

Providing for Pastors

Joshua 21:1-3

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, August 11th 2024

I. Introduction - Different views of church office

Before we start looking at the cities of the Levites, I thought it might be helpful for me to give a little bit of background on what the Levites did, why they did not get a tribal allotment, and why God devoted so many verses to laying out their properties. So you can think of today's sermon as an introduction to the whole chapter.

We've already pointed out in the past that both Simeon and Levi did not receive tribal state borders, but rather occupied cities within the borders of other tribes. This was prophesied to happen way back in Genesis 49. It was a part of God's curse on Simeon and Levi. But over the next two Sundays we are going to be seeing that God turns the curse into an incredible blessing. And I love the way God does this in our lives! We have regrets from the past that have produced some bitter fruit, but as we submit those very to God, He uses them to draw us closer to Him and sometimes to even make us even more effective than we would have otherwise been.

But before we even start digging into the first three verses this morning, I am going to give you a lot of background material. And I don't see any way of avoiding this.

Moses reiterated Jacob's prophecy that Levi would be scattered into every town and hamlet of Israel. That may not be immediately obvious when you see that they are only given 48 cities. But we will later see that each of these 48 cities was a presbytery headquarters, and there are several Scriptures that show that the Levites would need to branch out from those cities to pastor communities of people in every town and hamlet in Israel. And you might wonder, "How on earth does any of this chapter relate to us?" Well, let me assure you that it does. I will get into the specifics over the next two weeks, but I first need to give you a lot of background that these Israelites would have intuitively known. This would have already been in their heads when they read this chapter.

Here's the bottom line: The Levites were basically the pastors in all of the synagogues in the nation. So I am going to give you a long lesson on ecclesiology before we briefly look at the first three verses. And by the way, the word "ecclesiology" is just a big word for the doctrine of church government. What is the church supposed to look like? Believe it or not, the New Testament clearly teaches that church government did not start in the New Testament.

Now, I didn't grow up Presbyterian, so I studied all of the forms of church government to see which ones were the most biblical. They all have some aspects of Biblical truth or godly people wouldn't hold to them. But as I studied all the forms of church government in my early twenties I was surprised to find that Presbyterianism is the only form of church government that believes it cannot do *anything in the church* by mere sanctified wisdom. In

other words, Presbyterians have historically believed that absolutely everything that is lawfully done in the church must be justified by the Bible, and by the Bible alone. We call this the Regulative Principle of Government.

Likewise, Presbyterianism is the only form of church government that shows a core continuity of the same forms of church government from Genesis to Revelation. It blew me away. I will admit that I got very excited when I saw the exegesis of the Scottish Presbyterians of the 1600s and the detailed way they demonstrated that Presbyterianism is not only solidly rooted in the New Testament; it is solidly rooted in the Old Testament as well. And they demonstrated rather well that the early church was Presbyterian in its structure for many centuries, so there is a continuity in history as well. And I can't get into all of that this morning, even though the Levites of this chapter are key to understanding Presbyterianism. But I do want to at least introduce you to the subject. Otherwise it might seem pointless to go through this chapter. Once I give this introduction I am hoping you will have an aha moment where things begin to fall together.

