

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - September 2, 2021

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Title: "When You Need God to Provide"

Subtitle: "Does God Consider the Odds?"

Scripture reference: Matthew 17:24-27

"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, **What thinkest thou Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?** Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, **then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou has opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take and give unto them for me and thee.**" [Matt. 17:24-27]

## I. Introduction

A: Do you recall from several years ago the promotional game of **Monopoly** at the McDonald's hamburger locations throughout the U.S.? It was the chance to win one million dollars and the winning piece was "**Boardwalk**."

B. If you read the fine print of the official rules, you would have discovered that your chances of winning was one in 518,071,190. If you thought about it, the chances of winning were not good at all. In fact, there was probably only one piece printed with "**Boardwalk**" on it.

C. For those of us who bought a burger, fries, and a drink during those times, even though you may not have been a gambler, you pulled the sticker off of your French Fries pack or your drink cup,

hoping the odds of finding that one piece with "**Boardwalk**" on it, would be yours. However, it just wasn't happening. ((If you found it - I never heard about it!))

D. Perhaps in life, you may have thought or even be thinking now, that the odds are against you in many areas, and you are losing hope.

E. Perhaps you are experiencing financial difficulties and it seems like you're climbing a financial mountain of debt that seems to be unsurmountable. Or maybe you are in a situation that appears so hopeless, that the solution will require nothing short of a miracle.

F. You may even be saying, "If God doesn't intervene soon, disaster will occur." Your situation seems so impossible, and it's hard for you to imagine how God could possibly meet your need.

G. Let me encourage you - God doesn't have to consider the odds when it comes to Him providing for you.

H. Our target verses for this study session gives us a wonderful example of how the Lord can do miracles and provide no matter how impossible the situation may look. Four facts are established in these verses.

## II. **Fact # 1 - God knows our needs before we ask Him**

A. Peter received an unexpected bill. One day he was standing outside the house when the tax collectors arrived. They wanted to know if Jesus was going to pay the tax to support the temple, which was a commandment found in Exodus 30:13, concerning the sanctuary.

B. When Peter went into the house to inform Jesus, Jesus spoke about the tax before Peter could say anything. Even though Jesus wasn't outside to hear the conversation, He revealed one of His attributes to Peter - that being His **Omniscience** (i.e., His supernatural knowledge) of this need even before Peter asked Him.

C. Sometimes we think that the purpose of prayer is to inform God of our needs. We may even think that He doesn't know what is going on in our lives, and if we don't tell Him, He will never know.

D. We may even assume that the Lord is too busy or too concerned about other things. But in Matthew 6:8, Jesus said - "... **for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.**"

E. The purpose of prayer is not to inform God concerning things that are happening in our lives. We pray because God says our prayers make a difference in bringing things to pass on earth.

**Comment:** Perhaps some things are not happening in your life because you are not praying. If you are praying and patiently trusting God - just wait!

Let me share with you a story that I read.

Shortly after Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924 in Dallas, Texas, it almost had to shut down. The creditors were going to foreclose at noon on a certain day.

President Lewis Chafer met with his faculty in the office, praying fervently that God would provide. One of the men, Dr. Harry Ironside, prayed, "Lord, we know that you own the cattle on a thousand hills. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

In the meantime, a Texas businessman stepped into the seminary's business office and said, "I just sold two carloads of cattle in Fort Worth, and I feel compelled to give the money to the seminary. I don't care if you need it or not, but here's the check."

The surprised secretary took the check and timidly knocked on the door of the prayer meeting. Dr. Chafer took it out of her hand and discovered it was for the exact amount of the debt. He then turned to Dr. Ironside and said, "Harry, God sold the cattle!"

F. What are the odds of that happening? Without God, one in a billion. But with God, the odds change to one in one. God knew the

needs of Dallas Theological Seminary before the faculty asked and touched the heart of that businessman to sell his cattle and bring in the money.

### **Saints - Are you listening?**

G. God is also aware of our needs, and He prepares ahead of time the solution to our problems. Isaiah 55:8-9 says -

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

H. We can't comprehend how God supernaturally moves people and events when a situation looks impossible. We can't understand how God does things, but just because we don't understand how He will meet our needs, it doesn't mean that He doesn't know how He will do it. The Apostle Paul stated it this way - "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ..." (Eph. 3:20).

