

SCARBOROUGH BULLETIN

What is happening at Scarborough Baptist Church?

THIS WEEK

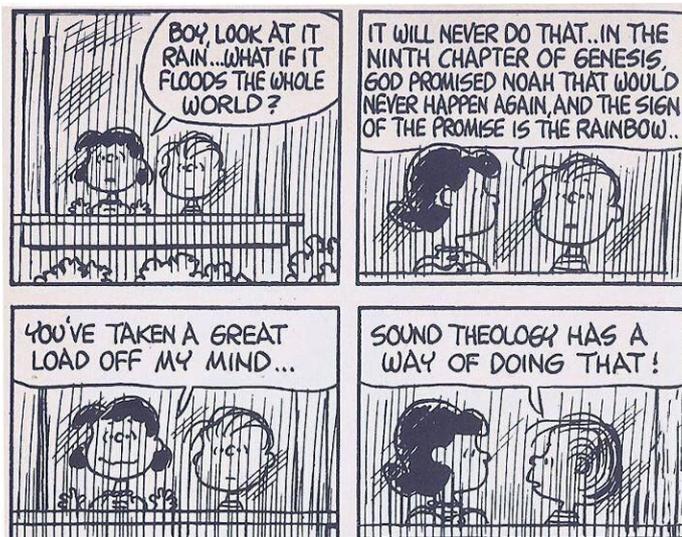
WORKING OUT OUR
SALVATION

PRAYER AND
PROVIDENCE



Thank you for joining us this week, whether on Zoom or physically in church. We have had to purchase some new equipment to make it possible for us to livestream the service on Zoom to those who are vulnerable and unable to physically attend. Please pray for us as we try to hold it all together this morning.

We are grateful for our musicians who have so faithfully served us this year.



EVENTS THIS WEEK

Monday morning 9.30am Bible Study on Zoom or at the church

Thursday evening Bible study on Zoom at 7pm. The link for this is on the **events calendar** on the website.

Brighton Kids: as usual this week.

We are exploring when and how to start all our other activities.

Offering: Please continue using EFT as it needs to be our main means of doing our offering at present. Our bank details are: Scarborough Baptist Church - BSB 306-054 Account number 4186613

Prayer: Please pray for **Krina Moore** who still has a lot of pain and also has difficulties with her heart. Please continue to uphold **Iris Sales** before the Lord and ask that the doctors will be able to treat her heart condition.

How does Jesus' injunction in the Lord's prayer to ask God for daily bread relate to his teaching that his disciples should not worry about what they will eat or drink or what clothes they will have to wear? It is the pagans who run after these things, Jesus taught. "Your heavenly Father," he assured his disciples, "knows that you need these things." This raises the question: If God who keeps his eyes on the sparrows knows our every need, why should we have to ask him for our daily food. If we are told not to worry about food, why then should we continue to ask God for it?



Behind these questions lies the idea that we would only be able to really stop worrying about practical things like food and drink once we have exchanged the person of God for a system in which all our needs are automatically met. We are more comfortable in trusting a system rather than a person. To rely on a person is to entrust yourself to someone who is open to mood swings, second thoughts, new demands. A system which kicks in automatically, and through which God automatically comes to our aid, seems much more reliable. No wonder that theologians soon turned Jesus' assurance that God knows our needs and that He deeply cares for us into an automatic system.

The Greek word which is used to describe an automatic system in which everything that happens is predetermined, can also be translated as "fate". The Stoic philosophers used this idea to argue that humans only find freedom and contentment when they realise that a person can do nothing to change what is going to happen to them. Instead of fighting this reality, people should learn to accept their fate.

In theology, the idea that God has determined everything that will happen to people and that people can find peace in the midst of negative things is referred to as "providence". It differs from Stoicism, some theologians argue, because it affirms that everything which happens somehow forms part of God's will. God cares for each individual, he has determined each person's path and will ensure that all works out for the best. Believers, they teach, must learn to trust God and accept everything which happens as coming from his hand.

Asking God for bread, challenges the idea of an automatic providential system in which we can blindly trust. It is true that Jesus said that we do not have to worry about food, drink or clothes because God knows our needs. This does not, however, relieve us of the injunction to ask God to provide our daily needs. We cannot blindly accept that everything that happens is evidence of God's care. The disciples had just learned to pray for God's will to be done on earth. They are now praying for God to intervene and supply their daily needs. They are facing a reality in which famine and drought and poverty are constant possibilities; a reality in which they need God to intervene and change things; where they can ask God to provide for them when everything else is against them. They could not rely on an automatic providential system in which bad things are deemed to be good, they are instead invited to rely on the living God who alone can transform their situation.

Christians do not have to worry because they can bring their needs to the God who cares. While God knows all our needs, he does not automatically supply them. Instead, he invites us to come to him, to talk to him, to ask him, to trust him and to depend on him to care for us despite the broken reality in which we find ourselves.