



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 3/30-31/19

“The Blueprint”

Romans 8:18-30

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

There is a common misunderstanding among many that God has our lives — every step of our journeys — mapped out in advance for us. Many of us search far and wide for God’s plan for our lives. By a plan, we usually mean a blueprint for the directions we are to take at whatever waypoints we encounter throughout our lives. However, this understanding violates the nature of love revealed in and through Jesus Christ. If love is to be love, it must be freely given and received in relationship. God has created us free to choose Him, or not; to choose to live in obedience to his law of love, or not. Consequently, what God has given us instead of a step-by-step plan for our lives, is purpose for our lives. It is God’s ultimate purpose of salvation, redemption and restoration that is to motivate and drive our truly free choices in life. By God’s grace and mercy, it is left up to us to choose how best to live out God’s ultimate purpose in love. As you go about your week this week, I pray that you would be continually reminded of God’s ultimate purpose and be guided by the Holy Spirit to choose a life of redemption and restoration: a life of love.

— Pastor Jake

Monday, 4/1/19

“Our Plans, God’s Purpose”

Proverbs 19:21

*Many are the plans in a person’s heart,
but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.*

The 18th-century Scottish poet, Robert Burns, in a poem entitled *To a Mouse*, states that, “The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.” We all have plans for our lives; often plans made when we were quite young. We have plans for our professions, families, leisure time, material comfort, for the things we want to accomplish in life, and many, many more. Often, though, our plans get thwarted; they go awry. When this happens, we can become disillusioned and even blame God for our plight. This is the danger of focusing on our plans to the neglect of God’s purpose. The challenge to us is to first think in terms of purpose. We discover our purpose in life by aligning ourselves with God and his purposes through the various means of grace (what we call spiritual disciplines) God has given us.

- What would you consider God’s ultimate purpose in the world to be? How would you describe your purpose in life?
- How can you align your life plans with God’s purposes?

Prayer: Holy God, we seek to know and receive you. Open our hearts to know you and your purposes and empower us by your Holy Spirit to align our lives with who you are and what you want for us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Tuesday, 4/2/19

“The End”

Isaiah 46:10

*I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, ‘My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.’*

The prophet Isaiah is addressing an Israelite people caught in exile in a foreign and hostile land. In this verse, Isaiah is pointing forward to the day when the Israelites would be freed from their exile, and so in the verses surrounding this verse he is encouraging them to remain faithful.

Sometimes it can feel like we, as followers of Jesus, are exiles in a foreign and hostile land. The good news is that God’s ultimate purpose of liberation and restoration will come to fruition. This is the “end” that was made known from the beginning. When we talk about the “end” in this sense, we are not talking about a stoppage (like the end of a book), but understand it in terms of a goal. God’s ultimate goal is to liberate, reconcile and restore all of creation, including all of humanity. The prophet, as God’s mouthpiece, is declaring that God’s ultimate purpose will stand; it will come to fruition. This is the reality that has been inaugurated in and through Jesus, and so is the hope that informs how we are to live our lives here and now.

- How might understanding God’s ultimate purpose affect how you live day-to-day?
- What are some things you can do to be a vessel of God’s redemption and restoration?

Prayer: Holy God, we praise you for your ultimate purpose, and for your promise to bring it to be. Empower and enable us by your Holy Spirit to live lives worthy of your purpose and to be witnesses to you and your kingdom of restoration. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, 4/3/19

“Good Works”

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are what God has made us. The word “handiwork” is a translation of the Greek that literally means “poem.” God is the author who writes our lives as a poem — as God's own creative composition. Poetry uses simile, metaphor and analogy to communicate deeper truths and realities than could be communicated with merely literal, descriptive language. Poetry also reveals much about the poet. Our lives are gifts of God meant to communicate the deeper truths and realities of God and are meant by God to reveal who he is to the world. This entails being created in Christ Jesus to do good works. Good works are the natural outflowing of a life lived in faith, and our good works are to be determined by and directed toward God and God's ultimate purposes for creation.

- What does it mean to you to be God's own creative composition?
- How does your life point others to the truth and reality of God? What good works do you sense God calling you to in your life?

Prayer: Holy God, we praise you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made in your image. Use us to make yourself known to the world. Help us to be witnesses to your grace and mercy through the good works you have prepared in advance for us to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, 4/4/19

“Royal Priesthood”

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

In this verse, we find purpose. God has called us out of the darkness of brokenness, sin and death into the light of Jesus Christ and the life he intends for us. As God's people/royal priesthood/holy nation/special possession, we are made to declare God's praises for having led us out of the darkness into the light.

- What do you think it means to be a royal priesthood or holy nation? How does it affect how you look at yourself and the Church to know that you are God's special possession?
- What does it mean for you to be called out of darkness into his wonderful light? What does it mean to declare God's praises? What are some ways that you can declare God's praises?

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for the gift of your Church, which makes known your glory. Thank you for leading us out of the darkness of sin and death into the light of the life of Jesus Christ. Bring to mind today ways that we can declare the fullness of your praises. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, 4/5/19

“Praise the Lord”

Psalm 105:1-8

*Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.*

*Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.*

*Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.*

*Look to the LORD and his strength;
seek his face always.*

*Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.*

*He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.*

*He remembers his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand generations.*

Spend some time today reflecting on the wonders of God and what he has done in your life and the lives of those around you. Let your reflections turn to thoughts and words of praise to God.

Prayer: Spend some time in prayer today simply praising God for who he is and what he has done in your life.

***This week's devotional was written by
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