Obviously good people differ on this subject. And if you want to get into the weeds, I can recommend some books on church government (including debates between different views), and I've written a couple of papers on the subject myself. But just for the sake of being fair and charitable, let me point out that there are good evangelicals who love the Lord and yet who disagree on this topic of church government. Let me list the eight main views. (And these are not in your outline - sorry about that. I decided to put these in after I printed them.) 1. There is the Episcopal hierarchy view - like the Methodists, the evangelical Anglicans, and the Reformed Episcopal church follow. And that tends to be a top-down structure. 2. There is Presbyterianism, which has a kind of republican form of government. It is representative rule with levels of government. 3. Then there is the single Elder Baptist view that sees the pastor as the only officer ruling the church. And they do actually have some basis for this since some small churches in the Bible only had one teaching elder. But they miss out a number of other Scriptures that describe the ideal. Anyway, in their ecclesiology it's a one man show. And wow does that one man have a lot to do. 4. Then there is the plural Elder Baptist view with no distinctions within the eldership. All elders share all of the duties together. And sadly, our denomination has failed to see distinctions among the elders - but they are restudying that and are about to fix that. But that's the only point of presbyterianism that we get a fail on. So you can pray for our elders as we think through these issues. When I joined the CPC, it was the only area I told them that I disagree with our polity. 5. Then there is Congregationalism, which is basically presbyterianism lite. It has a lot of good points, but it leaves some of the checks and balances out that Scripture clearly leaves in. And those checks and balances are actually for the protection of the sheep. They are so important. 6. There are also democratically-run churches where everyone has a vote on every detail of what they do. 7. Among charismatics you will find many different kinds of church government, including ones that parallel what we have already looked at. 8. And then, believe it or not, there are groups that are anarchical. In other words, they don't believe that there should be any humans who rule and not even the congregation can rule by vote. They just meet or not meet as desired; they come and go. But interestingly,

there still tend to be dominant personalities who informally influence and rule even if they try not to.

So those are the eight main views of church government that evangelicals have tended to hold to. And at least six of them can appeal to *some* Scripture to back up at least *some* facet of what they are doing. And I want to reiterate that only Presbyterianism can justify everything in church government - and actually, everything in worship from overheads, to instrumental music, amplification of sound, to pulpits, to administration, to discipline, to fellowship meals, to orders of service - everything from the Bible. But let me quickly go through the weaknesses of the main alternatives.

James Leo Garrett, Jr. makes a case for the congregation-led church. He defines congregational polity as “that form of church governance in which final human authority rests with the local or particular congregation *when it gathers for decision-making*.” The vision of congregationalism is that “the congregation governs itself under the lordship of Jesus Christ (Christocracy) and with the leadership of the Holy Spirit (pneumatophoria) with no superior or governing ecclesial bodies (autonomy) and with every member having a voice in its affairs and its decisions (democracy).”¹ So apparently on that view God governs the church by majority vote. But I was not impressed with his exegesis of passages that deal with elders or overseers.

Though Reformed Baptists do claim to believe in sola Scriptura (such as James R. White - a great guy), and though they do get a lot right in their church government, when push comes to shove on many specifics, these authors will state that those specifics are not laid out in Scripture - and don't need to be. They appeal to general contours, but leave the details to what they call “sanctified wisdom.” And there is a *lot* that is left to sanctified wisdom- so much so, that one Reformed Baptist leader, George Eldon Ladd says, “It appears likely that there was no normative pattern of church government in the apostolic age, and that the organizational structure of the church is no essential element in the theology of the church.”² In other words, he believes that while the New Testament does justify the general contours of their Baptist form of government, he can't point to chapter and verse to defend all the specifics of how that government is carried out. This is because he restricts himself to the New Testament. The problem I have with that is that the only Bible that the New Testament Christians had for several years was the Old Testament (Acts 8:32,35; 17:2,11; 18:24,28; Rom. 16:26; 2 Tim. 3:15-17), and even though Paul appeals to the Old Testament to teach on ecclesiology (such as 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 - which he couldn't do if the Old Testament had nothing to say to our ecclesiology), and even though Paul made clear that he had been “saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come” (Acts 26:22). That means that he based all of his New Testament doctrine in the Old

¹ James Leo Garret, Jr, “The Congregation-Led Church,” in Daniel Akin et al., *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 157.

² George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 579.

Testament. It's at least there in seed form. I have read numerous books on ecclesiology and because they don't look to the *whole* Bible, they don't have a complete system of church government. And they admit it; in the ecclesiology debate books they admit that they can't point to the Bible for every detail of what they think is a solid church government.

