. Here we go." And it was postponed for forty years and that was a bit of a hassle. Right? To think about the fact that you're there and thinking, we called last week's message "The Postponement" of this deliverance to Moses. And so we're always thinking "now" like a petulant three-year-old. I want it now, now, now, now, now. And God says, "You're going to have to wait. But I've got a plan and you have to trust in that plan."

Let's jot that down. Number one, if you're taking notes, those first three verses remind us there is a plan and you and I as Christians need to trust in that plan. And I say don't want to



belabor this because this has been the theme the last few weeks. Right? You have to either believe God's plan is true and that there will be a time and a place that God's kingdom is going to come and there will no longer be any mourning, no crying, no pain, no death. All of that's going to be behind us. The pain is going to be gone. The sin is going to be gone. The problems and the hostility and the oppression and everything we dislike that reminds us that things aren't right, God's going to make it right. Crooked straight, rough places plain, mountains low, valleys lifted up, everything is going to be made the way it's supposed to be.

Now you believe that, if you believe that, then you're not an Eastern mystic thinking that we're wandering in circles but there's a linear plan. And you have to say right now we can think about ourselves in Egypt and think about our culture, that it's hostile to our beliefs and we think, here's the thing, we know God is going to fulfill this promise. So I trust that he has a plan. And what I'm saying is you can stand up and preach it all day long. But unless you sit here in your heart and say, I not only believe it, I'm going to use a stronger word, I trust in that plan. I know it's going to happen. Well, then we can start to deal with the current set of pains, this category one pain, and say, I can put up with that. I got another day where I got to make bricks and they're not giving me straw. And I got the taskmasters hassling me and I got persecution going on. I got sickness, I got problems. I got economic issues. I got relational issues, I got health issues. I can power through that. I can even gladly put up with that suffering because I know there is a plan. This is a linear plan. It's heading somewhere.

I want to show you that they had a problem with that in Moses' day. So go with me, if you would, to the Old Testament book of Exodus. I want you to look at Exodus Chapter 6. Burning bush, Chapter 3, Chapter 4. Now, Moses is going to tell the people here in Egypt, the Israelites, we got a plan. God is fulfilling the plan. You got to look forward. You have to look forward with the kind of optimism I'm about to give you. He's going to take you to a land flowing with milk and honey. And they did not listen to it. I.

Want to show you this passage, very helpful. And I think some of us, this is where we're living and we shouldn't be. Exodus Chapter 6, drop down to verse 6. God's saying to Moses, "Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord.'" Like, "I'm in charge, the I AM, I have all authority, I manage it all. I have the ability to even make plans. And here's my plan." "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." Well, we've been praying for that for a long time. We've been groaning about that for a long time. "No, but I'm going to do that, I'm going to do that." "I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will," here's a big word, "redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment." That's the whole point, right? "Who made this man the judge and the ruler and the Redeemer?" Well God did.

The Redeemer. To redeem, it's not just a parallel synonym for the word deliverance, but you could say it's deliverance with a price tag. When Jesus came on the scene and says, "I give my life as a ransom," there's linguistically the connection to that word redemption if you looked at the Septuagint in New Testament Greek. Ransom. I'm going to make the payment. I'm going to pay the price to deliver you from this oppression. And today we here in this epic of pain and sin and a world that's laden with sin, God says, I'm going to redeem you out of that. I'm going to pay the price. Christ himself was the payment to take us out of all of this.

The picture here is God's going to come and he's going to pay the price. Right? Which is going to be with all these judgments. And he's going to extract the Israelites from Egypt. That's the plan. And so that sounds great. You're going to get us out of this mess. Verse 7, "I will take you to be my people." That sounds good, that would be awesome. "And I'll be your God," this perfect and powerful God, I'm going to be associated, identified with you. "And you shall know that I am the Lord, your God, and I brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." And one day we'll rejoice in that, the Bible says as Christians, we'll be so glad to have all this behind us. "I will bring you into a land that I swore," it's all based on a promise which we should be believing, "swore to give Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob," And I will give it to you for a possession, "I am the Lord." I have to always remember you have the authority, you made the promise, we ought to believe the promise.

