

1. Opening Prayer

2. Intro: God's Providence (Brian Yeich, UMC pastor and professor at Asbury Seminary)

Simple Definition: Activity of God working out God's redemptive plans for God's creation.

Important Points on God's Providence

- a. Providence does not mean that we have no free will.
- b. God's providence does not rule out human freedom.
- c. Providence is not opposed to human cooperation with God.
- d. Providence does not mean that we have no responsibility when it comes to spiritual growth.
- e. We cooperate with God as we grow in our belief in God working out for redemption.

Deeper Definition: While God allows human beings to choose between good and evil, God's providence is a work, to assist a human being in attaining the end of his/her being, in working out his/her own salvation, so far as it can be done without compulsion, without over-ruling human liberty.

Wesley's View on God's Three Fold Circle Providence in Creation

- a. For all humanity
- b. For all who profess to believe in Christ
- c. For real Christians who worship God not in form only but in spirit and truth. (Luke 12:7)

Wesley encourages Christians to put their full trust in the Lord and to not fear. God's providence means that we can trust him even when it seems that our world or the whole world is falling apart. He does not deny that we will face challenges and sorrows, but that we should walk humbly before God and trust that "God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to God's purpose." The Christian's hope is in the Lord who not only governs the universe but also cares particularly for those who follow God. He knows the number of hairs on our heads. No detail escapes his attention. God's providence gives us hope for both our present and our future. It's not a matter of just saying that "everything happens for a reason," for God is not the source of evil or chaos. However, we can trust that behind it all, God is at work. It does not mean that everything will go well for us, but it does mean that God is with us every step of the way. Perhaps that was the motivation of John Wesley on his deathbed when he uttered the words, "The best of all, God is with us."

3. Let us read Esther Ch. 6

4. Discussion

- a. What do you think caused the king to be sleepless?
- b. Can you make a comparison between Haman and Esther?
- c. Do you think verses 10 and 11 are narrated so briefly? If so, why do you think it is written so briefly?
- d. What do you think Mordecai responded or felt about this incident?
- e. From chapter 4 to chapter 6, do you see any transition of clothing? Do you think such transition shows any sign of the future?
- f. If you were the first time reader of Esther, what would you think or expect from the next chapter when you read 6:14?
- g. Can you find out any spiritual / theological lesson in this chapter?
- h. As we know, God is never mentioned in this book. But how can you tell the works of God in this book, especially in this chapter 6? Do you see God's providence?

5. Closing Prayer