Episcopalian writer, Peter Toon, is a phenomenal guy on many areas of theology. But in his essay proving Episcopalianism, he has to turn to God's supposed guidance during later church history to prove most of his points. He says, "It is important to recognize that the modern Anglican, unlike some of his seventeenth-century ancestors, does not see any blueprint for the polity and government of the church written in Scripture."³ That's a pretty big admission. Another prominent Episcopalian by the name of Paul Zahl says much the same thing.⁴ So it is no wonder that you see very little use of Scripture in his essay. He speaks of Scripture plus tradition being necessary to have a complete form of church government. But any time disagreements come up between members and the leadership, there is nothing for the members to appeal to if sola Scriptura is removed. Tradition is a wax nose that can be manipulated by ecclesiastical tyrants.

I'll just mention one more viewpoint. Sam Waldron, who is a wonderful godly multi-elder congregationalist, and who gets a lot right, insists that ecclesiology must be established by the New Testament alone. OK, great. Let's do it. But how detailed is the New Testament in his view? Uh, not very detailed. He says "though the written Word of God is sufficient to tell us how to worship God and govern the church, the circumstances and implementation of the biblical order are left to our sanctified common sense..."⁵ Thus, he can't give a lot of specifics on church government. And restricting himself to the New Testament severely limits and even rules out many checks and balances that are only hinted at in the New Testament, but which are explicitly laid out in the Old Testament. By the way, all seven principles of Presbyterian ecclesiology are in the New Testament, and then the New Testament appeals to the Old Testament for some details.

You see, when the *whole* Bible is taken into account, we have everything that we need for ecclesiology and there are protections for both members and officers. There is no micromanagement of the people. Nor is the teaching elder allowed to act as an overlord. The only authority allowed in the church is the Word of God – not a pastor's preferences. And the only basis for judgment is the Word of God, not the prejudices of an elders board. There is the right of appeal for a dictatorial edict, something that neither Baptists nor

³ Peter Toon, "Episcopalianism," in *Who Runs the Church?*, ed. Paul E. Engle and Steven B. Cowan, Zondervan Counterpoints Collection (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 28.

⁴ He speaks of Episcopalians standing on a "three-legged stool" of "Scripture, tradition, and reason." The Very Rev. Dr. Theol. Paul F. M. Zahl, "The Bishop-Led Church" in Daniel Akin et al., *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 209ff.

⁵ Samuel E. Waldron, "Plural-Elder Congregationalism," in *Who Runs the Church?*, ed. Paul E. Engle and Steven B. Cowan, Zondervan Counterpoints Collection (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 203.

Episcopalians have had a good track record on. Elders are just as subject to church discipline as members are and just as protected by due process as the members are. Ken Sande has a wonderful article on the Biblical principles for holding church leaders accountable. And I think that our denomination's shepherding committee lives out those principles rather well.

Anyway, the bottom line is that the Levites in this chapter are the teaching elders of the Old Testament synagogues. We will get to the ruling elders in a bit, but these were the teaching elders. And in this chapter, even when it came to their physical provisions, they appealed to the Scriptures in verse 2. So let me give you an abbreviated background on the Levites and how they fitted into Old Testament Presbyterianism. And hopefully this will help make sense of the rest of the chapter over the next two weeks.

II. Abbreviated background on Levites and Old Testament Presbyterianism

A. There is a continuity between the pastoral office of pre-Mosaic "firstborn" (Gen. 20:7; 26:24; 27:1-40; 28:1-4; 33:11; 35:9; 46:1; 48:1-49:33; Ex. 3:1; 18:1,12; Job 1:5), the Levites who took over the pastoral office of the firstborn (Numb. 3:12,41,45,46; 8:1-26; etc), and New Testament pastors who were prophesied to take over the role of the Levites (Isaiah 66:21; cf. Jer. 33:18,21,22; 45:5; 48:11-13,22; etc.)

First of all, Presbyterianism didn't start with Moses. Prior to Moses God established the firstborn son to be the pastor of his clan. There is very little controversy on that point. Almost everyone agrees with that. So even though I have included some Scriptures in your outline, I won't take the time to prove that.

But if you look at Numbers chapter 3, you will see that God had the Levites take over the place of the firstborn. In other words, the Levites will occupy exactly the same position that the firstborn did. Let me start reading at Numbers 3:12.

"Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine,

They were now the ones who would be set apart to God for teaching ministry. They are God's representatives. Verse 41 says something similar:

And you shall take the Levites for Me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel..."

Verse 45 says,

"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel... The Levites shall be Mine: I am the LORD.

And you can look at some of the other references on your own.

But before I move on, I probably should mention that entrance into the pastoral office of firstborn or Levite was not automatic before Moses or after Moses. For example, there are many Scriptures that show that if the firstborn wasn't spiritually qualified to be the pastor of the extended clan, he was bypassed and the second born or even third born took the office of firstborn and was called the firstborn even though he wasn't born first. In other words, firstborn was a *spiritual* position, not simply a birth order position. It wasn't automatic. To be pastor you had to be qualified.

The same was true of Levites. There were a lot of Levites who were bypassed because they didn't meet the pastoral standards. It's important to realize that when Levites didn't have all the God-given qualifications of elders, they were not allowed to serve as pastors. Several Scriptures say that their function was to be faithful teachers of the law. For example, Deuteronomy 33:10 says, "They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your law." I won't get into all of that. I'll just try to be super brief this morning - even though it may seem like I am not being very brief. I'm only intending to give you *some* of the background to this chapter that every Israelite would have automatically known. And it would have made it easier for them to understand what was going on in this chapter.

Anyway, this point goes on to say that the New Testament pastors were prophesied to take over the role of the Levites. For example Isaiah 66:21 prophesies that in the New Covenant, God would take some of the Gentile believers for priests and Levites. Obviously Gentiles can't literally be descendants of Levi, but they occupy the place of pastor that the Levites occupied. And the only priestly role in the New Covenant was that of the teaching priest. Jesus was the last priest who could make a sacrifice. Well, that meant that only the teaching or pastoral function was left. And so there is a continuity of the heart of what it means to be a pastor from Genesis to Revelation. It moves from firstborn, to Levite, to the teaching elder.

B. The pastoral function of firstborn in no way replaced the existence of ruling elder. The two operated side by side both before there were Levites (Gen. 50:7; Ex. 3:16; Ex. 3:18; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5,6; 18:1-27) as well as during the Mosaic economy when Levites took over the function of the firstborn (Deut. 31:9; Josh. 8:33; 2 Sam. 19:11; 2 Kings 8:3; 2 Chron. 5:4; Is. 37:2; Lam. 1:19; 4:16; Luke 23:66; Acts 4:23; 23:14; 25:15; etc.) Levite and elder/shepherd formed two separate orders within the office of elder. Thus in every era there were both teaching elders and ruling elders, even though all of them were considered elders and had parity in court cases.

The next point in your outline gives Scriptures that show that the pastoral office of firstborn in no way replaced the function of the ruling elder. They always had ruling elders.

You are probably aware that our denomination is realizing that we need to reinstitute the role of ruling elder. There is still debate in our denomination on whether ruling elder and

teaching elder are two offices or two orders within the one office of elder. But I think everyone agrees that the Bible requires both teaching elders and ruling elders, both of whom are shepherds. I personally believe the Scottish Reformers were right and that there is one office of elder with two different orders, functions, and callings. The Levites taught and administered the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism and the ruling elders helped them with the shepherding of the sheep, discipleship, and one-on-one teaching. But they were all elders. And I give Scriptures that show that this was a clear distinction before Moses, after Moses, and in the New Testament times. All elders had equal authority when it came to rule, but they had different functions and different ordinations.

C. Old Testament synagogues had only elders and deacons.

1. Elders who had an oversight and judicial role ("overseers and judges" - 1 Chron. 23:3-4;). These elders were further subdivided into 1) scribes - sometimes called "wise man," or "disciple of the wise," and were teachers of the law (Deut 33:10; cf. 2 Chr 17:7-9; 35:3; Mal 2:6-9), and 2) elders - in the minor prophets called "shepherds." The age at which these Levites took office was thirty (1 Chron. 23:3-4). These Levites could be either from the sons of Aaron or from any other son of Levi. However, if (like Ezra) Aaronic sons served as scribes, there was no confusion between priesthood and eldership.