Now, here's the challenge, verse 9. "Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel." Positive, based on a promise, God is going to do it, hang on, we're going to get there. "But it says they did not listen to Moses." Why? Because of their focus on the pain. "Because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery." Hey, listen, your pain might be acute right now, but I'm telling you, Paul's pain was worse, Christ's pain was worse. And the reality of the pain in our lives to say, "Wait a minute, I cannot let that break my spirit so that I don't believe God's truth because I'm so myopically focused on the pain in front of me." I've got to distinguish that pain as God's purposeful sovereign plan to put me through the wringer on all these things that he's doing. But the Bible says he's promised to work everything out, everything. Right? "I've worked all things together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose."

So I believe I'm part of God's family. He has a purpose for my life. And whether it's cancer or unemployment or whether it's relational problems or whether it's who knows what it is. Whatever the pain is, the problems at work, the hostility from our culture, I know this: God, that's your plan. But here's the thing. I'm not going to let it break my spirit. I'm not going to get to the place where I don't believe the reality of it. I have to make the comparison between where you're taking me and the pain I presently feel.

Which takes me to one of my favorite verses and all the Bible in my mind, Romans Chapter 8 verse 18. He says, "I would consider," he says, "that the present sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed to us." You've got to take these two things and say, OK, where we're headed to Canaan is not worthy to be compared to the harsh treatment and slavery I'm going through today. I have to look beyond the pain and I got to look to the prize. The prize is God's going to take his people to a place where there is, here it is again, no pain any longer. None.

So I know the pain right now, that's part of the epic and the dispensation I live in. But I know God's got a plan. I have to trust that plan. And I know that it's just a matter of time. Think about it. I mean, you're not Methuselah, right? You're not going to live another 800 years. Right? We're going to get to the end of this and you need to say, I believe to the end of my last breath on this planet, I'm going to get from here to there through this pain and I'm going to



recognize this, "it's not worthy," all of it, all that pain, "to be compared to the glory that has been revealed to us."

And then he says this. Think about creation. He personifies creation, that passage in Romans 8 starting in verse 19, and he says "it can't wait for the sons of God to be revealed." It can't wait for the day when we have the kingdom and the children of God here are revealed in God's eschatological plan. He says, "And you yourself," if you have the Spirit, "you groan within yourself," a lot of pain and you can't wait. "You eagerly anticipate the revealing of the sons of God." I mean, that's a big deal that you say, "I can't wait." We're waiting for the redemption that God is going to finish, this culmination of his plan.

And I know I've preached on it a lot, so I don't want to belabor it, that's the third time I've said that now, I don't want to belabor it, but I am saying this, you need to remember where we're headed. You need to remember that it's not about the "here and now." It's about the "then and there." We have to focus on that. If you don't focus on that, you won't believe it. If you don't believe it then you'll be focused on the pain and you'll get a broken spirit and you won't believe the truth of God and that is going to mess you up. That's a pain you would needlessly bear. "Oh, what needless pain we bear." Why? Why would you have to... just put the hope back in your mind. God made a promise. He's good for the promise. And in a matter of time, 100 years from now, we're all going to be in a whole different place. God's going to bring back his son to this planet, kingdom, no pain, no dying, no mourning, no crying. That's a good thing.

Back to our text. We'll get it here in Acts Chapter 7, beginning in verse 33. I've already told you, there's this reminder of the fact that God is not only present in Ur of the Chaldeans and not only Abraham going as a sojourner and God is present. Now, we get the reminder that God is present here in the desert adjacent to Sinai and holy ground, take your shoes off, this is holy ground. Not only that, way over in Egypt it says in verse 34, "I've seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I've heard their groaning."

I think about those lines in the Scripture that God is a God who has seen, the Lord is a God who sees, God sees. He hears. Nothing is hidden from his sight. We've kind of emphasized that throughout this series, reminding us of passages like Jesus saying, "Every hair on your head is numbered." God knows. And here's the challenge. Even though you believe in the omniscience of God, you believe in the omnipresence of God, the challenge for you as you sit here about to get into another Monday, another week with a lot of disappointments and a lot of pain and a lot of frustration and a lot of increasing hostility from our culture, you have to believe that not only does God have a good destination for us between here and there, he is not, to use the words of Christ in John 14, he's not "left you as an orphan." You're not orphaned. It's not like, "OK, when I say sojourner and stranger and aliens like, oh, good, good luck with that. See you in 25 years." No it's like I will be with you, I'm going to take you from here to there.

