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Christ, Our Provider—P6

“For the Lord your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you” (Joshua 23:10b).

In traditional Jewish marriage, husbands provided protection and a living for their wives, and there were few, if any, avenues for wives to provide for themselves. This meant that under the marriage vows, a wife depended on her husband for much of her daily living.

Discontent may result in marriage when wives do not feel their husbands adequately provide for them. This can be a legitimate concern in human relationships, but it can also relate to our expectations—are they right?

God takes His relationship with the Church seriously, joining her to Christ as her husband and provider. We should take comfort that just as God warns any husband who *“does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”* (1 Tim. 5:8), He most certainly will provide for His Bride. Indeed, God *“is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work”* (2 Cor. 9:8), and He *“will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 4:19).

But just like in earthly relationships, we have expectations, and we grow discontent, alarmed, concerned, and fearful when they are not met—worried that God is not fulfilling His role to us adequately. We may complain or impugn His character. In His relationship with Israel, God grew angry with their discontentment and their complaints over His provision: *“Then they spoke against God; They said, ‘Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?...Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?’ Therefore the Lord*

heard and was full of wrath; And a fire was kindled against Jacob And anger also mounted against Israel” (Ps. 78:19-21). We should not equate our human expectations of God to His actual promises to us, or we will always be discontent and unhappy with His provision.

Speaking of his imprisonment, Paul said, *“I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything”* (Phil. 1:19-20a).

His expectation was not execution, yet he adds his attitude is that *“Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death”* (Phil. 1:20b). He tempered his expectations with complete trust in the leading of Jesus, no matter where He led him.

Regarding his attitude towards his expectations of Jesus, Paul says, *“I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”* (Phil. 4:11b-13). Paul’s attitude was like that of a young bride who loves her husband so much, she doesn’t flinch at the hardships or poverty of her present situation—a direct consequence of joining to him. She does not judge her husband unfaithful if He does not meet the expectations of her former life.

In the same way, you and I are to *“be content with what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’”* (Heb. 13:5b). His vow of intimate faithfulness is our anchor, our rock through all life’s storms. Are you so in love with Christ that you don’t see your present circumstances, but instead gaze with Him towards the coming glory? May His Church so live. Even so, Amen.

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