

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

God provides

How does each sermon connect to this theme?

In May, we entered the new era of the church. However, then as now, believers do not live free from challenges, pain, and heartbreak, whether we bring it on ourselves or even when it is beyond our control. Yet, even in the midst of these difficult circumstances, **God provides**. This month, we will come to experience how God continually enters into our struggles, administers to us and supplies for our needs.

June 7: Perhaps like the disciples, our joy is misplaced in what we accomplish or experience. Yet, we will see that **God provides true joy in misunderstanding**, when we allow Him to redirect us.

June 14: This sermon takes us to the time of the Jewish people rebuilding Jerusalem after exile. When they receive and understand God's commands, holy days, and provision, **God provides strength in desolation**. His joy, not their circumstances, becomes an enduring source of strength.

June 21: Jesus Christ has opened a new and living way into God's presence through His sacrifice, as our faithful High Priest. We can draw near with confident faith, knowing that **God provides hope in discouragement**, through past faithfulness and present encouragement embedded in our community of faith as we await His promised return.

June 28: Living as strangers in this world, Jeremiah reminds us that as we patiently endure, living as a blessing, and trusting in His faithful promises, **God provides peace in displacement** and guides us toward our promised and hoped for future filled with His peace.

June midweek: Through the unchanging cornerstone of Jesus Christ, **God provides security in instability** anchored in Christ's gospel, love, grace, authority, and promises.

God is working in our lives! May this truth guide us through this month. I look forward to gathering with our family in Christ at the Together Conference in Columbus, OH at the end of the month.


John S. Schnabel

JUNE 2026

June 7

God provides...
True joy in
misunderstanding

June 14

God provides...
Strength
in desolation

June 21

God provides...
Hope
in discouragement

June 28

God provides...
Peace
in displacement

June midweek

God provides...
Security
in instability

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR JUNE 7

Where are we in the Bible?

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out seventy disciples to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God. They return with excitement, reporting visible success: even the demons submit to them in His name. They have seen power and experienced authority. Yet, in their joy, there is also a subtle misunderstanding. Jesus redirects their understanding. He shifts them away from what is visible - spiritual power and success, to the invisible eternal reality - their names written in heaven.

Then, in verse 23, Jesus deepens this teaching. He declares that their eyes are blessed, not simply because they saw miracles, but because they are being given the ability to truly perceive what those things mean. Their misunderstanding is being corrected, and their joy is being reshaped. This reveals a crucial distinction: there is a difference between seeing and understanding, between hearing and believing. True joy depends on this difference.

Summary:

True joy is not found in what we experience or accomplish, but in the unchanging reality that we belong to God and our names are written in heaven. When our understanding is shaped by this truth, we move from striving and misunderstanding into a steady life of trust, assurance, and enduring joy in Christ. The disciples were chosen by Jesus and empowered with His authority. He taught them not to confuse the visible with the essential, but to rejoice in the invisible reality of their election and salvation.

GOD PROVIDES...

True joy in misunderstanding

Luke 10:20

Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Luke 10:1-24

Catechism

10.6

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Jesus redirected the disciples' joy away from visible success and toward the reality that their names were written in heaven?

Have there been times when you confused visible success with spiritual maturity or closeness to God? What helped correct your perspective?

Jesus says true joy comes from knowing our names are written in heaven. How deeply does that truth shape your daily life and decisions?

What practical step can you take this week to live more fully in the peace, assurance, and quiet joy that come from belonging to God?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR JUNE 14

Where are we in the Bible?

Sadness and joy have always been a part of the human experience. Following their exile in Babylon, the Israelites returned to the ruined and desolate city of Jerusalem, and were likely experiencing a mix of emotions. Still, the people were open and responsive to the activity of God. In the 8th chapter of Nehemiah, they have finished rebuilding the city walls, and we find them gathered as a great assembly, with the scribe and priest, Ezra, at the center. With the knowledge that much work lie ahead in the rebuilding of the desolated city, and in an effort to strengthen the people for these purposes, several things occurred: God's commands were read aloud to the people; the people were reminded that the day was a holy day; and provision was made in the way of food and drink.

