



Upcoming Schedule

Mar 22

Ryan at Beecher City Church of Christ
Beecher City, IL

Mar 22

Matt at Calvary Chapel
Norman, OK

Mar 22-24

Ryan at Altamont Lutheran School
Altamont, IL

Mar 25-27

Ryan at Beecher City Church of Christ
Beecher City, IL

April 2, 9, 16

Ryan at Memorial Rd. Church of Christ
Edmond, OK

April 10-12

Matt & Ryan at Hi Land Christian Church
Pampa, TX

April 15-18

Matt & Ryan at Parkview Christian Church
Sedalia, MO

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LOOKING BACK

There are moments in life that we experience the Lord's Providence, which is the continual guiding and caring of us for His purposes. We may go through trials and suffering now to refine our faith in preparation for eternity. Other times we may see it for the here and now, with the aligning of plans for His purpose in our life, maybe with the opening or closing of a door. Many times we see Providence only in hindsight, looking back on life and seeing His hand working, molding and inspiring us for His plans and to His glory.



Matt Miles - President
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I can see the Lord's Providence at many times over the course of my life. I was recently reminded that early in my grade school years I developed a love for building models. Along with my father, we built a train set together in our basement. Following that, I began to build model cars and airplanes. I now know that love of building, tinkering and problem solving was Providence preparing me for this ministry. The Lord taught me early on how to stay focused and pay attention to detail. What I thought was only a hobby at the time is now something I must use on a regular basis in things such as fossil restoration, building crates, trailer and vehicle maintenance for our mobile museum.

Later in high school, while active in church, the Lord called me to serve our children's church ministry. I began to help teach others about Jesus. It seemed insignificant at the time. I remember helping in lesson times and the puppet ministry. I even was cast as "Pastor Rufus" in one of our ongoing puppet skits. My opportunities to share Christ and be an example to those younger than I was tremendous. Again through His Providence, the Lord was guiding me and calling me to ministry. He developed in me the love of teaching His Word to others, priceless to me today.

Then in college Providence brought Theresa and me together. The Lord knew exactly who I needed to be my bride for life. She is strong in my weakness and more Christ-like than anyone I know. She is the perfect helpmate and partner for me in ministry as well, which has so far been 34 years, to be exact. Many times the Lord has used her discernment to direct me through a situation that I did not see correctly. I am thankful every day for Providence that brought us together in life and eternal work.

As I look back on my life, there are more Providential moments than I have space to write. Most of those times have directly guided me to this specific ministry and my call to preach and teach His Word. Looking back on life and identifying those moments of Providence from the Lord is humbling and awe-inspiring. Please take a moment to

remember your own moments when Providence has been evident in your life. This ministry is about identifying Providence from the beginning. His plan from the start is us spending eternity in His presence. Our sin messed some things up, but not His plan. He always has and always will know exactly how to guide and care for us so that we bring Him the glory, now and eternally. There is not a month that goes by that we here at CTF don't praise the Lord for His Providence through you, our supporters and sustainers. Join with me in thanks for His Providence each day, guiding as only our Creator and Savior could do. *Psalms 31:3-5* Blessings.

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EACH OF THESE ARTICLES ARE EXCERPTS FROM
AMERICA'S EPIC ADVENTURE™
 CTF'S NEWEST VBS CURRICULUM
 From Lesson 1: *The Pilgrims, Walking by
 Faith in the Lord* – Proverbs 3:5-6



A MIRACULOUS STORM PART 2

THE NEW WORLD

The pilgrims set sail from Holland on the *Speedwell*. The ship, however, developed leaks. They had to squeeze together with other passengers from England on board the *Mayflower*. A total of 102 passengers with 30 or so crew left Plymouth, England on September 6, 1620, headed for America. The trip was challenging to say the least. It seemed to storm the whole trip. They were stuck below deck for two months with bad food, tainted water, no bathrooms, and only one set of clothes – the set you were wearing. Yet, they thought it was worth it to be able to worship God and live according to the Bible.

