

17 - God's Exacting Provision

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey discusses the importance of trusting God's provision and the paradox of being poor in spirit while accessing His abundant resources.

Duration: 9:51

Scripture: Psalm 23:1, Psalm 37:25, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Philippians 4:19, James 1:17

Topics: "Provision"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the process of building a community of people with a common purpose. They express their enjoyment in connecting with individuals who have become a part of this work. The speaker emphasizes their confidence in God's provision for the entire project, as they have chosen not to ask Him for money but instead rely on faith financing. They mention the examples of George Mueller and Hudson Taylor, who understood and lived out this concept. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the importance of being 'poor in spirit' and the various interpretations of this phrase.

Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Torrey back with you again to wrap up this discussion of what it means to live by faith, to trust God for your provision. If you have been with me the past few weeks, you have learned a great deal about how God has worked in my life to teach me about trusting Him for our needs and provision for His work. Last week specifically I spoke about how God turned the policy of faith financing that my father had established on its head for me in my efforts to carry on the development of the Three C's training center.

Going from not letting anyone know one's needs and praying only to God for them to just the opposite, letting people know and inviting them to help while not praying to God for the need. I want to add at this point that God's command to me to not ask Him for money was a direct command to me and me alone. This does not mean that others should not pray to God for their provision.

I believe very firmly that they should. There are many places in scripture that teach us this. His instruction was to me as a workman.

Think about it. If you are the foreman on a project for a large corporation, you don't worry where the money is coming from to do what your team is supposed to do. You direct the work and submit requisitions for funds as needed.

Also you don't keep going back to the management asking them if you should make this purchase or that one. You have been given a job to do because management trusts you to do it and do it well. You don't give the finances a second thought.

This is the nature of what God has shown to me. Unfortunately I am still learning this and have quite a ways to go yet. My confidence in God's provision is still all too easily shaken.

You see, He is still working with me as with all of us. Anyway, as I explained last week, God made it very clear that I was to do the work in front of me and not worry about where the funds would come from. I was not to ask Him for money.

But I still struggled with God's apparently opposite instructions to my father and to myself. Why would He do this? As I thought and prayed about this, I remembered my experience working with my father as we began Jesus Abbey all those years ago. The things that he lived and taught.

He looked to God's financial provision to guide him in decisions as to what directions to take, what to do, what projects to pursue. If there were several different things that he would like to see happen and they each cost a certain amount of money, he would pray for God to send those specific amounts of money. When one of the amounts that he was praying for came in, he would take that as God's confirmation.

He would pursue the course of action that required that exact amount of money, even if it didn't seem that important to him or there was something else that he personally would have preferred. This process of faith financing was part of his process for discerning God's will for himself and for Jesus Abbey. There was another factor as well.

My father was engaged in building a community of people living and working together. To participate in the community, one has to come and be a part physically of what is going on there. For the three C's, it is different.

We have no question as to what we are to do. It is spelled out for us in great detail in the document giving us permission to build. If we do not meet the conditions of this rather thick document, then we are in violation of the terms of the permit.

We also have to build the center within the time frame specified by the city of Tibet. If we fail to do this and someone else comes along with the resources and the desire to do this, they would be given the right to do so. If we fail to do this and someone else comes along with the resources and the desire to do this, they would be given the right to do so.

They could be given the land and we would lose all that we have been working for these thirty some years. So you see, it is not an issue of determining what we are to do. There are no questions about that.

We already know. As to those who are to work with us, there are many individuals whom God is calling to come, live and work with us. We need many people to do the many different things that need to be done.

But there are others whom God is calling to partner with us. Many are involved in our work in other locations, leading prayer and study groups, giving us advice in one way or another, doing research for us and so on. And there are still others who are to be involved in this work.

They are the ones who are to partner with us financially. Men and women whom God is calling to come alongside and give of their treasure to this work of the Kingdom of God. What I do is not fundraising as some think of it.

It is seeking out the partners whom God is calling. Of course, God can always sovereignly intervene and miraculously inform someone to give us funds. He has been known to do this in the past.

But this is not what He wants to do in this situation. He is building a greater community of people tied together by a common purpose and one of my jobs is to find these people and draw them in. While I have not yet procured the large sums that we need, I have enjoyed very much the process of connecting with the people to whom the Lord has led me.

There are a great many who have become a part of this work in one way or another. It is exciting. It also increases my confidence in God's provision for the whole work.

While I accepted God's command to me back in the end of 2002 to not ask Him for money, it took several years for the full meaning and impact to penetrate fully into my heart. Actually, I don't think it still has completely. However, last summer I made a very large step forward in integrating this knowledge into my life.

I think we all know that it is one thing to know something in your minds and to believe it with our heads. But it is something very different to really believe it in our hearts and live like we assume it. I made a major movement in that direction.

But I know I haven't arrived yet. I would like to read to you a verse from Matthew, chapter 5, the Sermon on the Mount. It is the very first of the Beatitudes, verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I have heard many different ideas about what it means to be poor in spirit, and all may be correct in their way. However, last summer, as we were preparing for our summer program at the Three Seas, the Holy Spirit gave me a new understanding of these words, and everything clicked together. To be poor is to have nothing.

The poor in spirit are those who know they have nothing, who realize that all they have, whether it be wealth, health, talent, personality, connections, or whatever, is really nothing, worthless. When faced with the enormity of what we are trying to do at the Three Seas, I realize that all I have is not capable of accomplishing anything. So far, my best efforts seem to come up with a big fat zero.

This is what it means to be poor in spirit. Now look at the rest of the verse. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

As soon as we realize our poverty, we then have access to all the wealth of God's unlimited kingdom. When we stop striving in our own effort, which accomplishes so little of eternal worth, we suddenly become the stewards of all God's great largesse. The paradox is that to be poor in spirit leads you to have the confidence of the world's wealthiest financiers.

We, as servants of God, agents of His kingdom, and laborers in His work, have full access to unimaginable riches. We are to have the attitude of the wealthy when it comes to carrying out God's instructions. Those who are truly poor in their own eyes become, as servants of God, the ones with an

outlook of complete abundance.

Conversely, those who are full of their own greatness, who count on their own wealth, will always worry that they do not have enough. They will become the ones with a mentality of poverty. This is God's way.

This is true faith financing. As long as we are serving God's purposes, following His instruction, we have no fear of want. It is all ours for the asking, for the work.

This is, I am convinced, what George Mueller and Hudson Taylor came to understand and to live out. By the way, we had a great summer program. I'll tell you about it sometime.

And God provided abundantly once I stopped worrying about whether there would be enough. I leave you with this thought. Who do you work for? Whose financing are you accessing? Good night.

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