

Sermon Series: Questions I'd Like to Ask God—Lord of Life Lutheran Church—11/19/2000

Title: "What is God's Plan for My Life?"

Text: Jeremiah 29: 11-13

Introduction: *Illus.:*

Theme: When we concentrate on our relationship with God through Christ, then our future and God's plans for it will come into sharper focus.

How can we know that God has a "good" plan for me?

- **A plan that includes but goes beyond just the material blessings**
 1. Often Christians get suckered into a *prosperity Christian* by a world philosophy which doesn't want a God with absolutes and plans and who might get in the way of my hedonistic selfishness
 2. God really says that he has a much better plan—one for peace (*prosperity* in many translations)
 3. Even in darkest moments of life God's plan is in-force and he gives us a peace which the world can't
 4. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14: 27*
- **A plan for deliverance not destruction**
 1. Sometimes when we go through the trial, the loss, the death, we can't understand, "what was God thinking?"
 2. **ILLUS.: PART OF A BIGGER PLAN**
 3. *If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Rom 8: 31-32*
 4. God talks about how he has the "thought-process" all the way thought through for well-bring and future and hope
- **A plan that has a future**
 1. God's ultimate plan for us is to get us home to heaven—*future filled with hope*
 2. God will use both good times, challenges, and trials to refine me and prepare me and to keep me safe for heaven
 3. *Through faith you are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor. 1 Peter 1: 5-7*
 4. Putting our plans for college, marriage, children, jobs, retirement, vacations, homes in his plan and future vision

How will you respond if God has a "good plan for you?"

- **Acknowledge God's role in your planning**
 1. "*Call on me*"—more than just a courtesy call—naming God is representative of who he is—we accept sovereignty
 2. **ILLUS.: LORD WILLING WE WILL HAVE THE TEST**
 3. Humble submission of my plans to God's will so that they can be aligned by his will to have a fulfilled future of hope
- **Call on God in your planning**
 1. "*You will come to me, pray to me, and I will hear you*"--Prayer is not just meaningless spiritual ritual but powerful
 2. *Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. Isaiah 65: 24*
 3. We can worry about it, fret over it, spend countless hours figuring the scenarios—why not pray about it
 4. **ILLUS.: THINGS WE WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND**
 5. *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. Ephesians 3: 20*
- **Follow's God will in carrying our your planning**
 1. *Seek* God's plan and will out for your life
 - a. In his word—helping to discern what is of the world and what is of God (*James 4: 4—friend of God or of world*)
 - b. Among fellow believers—encouraged, admonished, trained by one another *Colossians 3: 12*
 2. *Follow with all your heart* so that you can walk in the glorious result of His plan
 - a. **ILLUS.: GLAD TO BE CHOSEN**
 - b. *Obedience* (*It is God's will that you keep away from sexual sin as a mark of your devotion to him. 1Thess.4:3*)
 - c. *Loyalty* I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offering. *Hosea 6:6*

- d. *Fellowship* with God by choosing **ONLY** to walk in the light (*This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1: 5-7*)

Adversity Leads to Victory

In July 2000, Lance Armstrong won the Tour de France for the second year in a row. In 1999, the first year Armstrong won, much was made about the fact that he had survived testicular cancer that had spread into his lungs and brain. Armstrong not only recovered from the cancer, but went on to win the most prestigious race in cycling.

But there were those who said his victory was hollow because some of the best competitors had to sit out the race in 1999 due to a doping scandal. Few believed he would win in the year 2000 when the best cyclists would be back and the course more mountainous. This year Lance Armstrong not only won, but won by a whopping six minutes!

In analyzing his victory a commentator pointed out that it was after Armstrong's bout with cancer that he became a premier cyclist. After recovering from cancer, Lance was forty pounds lighter than he had been before. And while he bulked up some in the recovery years, he always remained leaner than he ever had been before. This loss of weight made a difference in Armstrong's biking and played significantly into his becoming a two-time Tour de France winner

Part of a Bigger Plan

I once watched a series on public television based on interviews with survivors from World War II. The soldiers recalled how they spent a particular day. One sat in a foxhole all day; once or twice, a German tank drove by, and he shot at it. Others played cards and frittered away the time. A few got involved in furious firefights. Mostly, the day passed like any other day for an infantryman on the front. Later, they learned they had just participated in one of the largest, most decisive engagements of the war, the Battle of the Bulge. It did not feel decisive to any of them at the time, because none had the big picture of what was happening elsewhere.

Things We'll Never Understand (Ephesians 3: 20-21)

Did you ever wonder why? Some comedian has said.....

You tell a man there's 400 billion stars and he'll believe you, but tell him a bench has wet paint and he has to touch it? Why?

Why is it called a hamburger when it's made out of beef? Why do you put suits in garment bags and put garments in suitcases? Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle? Why isn't there mouse-flavored cat food?

Why do they lock gas station bathrooms—are they afraid someone is going to sneak in there and clean them?

If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes? Why are there five syllables in the word monosyllabic? When two airplanes almost collide, why do they call it a near miss—it sounds like a near hit to me?

Why do banks charge you a non-sufficient funds fee on money they know you don't have? Why do you drive in a parkway and park in a driveway? Why are they called apartments when they're stuck together? Why are they called buildings when they are already finished? Shouldn't we call them built? If the black box flight recorder is never damaged during a plane crash, why isn't the whole airplane made out of that stuff?

Isn't it logically impossible that we as finite creatures could ever fully understand the infinite?

Glad to be Chosen

Entertainer Garrison Keilor recalls the childhood pain of being chosen last for the baseball teams.

The captains are down to their last grudging choices: a slow kid for catcher, someone to stick out in right field where nobody hits it. They choose the last ones two at a time—"you and you"—because it makes no difference. And the remaining kids—the scrubs, the excess—they deal for us as handicaps. "If I take him, then you gotta take him," they say.

Sometimes I go as high as sixth, usually lower. But just once I'd like Darrel to pick me first and say, "Him! I want him! The skinny kid with the glasses and the black shoes. You, c'mon!" But I've never been chosen with much enthusiasm.

Did you ever think about the fact that you are so valuable to God he chose you early—with enthusiasm. "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1:4).

Jeremiah 29:11-13

I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope. ¹²Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will hear you.

¹³When you look for me, you will find me. When you wholeheartedly seek me,

(GW)