As a matter of fact, let me turn you to... let me first write it down. You need to "Trust in the Holy Spirit's Presence," to speak of orphans. Right? The idea is he's not leaving you as



orphans. I'm going to go back to my Father and I'll be ensconced at the right hand of the King. But here's the thing. You will have the Holy Spirit. He will come to you and he will dwell with you and he will be with you. And in that sense, I can say, "Lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age." And the problem is we can say we believe in the omnipresence of God. But on Wednesday afternoon, you have to think I know that God is fully aware of every single issue in my life, including my groanings and the burdens and the pains, and I know he's walking me through this.

Even if your life feels like it's 430 years of enslavement in Egypt, I know that God is with me. The resource of knowing that, the practicing in my own conscious, cognizant mind that God is present right now is going to make all the difference. And I'll show you, go to Deuteronomy 31. At the end of Moses' ministry, he says, as he's handing the baton off. This is 40 years after the burning bush experience. And he's saying, "OK, Joshua, you're going in now and you're going to lead the people into Canaan. God's not even going to let me into the Promised Land here on this earth, this Promised Land here, land flowing with milk and honey, you're going to lead them in."

Which, by the way, when you lead them in, it's a long series. It's going to be a lot of work. You got a lot to do. I mean, you got the battle of Jericho and then there's going to be failure and sin and you going to have discipline. What needless pain you're going to bear at the battle of Ai, you're going to have to bury soldiers. It's not going to be good. And then you're going to have a northern campaign, southern campaign. You going to have all these things. It's going to be a lot of work for a whole generation settling the Promised Land. But listen, here's the promise of God, between here and there the promise is God's presence. And you have to believe that.

Look at verse 6, Deuteronomy 31:6. This is a great text. At the end of Moses' ministry, he says here, "Be strong," he's telling the people, "Be strong and courageous." Don't be disheartened, don't have a broken spirit. Don't be dismayed by the struggles. "Do not fear or be in dread of them." You're going to go in there, you're going to have problems. Today, you have problems at work, problems with the culture, you have problems in your life, problems with your body, all kinds of problems in this present dispensation. But here's the deal, "For it is the Lord your God who goes with you."

By the way, you know there are not verses about, "Hey, be sure you sleep every night." There are no verses about that. "Hey, you should really eat. You should have some lunch today. Don't forget to eat boys and girls." God never has to say those kinds of things. There are no verses about, "Be sure you breathe." Right? Because you're going to do that. When you see God repeating commands over and over and over and over and over and over again, like this one, "I'm with you. I'm with you. I'm with you. I'm with you." Then I know this, we must be prone to not remember that, right?

God's not stuttering or wasting ink. He's trying to tell us you will forget this if you don't practice this. If you don't make this your cognizant, conscious awareness. You have to know this invisible God who's made a promise has not left you as an orphan between here and there.



He will walk with you. Keep reading, verse 7. I didn't even finish verse 6, did I? "For it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you," right? He's talking about the rest of this week. The rest of... "He's not going to forsake you." That's what God promises.

Then Moses looks at the guy who's going to have a lot of weight on his shoulders, Joshua. "Moses summoned Joshua and he said to him, in the sight of all of Israel." I going to tell you that your leader, I'm going to commission him, you're all going to hear what I'm going to say to him. The same thing I said to you. "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it." It's going to take a whole generation to get this done. "It's the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you; he will not forsake you. So do not fear and do not be dismayed."

Here's the problem. The difference between you getting from here to there with the right attitude, without all this unnecessary, superfluous pain that you really shouldn't bear, "Oh, what needless pain we bear," would be for you to say, number one, I know what God promises and I know where we're headed. In 100 years from now I know where I'm going to be. But between here and there. Right? I'm never going to forget that I'm not left as an orphan. How many times does God have to say it? Right? Hebrews 13. Right? All the issues that you have about money, you're all concerned about money. Don't worry about that. He says, "I am with you. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. You need to remember that I'm there."

And even Moses, when he was told from the burning bush, God said, "Hey, you go and lead these people back. Think about the sphere that you would have. "I left Egypt because they had a bounty on my head. I'm going to be killed if I go back." God says, "Go back," and guess what he says? What you and I would say, "I don't want to go. I don't." He says this: "Send someone else," he says in Exodus 3. Right? Do you remember what God's response is? "I will be with you." You need to remember that. "I will be with you. I will get you through the difficulty of you standing in the shadow of Pharaoh and his throne."

