



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 1

What a great Sunday we had at Providence Church! So many of you came to worship with us in person and online. We celebrated and proclaimed that God can be trusted at all times and in all situations. I hope you are able to see yourself in the story of God's faithfulness through Providence Church and beyond. As you study and pray this week, consider what you would like to entrust into God's care.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: LUKE 15.11-24

*Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons.<sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.*

*<sup>13</sup> "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.<sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.<sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.<sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*

*<sup>17</sup> "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!<sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.<sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'<sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father.*

*"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

*<sup>21</sup> "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

<sup>22</sup> “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

- This has been a central story of the Christian faith since the beginning of the church. For the prodigal son, a return to home seemed like an impossible dream. He had messed up, he had cut off all ties with his father. Yet, when desperation and repentance drove him home, his father welcomed him with open arms and threw a party. It was and is a counter-cultural concept. Throw a party for one who has been lost? Yes! That’s been the story of Providence Church for the last 15 years as well. Maybe you count yourself as one of those who heard the good news of the Father’s love. Some of us may relate more to the older brother who did things right and had trouble understanding the party going on. Regardless of how we approach it, the party is for us to join in. God did it! May He do it again in our time. **Which of the brothers do you most relate to? Have you ever been in a position to offer the kind of forgiveness and acceptance the father offered to his lost son?**
- *God, I too was once lost, and maybe I’m still a little lost today. I humbly return home to receive your grace. Amen.*

## TUESDAY: PROVERBS 3.5-6

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight.*

- There are many stories in the history of the church that point to the fact that God can be trusted. From young men being able to walk after terrifying accidents, to miraculous provisions for the physical needs of the church and community. Proverbs tell us what a wise person does. Chiefly, a wise person trusts in God above everything else. You think you know what is best in any given situation? Submit it to God, He will make your path straight. **Are you a planner and a DIY (Do It Yourself) kind of person? Great! Are you also able to place each part of your plan and project into God’s hands?**
- *O God, I desire increasing trust in your perfect will. My own understanding is limited, but you are not. Amen.*

## WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 17.20

*Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

- Here Jesus is answering his disciples questions about their inability to drive a demon out of a young boy. He tells them it is because they have so little faith. They had just tried to reason away his upcoming death and resurrection (demonstrating that they did not yet fully realize the reason Jesus came to earth). When Jesus said they had so little faith, he might as well have been saying they had no faith—at least not yet as big as a tiny mustard seed. Just a little faith, just a little trust in God will provide you with strength to see even more of His great power. **Have you ever felt that your faith was too small to see God at work in your life? Have you ever been surprised at the way God showed up in the midst of your mustard seed-size faith?**

- *Jesus, the more I am in your presence, the stronger my faith seems to grow. May I abide in your presence always. Amen.*

#### **THURSDAY: JEREMIAH 17:7-8**

*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,  
whose confidence is in him.*

<sup>8</sup> *They will be like a tree planted by the water  
that sends out its roots by the stream.*

*It does not fear when heat comes;  
its leaves are always green.*

*It has no worries in a year of drought  
and never fails to bear fruit.”*

- Some people seem to have the ability to weather any storm. They flourish no matter the conditions around them. God speaks through the prophet Jeremiah to tell us that that is possible for us. Not that there will be no seasons of drought, but that we will make it through and even bear fruit when our confidence is in God. **Imagine yourself planted by the water and the roots of your faith pushing deep into the soil by the stream. What faith practices might help you to remain planted with trust in God?**
- *O God, nourish the roots of my faith in you so that I might stand confident in you no matter the circumstances. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: ISAIAH 43:2-3a**

*When you pass through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
and when you pass through the rivers,  
they will not sweep over you.*

*When you walk through the fire,  
you will not be burned;  
the flames will not set you ablaze.*

<sup>3</sup> *For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;*

- This passage comes during Isaiah’s description of the coming servant—the Messiah. The nation of Israel had lost its way and had suffered for many years. Then comes this promise of rescue. The images of escape through water and fire would have been familiar to God’s people. It’s a reminder of the past and a promise for the future. Imagine the scene of stepping onto the riverbed of the Jordan river while the waters were stopped up to allow you to go through. That first step takes a trust in God that seems particularly bold. **As you heard bits of the story of Providence Church this week, you might have heard examples of similar steps. Are there steps of faith you are being invited to take today?**
- *Jesus, you are my only hope of rescue. Be my salvation as I pass through the rivers and walk through the fire. Amen.*

## SATURDAY: PSALM 56.1-4

*Be merciful to me, my God,  
for my enemies are in hot pursuit;  
all day long they press their attack.*

<sup>2</sup> *My adversaries pursue me all day long;  
in their pride many are attacking me.*

<sup>3</sup> *When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.*

<sup>4</sup> *In God, whose word I praise—  
in God I trust and am not afraid.*

*What can mere mortals do to me?*

- These words from David give a strong contrast between fear of enemies and trust in God. His words are more than simple defiance and hopeful dismissal of those who are coming against him, they are a statement of faith in a God of mercy and strength. **If you could make these words your own, who or what are the enemies that seem to be attacking? Does a perspective of trust in God allow you to see them differently?**
- *God, you can be trusted. I trust you with my life and I praise your Word. Amen.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In this week's message, we heard a lot of little stories that make up the big story of what God has done through the last 15 years at Providence Church.

- What is your Providence Story? How did you find yourself first connecting with Providence?
- When have you most needed to hear and know that God can be trusted?