



**Worship Service:
God is Our Provider**

Helpful Elements:
Green tablecloth (Ordinary Time)

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time. Today we are looking at the nature of God as our Provider, from a famous name of God in the Old Testament: Jehovah Jireh, which means "The Lord Sees" and "The Lord Will Provide."

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence today joyfully and reverently, and let us depart with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

Statement of Faith, p. 2: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting "The Lord is My Shepherd" together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

We Gather Together, p. 3

For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 4

Joyful, Joyful, p. 5

First reading: Genesis 22, the story of Abraham and his son Isaac.

[At one time] God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham! ... Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and ... offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, ... and went to the place that God had told him. ... ⁶ And Abraham [and Isaac] went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, ... “Behold, [we have] the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”

[And just as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord stopped him and provided a ram for the burnt offering.] ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah Jireh*, “The Lord will provide [and the Lord sees].”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Jesus Loves Me, p. 6

Oh, How I love Jesus, p. 7

Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 8

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10. This is written by St. Paul, telling the Corinthian church how he learned to lean on God even in hardship.

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh ... to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But the Lord said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so

that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

His Eye is on the Sparrow, p. 9

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 10

Interactive Homily: Let's think more God as our provider and as one who sees us.

- In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he talks about having a "thorn in his flesh," something that keeps him depending totally on God. There are all sorts of things that are hard to bear in life. What kinds of hardships can happen?
 - Physical hardships: illness, handicaps (deafness, blindness, parts that don't work as well as they used to), slow wearing down (like arthritis, balance)
 - How about in your heart – what can be an emotional hardship?
 - Insults, harsh words, people who are impatient with us or not gentle with us
 - What about in your spirit? What kinds of feelings can be hard at times?
 - Sadness, anxiety and worry, fear, persistent anger
- Did Paul just ignore his hardship? No! Paul says he pleaded with the Lord three times to fix it, to take it away. I love that Paul is honest with God about what he wants!
- But how does God answer this particular request of Paul's?
 - God tells Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
- So, if God wants Paul to depend on God's grace and power, let's think about what that might mean. When someone is gracious with you, what is that like?
 - A gracious person stays with you through thick and thin → God promises his presence with us at all times.

- A gracious person cares → God sees you and knows your needs at all times.
- A powerful person can do something! → God is not thwarted by our problems ... and he will always help, *even if the help doesn't look like the help we asked for.*
- I love that the Hebrew term Abraham used for God, “Jehovah Jireh,” has a combined meaning of *providing* and *seeing*. The Lord sees you – and he will provide what you need.
- Does that mean our hardships magically go away?
 - No. God did not tell Paul, “Oh, right! I’ll take away that thorn! Thanks for pointing it out to me!”
 - Instead, God told Paul that God’s own presence and power would make Paul strong.
- What has God provided for you over the course of your life? Name as many as possible.
 - Food, clothing, jobs, companionship, caregivers, church, answered prayers...
- And beyond those basic (yet important) needs, God promises so much more. When we are in a place of hardship, God as our provider gives us whatever we need to meet what is required. *[start these phrases and let people fill in the final word]*
 - When we feel weak, God will give us ... *strength*
 - When we feel impatient, God will give us ... *patience*
 - When we feel anxious and worried, God will give us ... *peace*
 - When we’re angry with someone, God will give us ... *forgiveness*
 - When we’re sad and grieving, God will give us ... *comfort*
- God always has and will be the one who provides. Just as in the story of Abraham and Isaac, God himself provides the sacrifice: sending his son Jesus to die for our sins and raise us to eternal life with him.

Let’s pray silently for a moment. Be honest with God about what you need today and know that he sees you and will provide.

(Silent Prayer) ... Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

Lord’s Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

He's Got the Whole World, p. 12

In the Garden, p. 13

Standing on the Promises, p. 14

Third Reading: Quotes on God's Provision

When God sends no answer and "the cloud remain[s]," we must wait. Yet we can do so with the full assurance of God's provision of manna [from heaven], water from the rock, shelter, and protection. – American author and writer Lettie B. Cowman

Whenever we participate in and enjoy God's provision, we have a vision. We see God and He sees us. – Chinese preacher Witness Lee

I will willingly abandon this body to hunger and suffering, provided that my soul may have its ordinary nourishment. – Native American Catholic saint Kateri Tekakwitha (pronounced *gaderi dega'gwita* in Mohawk)

My focus is not on the flood that surrounds me. Rather, my focus is on the God who surrounds the flood. — American author and counselor Craig D. Lounsbrough

Hymns:

It is Well with My Soul, p. 15

Amazing Grace, p. 16

Fourth Reading: A True Story of God's Provision (edited)¹

If any of you have ever been to a true English tea, you'll know that it's much more than tea! The hosts provide tea, cakes, sandwiches, the works. One day in Scotland, missionary Brother Andrew and his friends felt prompted to invite some people to a tea party, despite the fact that they had no money and none of the

¹ From *God's Smuggler* by Brother Andrew: <https://www.amazon.com/Gods-Smuggler-Brother-Andrew/dp/0800796853> and <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/about-us/history/brother-andrews-story/>

materials people would expect for a proper English tea (cake, bread, butter, cups...even the tea itself).

Without being asked, the people they invited volunteered to bring almost all of the ingredients, including the tea, plates, and cups. But Brother Andrew and the other missionaries still didn't have cake, an absolute requirement for a tea party in Scotland.

"That night," recounts Brother Andrew, "in our evening prayer time, we put the matter before God. 'Lord, we've got ourselves into a spot. From somewhere we've got to get a cake. Will you help us?'"

Morning arrived. They half expected a heavenly messenger to come to the door bearing a cake. But no one came. The morning mail arrived. They ripped open the two letters, hoping for money. There was none. ...

The tea had been announced for four o'clock in the afternoon. At three forty-five, the doorbell rang. It was the postman, and in his hand was a large box.

"Hello, lads," said the postman. "Got something for you that feels like a food package." Brother Andrew took the package and carefully unwrapped it. ... Inside, there was no note — only a large white box. [As Brother Andrew opened the lid], there, in perfect condition, to be admired by five sets of wondering eyes, was an enormous, glistening, moist, chocolate cake.

Hymns:

When the Saints Go Marching In, p. 17

How Great Thou Art, p. 18

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word "Lord")

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his to face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, Reprise, p. 30