And then he says, "I'm not very good at speaking. You want me to speak? I'm not..." Remember what God said? "I will be with your mouth." Can you just start recognizing God's presence in your life? Don't forget that you're not an orphan, that Wednesday afternoon, whatever it is you have to power through at work, whatever you deal with next weekend, God says, "I am going to walk you through it. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you." And the reality of that is life-changing.

One passage, Psalm 139. I know I send you there in the discussion questions this week, but let me give you, and I'll do my best to be disciplined to not comment. I just want to read a little bit of this for you. OK, without comment. Yes. OK, here we go. Ready? Verse 1. Psalm 139. You need to let these words sink in. This is critical. You need to think this way. You need to trust that the Spirit is present. Ready? First one. "O Lord, you've searched me and known me. You know when I sit down. You know when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path, my lying down, you are acquainted with..." most of my ways. Underline



the word "most." Is that there? Oh, oh. That's the lying translation. No. "Acquainted with ALL of my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it all together." Is he here? I'm hemmed in. "You hem me in, behind and before," (are you actively involved?) "you lay your hand upon me." Now if I really think about that the God of the universe, who has an active presence in the third person of the God-head in my life. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it's high; I can't even attain it," if I really think about it. That's the Psalm 8 echo. How can it be that God would take and give attention, that kind of attention to us? But you know what, it is your Spirit, the third person of the God-head.

"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" I can't. "If I ascend to heaven, you're there." Duh. "If I make my bed" in the grave, "in Sheol, you're there. If I take the wings in the morning." If I take that, you know, the Concorde as far east as I can go. "If I dwell in the uttermost part of the sea." I buy a submarine and I go live down under the ocean, "even there your hand shall lead me, your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely, the darkness shall cover me. The light is going to be night.' Well, even darkness is not dark to you. The night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you." How well you know me.

Verse 13, "You formed my inward parts: you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame wasn't hidden from you, when I was being made," crafted together "in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious," how valuable, "to me are your thoughts." And the context here, your thoughts about me, you think about me, you know, you here and you see. "How precious to hear your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them."

How much? This is mind-blowing. "If I were to count them, they are more than the sand." How much is God thinking about your situation? When you're sitting there in Egypt going, "God, where are you? You don't hear me. You don't know how much we're hurting. You don't know the struggles. You don't know the financial situation we're in. You don't know how hard it is for my husband at work. You don't how difficult it is with this diagnosis." God knows it all. It's like the sand of the seashore. And then when you get to point "B." Right? This linear plan and the promise, hey, "When I awake," when I'm dead and I wake up, "I'm still with you."

The reality of God knowing your situation, I just think that can be pivotal. You can say in your systematic theology, I believe in an omniscient, omnipresent God, but do you really cognitively say, I know this week God will not leave me and he will be actively present and every groan he'll hear, every sigh he hears, every pain he hears. He's intricately detailed, specifically involved in knowing my life. "I am with you." That is repeated so many times in the Scripture. The God who hears, the God who sees, nothing hidden from his sight. That's critical.



So let's get to work. Great. What is it? Verse 35, back in our passage. Acts Chapter 7 verse 35. Let's get there. Well, we need a leader. Well, thankfully, if I were there as a slave in Egypt as an Israeli and I can't wait to get to the Promised Land, I need to follow a leader. And it's going to be a very circuitous route from, you know, from Goshen to get to the Promised Land, to get to Jerusalem. That's going to be a really long journey. But I need a leader. How do we get there? Well, thankfully, "This Moses, whom they rejected," which again, you can see the Christological, sociological undertones of this, you've rejected Christ. He is the redeemer. He's the ruler. Right? And now you think back to the history of Israel. They rejected Moses. Maybe you Sanhedrin need to think about rejecting Christ. Maybe you need to rethink that just like they had to rethink Moses because Moses was the God-appointed man.

"This Moses, whom they rejected saying, 'Who has made you ruler and a judge,' an adjudicator? The guy who decides, our umpire. Well, 'This man,' God did, 'God sent as both ruler and redeemer,' better than that. He's going to take us to the Promised Land, 'by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for 40 years.'" That's a long journey but they had Moses as their leader.

