One day, as the crowds were pressing close to him to hear the word of God, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats moored by the land; the fishermen had gone ashore and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats—it was Simon's—and asked him to put out a little way from the land. Then he sat down in the boat and began to teach the crowd.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deeper part, and let down your nets for a catch.”

“Master,” replied Simon, “we were working hard all night and caught nothing at all. But if you say so, I’ll let down the nets.”

When they did so, they caught such a huge number of fish that their nets began to break. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. So they came, and filled both the boats, and they began to sink.


**MEDITATION: Providence**
Providence is God's power sustaining and guiding human destiny. Peter recognized the miraculous catch as providential. His experience of God’s blessing was presaged by a willingness to follow Jesus in ways that were antithetical to his experience; fishing at night was
usually more successful. Faith propelled Peter to follow Jesus’s lead, resulting in leaving behind his vocation as a fisherman to take up a new calling.

God continues to disburse providence as we would expect from a loving Father who wants to shower his progeny with blessing. Sometimes the blessing will be as bounteous as the catch Peter experienced. I have been blessed with providence many times in ways large and small. The day my Department Head was writing his evaluation of my tenure package I received a check in the mail for $30,000 as part of a grant award for $90,000. Such providential encounters are often valuable confirmation of our vocation.

Providence is one of those words that is still culturally acceptable in the vernacular of our post-Christian society. I can share with colleagues my providential grant award experience using exactly those words; they are the secular equivalent of luck. Grant awards are a miraculous catch too.

Our response to providence can be like Peter’s; sharing the catch gives God the glory. We experience providence every day. Like Peter we need to be spiritually attuned so we identify and acknowledge the blessing, sharing the gifts with others, and acknowledging the source of all blessing. To God be the glory forever and ever.

REFLECTION:

1. What blessings has God bestowed on you this year, this month, this week, today?
2. How do I share the knowledge of these blessings with friends and colleagues?

PRAYER:

“Providence is wiser than you, and you may be confident it has suited all things better to your eternal good than you could do had you been left to your own option.”

— John Flavel, *The Mystery of Providence*

Lord, may you give us eyes to see your providential blessing poured out in ways small and large and faith strong enough to follow and share your blessings with all we meet.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Fraser Fleming, ASA Fellow, is a native New Zealander who completed his undergraduate degree at Massey University before moving to Canada to obtain a PhD. He performed organic chemistry research with Ed Piers who introduced him to science and religion. For twenty years he taught chemistry at Duquesne University. Then, in 2013, he took a two-year position as a program director in the Division of Chemistry at the National Science Foundation. His primary research lies in developing new organic chemistry reactions; a second research area is in science and religion. He has taught several science and religion courses, has written *The Truth about Science and Religion: From the Big Bang to Neuroscience* (Wipf and Stock 2016), and has given presentations on the intersection of science and religion. He is currently a professor of organic chemistry at Drexel University in Philadelphia.