Summary:

As we receive, understand, and live within God's word, holy days, and provision, we discover that His joy - not our circumstances - becomes the enduring source of our strength, sustaining us and sending us out with gladness to serve Him and others. Through this strength, Christians are called to serve joyfully in the church, recognizing that in serving others, we also serve God.

Note: We often hear and even say the phrase "the joy of the Lord" but it is worth some intentional contemplation. What brings God joy? How does He share or communicate this joy to us? How does the Lord's joy differ from our own ideas of happiness? It's a simple answer: He finds joy in sharing His commands, in the celebration of His holy days, in providing for His people and when a soul repents (Luke 15:7). This sermon invites you to consider the joy of the Lord in a deep and personal way.

GOD PROVIDES... **Strength in desolation**

Nehemiah 8:10 (excerpt)

Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Nehemiah 8:1-13

Catechism
6.2.3.3

Discussion Questions

The Israelites responded to God's word with attentiveness, reverence, and a desire for understanding. What can we learn from their attitude toward God's commands?

How intentional are you about creating space to hear and understand God's word in your daily life?

Are there rhythms of worship, rest, or fellowship that you have neglected but may need to restore?

This Bible verse emphasizes that even grief, uncertainty, and desolation are not wasted in God's hands. How have you seen God bring growth or strength out of difficult circumstances?

What would it look like for you personally to live from "the joy of the Lord" rather than from changing emotions or circumstances?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR JUNE 21

GOD PROVIDES... Hope in discouragement

Where are we in the Bible?

From 6:13 to 10:19 the author of Hebrews builds his case for confessing Jesus as our High Priest. Right from the beginning, he states that *"this hope we have [is] an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast"* (6:19). Here "the confession" of Christ is the sure and steadfast anchor of our soul. The encouragement found in chapter 10, verses 19-25 builds directly on this preceding explanation; Jesus has given us the most intimate entry into God's presence through His sacrifice. These four chapters of exposition (mentioned above) are meant to give us confidence in who Christ is, and the relationship with God that His sacrifice allows us to have. This new reality is the unwavering confession: Jesus Christ is the willing sacrifice that brings us into the presence of God. This immovable truth stands as an anchor in our lives that brings peace when we believe and profess it. It continues to endure even when we are wavering. And so in 10:19-25, the author of Hebrews writes an encouragement that affirms what we have received through what Christ has accomplished ("we have" or "having") and also calls us to action ("let us").

Summary:

Because Jesus Christ, our faithful High Priest, has opened a new and living way into God's presence through His sacrifice, we can draw near with confident faith, hold fast to our unshakable hope, and encourage one another in love as we await His promised return. Anchored in who Christ is, anchored in our new reality, and anchored to the confession of our faith, we live in the peace that Christ already gives today - a peace that becomes the foundation for true joy and points us toward the future fulfillment of peace at His return.

Note: In the original Greek text of this verse, **confession** is modified by the adjective *akline*, which means *unswerving* or *sure*. It attaches grammatically to "confession," not to our ability to hold fast. Thus the verse could be translated, *"Let us hold on to the secure confession of hope..."* But it is a natural temptation to make it translate the unswerving conviction of the believers, as though it were an adverb. Nevertheless, the emphasis here is on the confession itself as steady, as the next clause makes clear: they can hold on to it, because the One who has made the promise is "faithful."

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Hebrews 10:11-25

Catechism
3.4.7.2, 8.2.12

Discussion Questions

The Bible verse describes our confession of Christ as an "anchor of the soul." What does it mean for profession to function as an anchor in daily life?

We now have direct access to God through Christ. How should this affect the way we approach prayer, worship, and daily faith?

Verse 22 speaks about entering God's presence with "full assurance of faith." Do you approach God with confidence, hesitation, or fear? Why?

How has Christian fellowship strengthened or encouraged you during difficult seasons?

How does the promise of Christ's return shape your priorities, choices, or perseverance today?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR JUNE 28

GOD PROVIDES...

Peace in displacement

Where are we in the Bible?