And guess what God did through that leader? He led them and if there was a need, met the need. When they said, "We don't have anything to eat." Through that leader, God gave them manna. Even when they complain and said, "We'd sure like some meat," God gave them quail. I mean, if they had a need, like "Where do we go from here," God had this visible sign, the signs and wonders, that made it clear that this is authenticated leadership, not just the guy wandering in the wilderness going he's crazy. No, we can even see there's this pillar of fire at night and this pillar of cloud by day, and our leader is following that. And that's supernatural. So we recognize the authenticated, supernatural, authorized leadership of this person.

Which, by the way, as Romans Chapter 1 verse 4 says, we sit here today not as Buddhists, not as Muslims. We follow Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our King. He is our Lord. And we say we follow him. The authenticated leadership of our king was, as it says in Romans 1:4, that, "He was declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection of the dead." Right? You can't claim that for any other religion on the planet. We have a physically bodily resurrected king who is alive and not dead. Pick any other religion and try and have that claim. You can't. And it's the number one apologetic, it's the reason that we sit here and say objectively, we must follow Christ. He has been declared to be the Son of God. And like Moses, he is our deliver, our king, our judge, our ruler.

And that is important for us as we sit here in a world that says, "We don't like what Christ said. We don't like what he said about marriage. We don't like what he says about ethics. We don't like what he said about values. We don't like what he said about anything." And they are increasingly pushing against us in that regard. But we sit here and say, "No, he's our leader," and we trust him and we believe him. And the Bible says that Jesus comes on the scene and says, you listen to me and keep my priorities as your priorities. You listen to my words, which he said "will never pass away, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass



away," Jesus said. You follow what I say and if you follow what I say, whatever the needs might be, I'll meet those needs.

For instance, when he said this, "Seek first the kingdom of God," Matthew 6:33. He says and you know what? "All these things" that the pagans are chasing after, they're really worried about where they're going to sleep, what they're going to eat, what they're going to wear, "will be added to you." You won't get everything you want, but you'll get everything you need. Right? And think that through. Right? They may have wanted boots with spurs, but they didn't get that, they had sandals. But here's what the Bible says. Their sandals didn't even wear out in the 40 years of wilderness wandering. Even their feet did not swell. They had food, they had water, they had clothes. They had everything they needed. And guess what? I bet you got all that, too. And the Bible says, as a Christian, it doesn't matter what the world says or what it wants to take away from you. If you seek first his kingdom, he's going to supply your needs.

As a matter of fact, here's a verse for you, Philippians 4:19. It's so important you have this clearly ensconced in your mind because it's not just about trusting where we're headed, the promise of God, the hope of the Christian life. It's not just about you knowing he'll be with you, but he's going to provide for you. That's the third point, by the way. The third point before I quote Philippians 4:19, I want you to write it down. We need to "Trust in Christ's Provision." Christ is our leader and Christ decides to provide for his people. He's the head of the Church. Right? He's the one in charge. He's the one who is going to provide everything that you need to get from point "A" to point "B." You need to listen to what he says, his eternal words, and you need to say this, as it said in Philippians Chapter 4 verse 19. "My God," Paul says, "will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

So you look to Christ, you follow Christ, you do what he says, you believe what he says, you don't care what the world says about what he says. You follow it because you're a follower of Christ and the Bible says he'll take care of your needs. He'll give you everything you need between here and the day you breathe your last breath in this life. He will take you from here to there. You believe that and you trust that. Then you think, "OK, I guess I've got what I need. I have provision."

Listen to Nehemiah 9:21. "Forty years God sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing." That's just a good line. When you get to your deathbed you will say that if you follow Christ, "Listen, I followed Christ and God sustained me in the wilderness and I lacked nothing." Right? You may not have a boat in the harbor. You may not have a third house on the hill, but you will have what you need. And that is important to distinguish the needs from wants and to say, "Trust in God. I'm going to do what he says."

One passage for this. I'll just give you this one text. Turn with me to John 12. This is it. This is what we do as Christians. It's why we preach the word, it is why God authorized his apostles to write the New Testament, to take his words as he promised in the Upper Room Discourse in John 13 through 16. And he said, listen, I am going to have these guys recall my words and they're going to put them down. He's going to put the details of what he said in writing.