Land was sighted on November 9th! They all ran up on deck and began to praise God for bringing them to the New World. They celebrated for so long that Captain Jones had to force them below deck so he could continue operating the ship. They had arrived at Cape Cod, north of where they were supposed to settle. They attempted for a few days to sail south, but strong winter storms and winds kept them from making any progress.

They floated into the Provincetown Harbor of Cape Cod on Saturday, November 11, 1620. With the next day being Sunday, they stayed on board to worship together instead of unloading, despite two months of being cramped up in the *Mayflower*! That's how important the Lord's Day was to them! Then on Monday, November 13, 1620, the pilgrims set foot in the New World. They settled on a location on December 21st and began home construction on December 23rd. The winter was harsh with freezing temperatures, disease, and lack of shelter. Of the 102 passengers, only 53 would survive to the following November. They remarkably didn't give up and stayed when the *Mayflower* went back to England on April 5th! They believed God would take care of them if they were faithful to Him.

Just a few weeks before the *Mayflower* left, a man named Samoset walked into their village. He had learned English from being captured and released by English fishermen in present-day Maine. His friend Squanto had been captured in 1605 and returned home for good in 1619 (Squanto crossed the Atlantic 6 times in his life). When Squanto heard of this new group, he went to meet them. His people had been wiped out by a plague while he was in captivity. He was so pleased to see people living on his tribe's land that he stayed with them. He attended their worship services and listened to them read the Bible and pray. He was amazed at their "brotherly love."

The colonists became so fond of him that when he was captured by a rival tribe, Miles Standish led a group to rescue him, which, after Squanto did some negotiating, would lead to another 50 years of peace. Following his safe return, Governor Bradford showed him the story of Joseph taken to Egypt and how he too had been captured, but God worked it out for His good. Squanto and Bradford became close friends, and Squanto became a Christian.

Through all those storms, God had led the pilgrims to the one place in the whole continent where (1) the natives were happy for someone else to live there, (2) the land had already been somewhat prepared for them, and (3) there was a native who spoke fluent English who could show them everything they needed to know to survive and prosper. The pilgrims were right – God did take care of them!

The colonists established good relations with the natives through the love of Jesus. In return, the natives worked side-by-side with the pilgrims. After the harvest of 1621, they all got together (90 Indians and 53 colonists, most likely in October) for a three-day celebration.

Living by the Bible

Problems came with the arrival of the *Fortune* in November of 1621. New colonists came with new rules from England. The rules said that no one could own their own land, they had to rotate from one piece to the next as they planted and harvested, and then they had to bring all the food into one place and give everyone the same amount. It did not matter if you worked really hard or had been lazy and did nothing, everyone got the same amount of food. Many who did not follow the Bible did not work hard. This meant there was not nearly as much food as there had been, and it was soon realized that there would not be enough to last the winter.

Governor Bradford said the answer was in the Bible. He, just like John Smith 15 years earlier, operated by the Scriptural teaching of 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "...that if any would not work, neither should he eat" and 1 Timothy 5:8, which says that if you do not provide for your own family, you have denied the faith like someone who does not believe in God! Therefore, because of what the Bible says, Bradford and the council declared that if you did not work, then you would not receive any food. Guess what everyone who had been lazy began to do? WORK!

A LOT more crops were planted in 1623, and everything was going well, until a really bad drought from May to June looked like it would kill all their crops. The colony came together for an entire day of fasting and prayer. That night, Governor Bradford wrote, "...it began to overcast, and shortly after to rain, with such sweet and gentle showers, as gave them cause of rejoicing, & blessing God. It came, without either wind, or thunder, or any violence, and by degrees in abundance, as the earth was thoroughly wet and soaked. Which did so apparently revive & quicken the decayed corn & other fruits, as was wonderful to see, and made the Indians astonished to behold... For which mercy (in time convenient) they also set apart a day of thanksgiving."

And that's how this nation was founded – upon God's Word, with full faith and dependence on Him, giving Him all the praise and honor, including a special day of Thanksgiving unto God.



Signing the Mayflower Compact
 by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, 1899