

GOD'S PLAN IS EVEN BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

4 Series "PRAYER"

Introduction: Our society is changing quickly

- We have some great breakthroughs and inventions
- The way our society thinks is changing.

ILLUSTRATION: Social commentator says –

- ⇒ We can be convinced by a slogan, rather than informed discussion
 - ⇒ We let a person whose expertise is in one area speak on all areas
 - ⇒ Easily offended (facts do not care about feelings)
 - ⇒ We are being conditioned NOT to think for ourselves
 - ⇒ Truth has become fluid; we don't have objective truth but "truth of the moment".
 - ⇒ Tolerance has been deified; Tolerance was to be applied to people; intolerance applied to bad ideas, not to people.
- We have the message of hope that cuts through the foggy thinking about this life and the next.... So think higher than what you see around you today!

1. God's Plan for Us

- Look for the key words in these scriptures:

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* (prosper; hope; future)

Psalm 37:23 *If the Lord delights in a man's way, He makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand.* (delights; stumble; upholds)

Romans 8:28 *For we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.* (all things; works for good; love Him; called)

Philippians 1:6 *...being confident of this, that He Who began a good work in you will carry it on to completing until the day of Christ Jesus.* (confident; began a good work; completion)

2. Opportunities to Serve

- The Bible describes me as a “masterpiece in the making”

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

(workmanship; created to do good works;
God has prepared in advance)

ILLUSTRATION: Sport has been described as a group of people on the field in a desperate need of a rest, being cheered on – or put down by – fans in the stands desperately in need of exercise.

(a) Serve God

Hebrews 12:28 *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe...*

- We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken
- Give honour and reverence to God

(b) Serve Others

Galatians 6:9-10 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

- Opportunity to do good; especially the family of believers

ILLUSTRATION: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 (Sowing Seeds)

- Sow sparingly & you will reap sparingly
- Context is financial giving
 - If you don't have finance, what do you have?

Promises:

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

- You will have all you need

2 Corinthians 9:11 *You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

- You will be rich in every way

3. Opportunities to Lead People to Jesus

- Not everyone is ready to hear
- BUT Jesus paid the price for all

ILLUSTRATION: In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus described two places:

- A place of torment
- A place of peace

Luke 16:27-31 *He answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."*

Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

"No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

- "Moses and the Prophets"... In our day, "church and the Bible"
 - Some people will never be convinced.

John 6:65 *He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled him."*

- There are people that the Holy Spirit is drawing to Himself.

ILLUSTRATION: Woman at the Well (John 4:1-15)

- The opportunity
 - Did Jesus make use of an opportunity or did He plan it?
 - Did not let culture or gender issues stop Him from seizing the opportunity.
 - Guided the conversation from where the woman was at, to the Good News.
- God's plan is even bigger than you think.