And I can't get into the weeds on this, but the synagogues of the Old Testament and New Testament had only elders and deacons. That's my view. The elders were divided up into Levitical scribes who taught and administered the sacraments and elders or shepherds who joined with the Levitical scribes in helping the congregation to grow in the Lord.

2. Servants To The Elders (Numb. 3:5-7; 7:5-8; 8:19-26; 16:8-11; 18:5-7; 1 Chron. 6:48-49). These are equivalent to the deacons (literally "servants") in Acts 6 who were ordained to aid the apostles. The minimum age for these Levites to enter their office was twenty (1 Chron. 23:24).

And since deacon means servant, there were servants to the elders in the Old Testament just like there are in the New Testament. Since that is not at all controversial, I won't get into that more.

D. See my paper on the details of Presbyterianism in both the Old and New Testaments that gives detailed proof for the structure shown in graphic below:

But in your outlines you can see a breakdown of how the courts of the church were structured in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (and for that matter, in the first few centuries of church history). But enough on background. [image]

III. This chapter deals with God's provision for the Levite's physical needs

This chapter deals with God's provision for the Levites' physical needs.

A. The tithe went to them to free them up for full-time work (Numb. 18:23-30; Deut. 12:12,18,19; 14:27,29; 16:11,14; 18:1; 26:11-13; 31:14,19; etc)

God had already provided a tithe for them before and after Moses. The tithe went to Levites, and the Levites in turn gave a tenth of their tithe to the temple. So Numbers 18:26 says, "Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe.'"

B. Property was also given to them to ensure their financial success (Numb. 35; Deut. 18-19; Josh 20-21).

But in addition to the tithe, God made sure that each Levite got a place to live. We will see next week that there were others who *weren't* Levites who also lived in these cities, but Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 18-19, and Joshua 20-21 all deal with this parceling out of cities and land to the Levites. God was not against them having property.

C. These 48 cities were the headquarters of the 48 presbyteries in Israel, with additional Levites branching out to pastor synagogues in every town (Acts 15:21 with Deut. 18:6; Judges 17:7; 18:30; 19:1; Neh. 10:37ff; etc)

Maybe in a future sermon I might get into more detail on these 48 cities, but for now I will just say that they were the headquarters for the 48 presbyteries in Israel. You can see from the map in your outline that these 48 cities were within walking distance of most places in Israel. But though the Levites got land in their cities, most of them pastored synagogues in every town. I'll just give a couple of sample Scriptures that show that they didn't just stay in these cities. This was their headquarters and where their land was owned, but many also lived elsewhere. So Peter said in Acts 15:21, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." Where did Moses authorize them to go beyond these 48 cities and lead synagogues in every town? There are a number of places, but I put Deuteronomy 18:6 in your outlines as one example. It speaks of the Levites living in *any* of your gates in *any* place in Israel. Thus Nehemiah 10:37 and following speaks of Levites in all of the farming communities. So they weren't just in these cities. The cities were where most Levites and even where most Israelites started, but they began expanding outwards. Next week we will see that these 48 cities were the headquarters and where the bulk of the land was initially owned, but Levites needed to be in various towns to pastor. Sometimes they traveled to those communities and sometimes they moved there and lived there.

D. This ensured that every community received preaching (Lev. 23:3; Deut. 24:8; 33:10; Ps. 74:8; etc) while the Levites themselves could be trained in the 48 scribal centers.