Exposit this New Testament, New Covenant truth. We have it in 27 books in the library of the New Testament and we're saying here is our Constitution. The provision of our great high priest is in this book and we follow what it says. He's a sympathetic high priest because he shared in humanity like we are and we can come to the throne of Grace and we can get the mercy and help we need in our time of trouble. And we say we follow him.

Jesus put it this way. Look at this. Look at verse 46. Bottom of the chapter, John 12:46. "I've come into the world as light," which the world doesn't have, but he is light. It's a great metaphorical picture of his truth. Like the Bible says in Psalm 119, his word is that light, a light for a path. "That whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." And that's the good thing. I'm getting from point "A" to point "B" journeying through this world with the presence of God. I have the truth of what God wants me to know. The Constitution, the information, the philosophy, if you want to call it that, the theology of God. I'm not in darkness. I know the truth.

"If anyone hears my word and does not keep them." Now, he kind of speaks here with some double entendre. "I don't judge him." Right? He will end up judging him. But "I didn't come," certainly not in the first time, "to judge the world, but to save the world." I want people to be in the light. I want them to accept this truth that I'm teaching them. "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge." And what is it? It's the words that I said, "The words that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." You know, every neighbor you have, every non-Christian worker you work with, they're all going to be judged by the words of Christ, which are, by the way, written on their conscience as well.

And the reality of that is we are saying we believe that. That is the light. That is the truth. I follow the truth of what Jesus says. And we say that is my focus, that I'm following him. The one who rejects me, doesn't receive my words, has a judge. It's the word I've spoken. It will judge him on the last day. "I have not spoken on my own authority." This is like Moses standing between that pillar and the people. It's like he's saying, "I'm lined up with the God who made us, with the Father. I've not spoken to my own authority, but the Father who sent me has given me a commandment -- what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life," is the best thing. It gets you from point "A" to point "B," to a place where there's no crying, no mourning, no death, no pain. "What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."

You follow Jesus Christ and by that I mean you take what he says and you take it seriously and you use it as a definitive guide and truth for your life. It is the compass, as we put it here at Compass Bible Church, of your life. It is the thing that says Christ is the point and I follow him and in him is light and I trust him and I'm going to get from my life today until the end of this life where I know what's beyond this life, the promise of God. I know that he's going to walk me from here to there and I'm going to trust that he will provide. Just like Moses provided for the people all we need, he will provide for us "according to the riches of Christ." They're good words. Trust in his plan. Trust in his presence. Trust in this provision, the triune God. The Father has got a plan. The Spirit comes and walks you through it and Christ says, "Do what I say, follow what I said, and you'll have all that you need."



Planned presence and prevision. There's more I could say, but I've said more words today probably than both sermons combined the last two weeks, so, I'll call it.

Let's pray. God, more could be said and certainly in more eloquent ways to bring this sermon to an end, but we've had enough in terms of what the truth is here. You are a God who, based on a promise, has told us where we're headed and it's good. We can be discouraged, we can be broken in spirit, we can have the wrong perspective if we let the pain in our lives take center stage. We're so focused on the things we don't have, the deprivation, the aches, the pains, the relational problems, the things that really, they're bad, they're hard, like that thorn in the flesh that Paul had and yet he could somehow parlay that into something he said, "I'll gladly bear it, I gladly put up with it." I'll even rejoice in the fact that I have these pains here and now, the great treasure of the presence of God in jars of clay. I'm willing to focus on the reality of Christ in me through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

I know that if I trust him and follow him, my leader, the Lord, that he's going to provide. "Seek first the kingdom." Everything he said, all of his agenda and all the other things, they'll take care of themselves. Help us not be like our non-Christian counterparts that we live next door to, that we work next door to. God, let us be the kinds of Christians who say, no, we know where we're headed. And we'd sure like our neighbors and our coworkers to go there with us. But we need to believe the truth of Christ. Christ said you're blind and until you see that you're blind, you can't be seeing. Until you see sin for what it is and confess it you can't be right with me. God, let us be truthful by sharing the message of Christ with our friends and neighbors and let us believe what we're saying, that there is a plan, that it promises his presence and that he'll take care of us by providing for us. Make that the reality for us in a new and firm cognizant way this week.

In Jesus name. Amen.