The background to Jeremiah 29 is found in 2 Kings 24:8-17. Judah's road to exile unfolds in uneasy steps: King Jehoiakim first submits to Babylon, then rebels (2 Kings 24:1), and soon dies as judgment approaches. His son Jehoiachin reigns only briefly before being taken into exile - along with many others (2 Kings 24:8-17, Jeremiah 29:2). Meanwhile, both in Jerusalem and in Babylon, voices rise promising a quick return and urging rebellion (Jeremiah 27-29), refusing to see the exile as part of God's plan.

But Jeremiah speaks a gentler, constant truth to the exiles: settle, build, plant, and trust the Lord (Jeremiah 29:4-7). Even there, in a foreign land, God is at work—and in time, He will fulfill His promise to bring His people home and give them a future filled with hope (Jeremiah 29:10-14).

We are also displaced. We were first created to live an eternal paradise with God. An old hymn reminds us, "I'm but a stranger here, heaven is my home." This applies to both the living and dead; both are displaced, existing in a world or realm that is not as it should be (See *Thoughts of peace for both the living and the dead* in the DSG). In this way, Jeremiah's message speaks to us as well. *How shall we live?* The prophet encourages the Israelites (and us) to exercise patience, contribute positively to their society, and hold on to the promises of God.

Summary:

In a world of waiting and displacement, Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that as we patiently endure, live as a blessing where we are, and trust God's faithful promises, He is already at work guiding us toward our promised and hoped for future filled with His peace. We seek peace through patience, presence, and promise, trusting that God remains faithful even in the face of injustice, sin, and suffering.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Jeremiah 29

Catechism
1.1.2

Discussion Questions

The Israelites wanted a quick return home, but Jeremiah called them to settle, build, and wait patiently. Why is patience often so difficult in seasons of uncertainty or hardship?

Jeremiah 29 refers to false prophets offering quick fixes. What are some modern "voices" that tempt people away from trusting God patiently?

What does it mean to "seek the peace of the city" in today's world? How can Christians be a constructive presence in their communities?

If your life is meant to point toward your future home with God, what changes might need to happen in your priorities, attitudes, or actions?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR JUNE 3/4

Where are we in the Bible?

In Isaiah 28, the prophet delivers a warning to both Ephraim (the northern kingdom) and Judah, exposing pride, spiritual complacency, and misplaced trust. The chapter opens with judgment against Ephraim's leaders, whose arrogance and indulgence have led to moral and spiritual decline. It then turns to Judah, where priests and prophets are likewise depicted as dull and dismissive of God's word, even mocking its simplicity. Rather than relying on God, leaders place their confidence in political alliances, believing they can avoid disaster through human strategy. Into this instability and false sense of security, God speaks a decisive word in Isaiah 28:16, declaring that He Himself lays a "precious cornerstone" in Zion, a sure and tested foundation. This stands in contrast to the unreliable structures the people have built for themselves. The call is not to have self-made solutions, but to have faith: "whoever believes will not act hastily." This deep truth is revealed throughout Scripture: when human confidence fails, God, through His Son, establishes a foundation that is secure, trustworthy, and worthy of belief.

Summary:

Instead of scrambling to fix, control, or protect everything ourselves, which creates instability, we live with quiet confidence that what God has established in Christ is secure. Jesus is the cornerstone, and in Him we have a solid foundation because His word and love are unchanging, His grace is perfectly effective, and His authority is absolute. As we trust Him, love Him, and seek His grace, we learn not to act hastily, but to stand firm in the peace and security of what God has already established.

GOD PROVIDES... Security in instability

Isaiah 28:16

Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily."

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
Isaiah 28

Catechism
3.4.15

Discussion Questions

Isaiah contrasts human strategies and political alliances with God's secure cornerstone. What are some modern examples of people placing trust in unstable foundations instead of God?

Why is the image of Jesus as the "cornerstone" such a powerful description of His role in the life of a believer?

Which aspect of Christ's secure foundation—His truth, love, grace, authority, or promises—do you most need to hold onto right now?

What might be some "sinking sand" foundations (success, approval, control, comfort, etc.) that compete with Christ in your heart?

How has God shown Himself faithful and trustworthy in your life in the past?