### **III. Fact # 2 - God Controls Events That We Can't Control**

A. After Jesus revealed to Peter that He already knew his need, He told him to go to the sea and throw in a hook. When he caught the first fish, he would find a coin inside its mouth with which he could pay the tax.

B. Out of all the ways Jesus could have chosen to meet this need, why did He choose this way? There certainly are easier ways to get money.

C. Jesus did this for a reason. It was done to demonstrate to Peter (and to us) that God controls events we can't control.

D. Peter was a fisherman, and surely, he may have thought that using a net would be much easier to catch a fish. But Jesus told him to use a hook for a reason.

E. Jesus didn't want Peter to catch a whole net full of fish. He

only wanted Peter to catch one fish, the right fish. Out of all the fish in the sea, only one had a coin in its mouth. All Peter needed to do was to trust what Jesus said. ((So do we.))

#### **IV. Fact # 3 - God's Timing is Perfect**

A. Because we are so many times in our life impatient, we think God is either late or He has forgotten about us. But God's timing is always perfect.

B. Peter went to the sea and threw out the line with the hook. It was no accident that the fish was at the right place, at the right time to meet Peter when he arrived at the correct spot on the sea.

**Point:** God specializes in making divine appointments!

C. It was no accident that -

- When Saul was looking for last donkeys, he met Samuel at the appointed time set by God (1 Sam. 9:3, 15-17, 24)
- Mary and Joseph had traveled to Bethlehem for the census at the same time she gave birth to Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2 (Luke 2:1-6)
- At the exact moment when Peter denied Jesus for the third time, the rooster in the courtyard crowed twice, fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus (Mark 14:30)
- The great fish was at the appointed spot in the ocean at the right time to catch Jonah when the men threw him overboard (Jonah 1:15-17)
- The ram was caught in the thicket at the exact moment

when Abraham was about to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22:1-13)

D. From these examples, we can see that not only is God in control, but He also has perfect timing.

**V. Fact # 4 - God Supplies Needs to Those Who Obey Him**

A. Jesus told Peter to throw the hook into the sea. But if Peter had not obeyed, he would never have caught the fish.

**Point:** It is essential that we fulfill our part in what God asks us to do!

B. Peter was responsible for only two things. The first thing he had to do was to go to the sea that Jesus obviously wanted him to go to (the Sea of Galilee). Peter could have gone to the Dead Sea, but there are no fish living in the Dead Sea.

**Point:** Some people aren't catching anything because they are fishing out of God's will in the wrong place.

C. The other thing Peter had to do was throw in a hook (it was obviously on a line). Many times, when God wants to provide, He asks us to do something, such as throwing out a line.

D. Peter could have thrown out a net, trying to increase his chances of catching the fish with the coin in its mouth. But if he had done so, he would have been disobedient.

**Comment:** We must obey God, even if it makes (in our minds) better sense to do it in a different way than what the Lord says.

E. Look at the result when Peter followed instructions. The exact amount needed to pay the tax for both Jesus and Peter was in the fish's mouth.

**It really is a blessing to obey the Lord!**

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the passages below by filling in the blank spaces with the correct answer. As always, all Scriptures have been taken for the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

"Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ by thy great \_\_\_\_\_ and stretched out arm, and there is \_\_\_\_\_ too hard for thee."

[Jeremiah 32:17]

"But my God shall \_\_\_\_\_ all of your \_\_\_\_\_ according to his \_\_\_\_\_ in glory by \_\_\_\_\_."

[Philippians 4:19]

"(For we \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_; not by \_\_\_\_\_:)"

[2 Corinthians 5:7]

"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is \_\_\_\_\_, but with \_\_\_\_\_ all things are \_\_\_\_\_."

[Matthew 19:26]

"For with God \_\_\_\_\_ shall be \_\_\_\_\_."

[Luke 1:37]

### Questions For You to Ponder

1. Are you fishing in the Dead Sea? If so, change your fishing location.
2. What line does God want you to throw out? (This would include praying, sending out resumes (if you need a job), etc.
3. Are you trusting God in spite of what the odds may seem to be.

I pray that you have been blessed through the material covered in this lesson.

Jude 3  
Pastor Austin