And what this did is that it ensured that every community in Israel was able to get preaching of the Word on every Sabbath. What a wonderful gift. And I've given some sample Scriptures that show the preaching of the Word in the synagogues throughout the land. The fourth commandment itself mandated that. It commanded a holy convocation or gathering for worship every Sabbath. There is no way they could travel to Jerusalem every Sabbath. The country was way too large for that. So they gathered in synagogues. And Psalm 74:8 speaks of the synagogue meeting places throughout the land. By the way, I have a bunch of Scriptures in my notes here that aren't in your outline that show that Luke uses the term elder in exactly the same way to describe both synagogue officers (Luke 7:3; 9:22; 20:1; 22:52,66; Acts 4:5,8,23; 5:21; 6:12; 22:5; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15) and church officers (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2,4,22,23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18). They are one and the same. And James calls his congregation a synagogue. It was a Christian synagogue. Every church in the New Testament was a Christian synagogue. The synagogue system was identical to the Scottish Presbyterian system, which was identical to the church government of the early church in the first few centuries.

Obviously I can't give you a detailed lesson on ecclesiology this morning, but hopefully I have given enough background so that this chapter on the cities of the Levites makes a bit more sense. And I'll end this morning's sermon by looking at how the Levites were provided for in the first three verses.

IV. How the Levites were provided for

A. They asked for provision based on the Bible (vv. 1-2)

First, they asked. If the Bible commands provision, there was no shame in their asking for provision. Obviously, not all 23,000 Levites asked. The heads of the Levites in verse 1 is the representatives from the General Assembly level of the church. So the heads of the clergy spoke to the heads of the elders to make sure that what God intended for distribution across the nation actually happened. Verses 1-2:

Josh. 21:1 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel. 2 And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock."

But notice that even on physical provisions, they appealed to the law of God. God's law mandated that the Levites be people of the book, and their only authority was the Bible. To go beyond that is to go beyond the Regulative Principle - a principle that I think is very well laid out in the Bible.

And you might think, “Well, how does that relate to me?” Well, even if you are not a church officer, you can still learn to ground your prayers on the Word of God. When God commands something, or promises something, you can claim it in total faith. Like the Levites, you need to become acquainted with the Word of God if we want to pray in faith. Our prayers need to be saturated with Scripture. 1 John 5:14-15 says this:

1John 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Too many people are passive when it comes to God’s promises, but promises are meant to be claimed before we will see them answered. And many examples of this could be given. In Ezekiel 36:36 God promised to give Israel some land when they came back from Babylon. But the very next verse says that He won’t give it to them until they *ask* Him to give it to them. So He promised it, but then immediately said, “Hey! Even though I have promised it, I am not going to do it unless you claim the promise in faith.” God made it this way to strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and to develop patience and diligence. God promised cities to the Levites, but until they asked for the cities, they did not get them. James tells us, “you have not because you do not ask” (James 4:2). So take this application to heart. This needs to instruct our prayer life. And these Levites not only expected it from the Lord, they asked for what was their heritage from the authorities that could give it to them. In other words, they took initiative. The Reformed faith has never been a passive faith.

B. The people promptly responded (v. 3)

And in verse 3, the people promptly responded. Their attitude was, “Hey. If that’s what the Bible says, we’ll do it.” They too were people of the book. Verse 3 says,

3 So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:

And it will go on to list cities close to the location of the future temple for Levites who would function as priests, and it then lists cities farther away from the future location of the temple for priests whose main function was teaching. And verse 4 begins by pointing out that it was all distributed by lot - showcasing God’s sovereignty in the distribution.

But can you see that divine sovereignty and human responsibility once again are not at odds with each other? God expects us to claim the promises of Scripture and to work diligently to see those promises achieved in our day-by-day living. Once we have done what we are responsible to do, we can rest in the assurance that God will bless us. He will.

Even though you are not Levites, you too can trust God’s faithfulness and care to provide for His own. That’s what we started the service with, wasn’t it - that God daily loads us with benefits and loves to give good things to people who ask in faith. And some people feel that their case is so hopeless that they can’t act in faith. No. There is always something that can be done to enter into the realm of God’s impossible. Often it is working faithfully with the widow’s mite.

The point is that you have responsibilities to take what initiative lies within your power - like the initiative we see in verses 1-2, but when you have done what you are able to do, you can rest in God's providence to provide for all that His children need. And Lord willing, next week we will look at this issue of provision in more detail. I think there is much that each of us can learn from it. But let's close in prayer.