



September 10, 2020

Learning of God's Provision Through Experience

I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:12-13)

What we find from the writings of Paul, as seen in the last devotional, is that he learned through his experiences the all-sufficient provision of God: to be content, at ease, and free of anxiety. While grateful for the Philippians' gift, he could truthfully say that he did not need what they had sent. Whereas King David wrote "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," Paul wrote, "not that I speak in regard to need." They both knew the provision of God that became for them a life without lack.

But how could Paul say that? This man has been dragged through every jailhouse in the Roman Empire. Several times we find him bobbing around in the ocean, trying to survive shipwrecks. It makes me want to say, "What do you mean, you don't have any wants? Couldn't you use a boat?" He would respond, "Well, sure, I'll take a boat, but I don't really have to have it, you understand." What kind of man is this? One who has had many lessons, in many different circumstances, that taught him the deep truths of sufficiency. His simple testimony is found in the passage above.

What did David and Paul share that gave them both this confidence? David speaks of being strengthened by the Shepherd's rod and staff; Paul speaks of being strengthened by Christ. It's the same experience for both of them, they both experienced the provision of God in the midst of their sometimes messy and chaotic lives.

Practice: *Paul was also convinced that it was an experience that everyone can know. Out of that conviction, Paul could promise the Philippians, and us: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (4:19).*

(Q) Identify the felt needs in your life at this moment? How is God's love seeking you out in these situations, how is he seeking your good?