

What's God's Plan for my Life

Genesis 24: 34 -51, Acts 13:1-5

Suzie has been reading her bible a lot lately and has noticed something. In the stories we read this morning and in other ones she sees God at work telling people about his plan for their life. She's seen God do this for Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David, just to name a few, and she wonders if God has a specific plan for her life, like he did for the major characters in the story of the scripture.

And Friends that is exactly where we want to begin this morning as we look at this question of "what's God's plan for my life?" We want to start with the Scripture.

Because like our friend Suzie has seen, and I hope we have seen with the two passages which we read, God does break into human lives with his own plans. It is *his will* that Rebecca go and marry Isaac, it is *his will* that Barnabas and Paul become missionaries to preach the gospel in other nations.

So it's a legitimate question to ask and it has important implications for our lives.

Now I want to introduce you a few other people who have reason to wonder about God's will, maybe you can relate to some of them?

Here's Ben, an enthusiastic Christian teen in his last year of high school had been looking at applying to his local universities business program or even taking a year off to work and save up some tuition money. Ben recently went to a youth rally where he heard the lead singer for a popular Christian band is tell his life's story. As a teen this singer had the opportunity to go overseas to help people and share the gospel but he passed it up. Consequently he got in with the wrong crowd and messed up his life with drugs and alcohol over the next 20 years – only a dramatic intervention by God saved him from death and now finally he is living God's plan for his life – Don't make my mistake, he warned the teens – get on with God's plan for your life right now! Then he proceeds to give an invitation to sign up for an overseas mission trip to help others and share the gospel. Ben is now wondering if that isn't God's plan for his life, perhaps he's called to missions?

This is Dave. He's curious, while he was riding into work on the subway this morning he found a little brochure on the seat next to him which stated that God loved him and had a plan for his life. Dave has been feeling empty and unfulfilled in his job for a while, even though he's achieved a high level of success, now he's wondering if there is more to life than the 9 to 5. He's never believed in God, but the concept is intriguing. Maybe there is an all powerful being who can make your life meaningful and fulfilling.

And here is Connie, She's been listening to the featured speaker at the senior's dinner. The speaker is reminiscing about her life and how through prayer and daily devotions she had discovered what God wanted her to do each day and how she had experienced all kinds of divine coincidences and opportunities to share Christ with people because of this. Connie is a faithful church attendee, has been for her whole life but this lady's story has her wondering if her life counts for much and if perhaps she's missed out on some part of God's plan for her life.

And we can't forget Jared. He's has recently been diagnosed with cancer. The doctors are optimistic that they have caught it in its early stages and the treatment stands a good chance of success. But Jared isn't sure if they are just trying to keep him positive or if it's really true. All he knows is that the future he had counted on is no longer certain – to make matters worse he works in the auto industry, and his company had to reduce health benefits in order to stay afloat. And he is wondering how he can take time to get better and not go into personal bankruptcy. Where is his life going? What's God's plan for him he wonders?

Friends, when people ask the question “what's God's plan for my life?” What they really mean depends on the circumstance they are in.

Ben is just starting out in his life – what “God's plan” for him is all about has to do with how to make the right decisions.

Dave is in the middle of his life and dissatisfied with it – what “God's plan” is for him means is about finding a sense of direction and purpose.

Connie is looking back on her life, evaluating it – what “God’s plan” is for her has to do with gaining the proper perspective on her life.

Jared is possibly near the end of his life. Things are very uncertain for him – what “God’s plan” means for him is some sort of assurance and hope about how things will turn out.

So let’s look at each of these situations and see how the scriptures speak to what these individuals are looking for.

Now a couple of weeks ago we dealt with the subject of decision making. So Ben needs to know that the scriptures give these following guidelines about making God honoring decisions.

1. Read the Bible and Pray

- but...learn the principles for correct interpretation and application
- Learn the big picture of scripture, not just individual verses.

The scripture will start to be a light for your path (Psalm 119:105)

2. Learn your Gifts and Abilities

- Make decisions that fit within them

God has given you gifts to use and develop (Romans 12:6)

3. Don’t look for Signs, look at your circumstances

- God works in everything, so be wise in responding.

Being wise means living skillfully and deciding accordingly (Proverbs 21:9)

4. Live out the Vision

- God invites you to participate in his mission, which is his plan for the world.

Make decisions which bring this into being (John 14:12)

Now if you start out in life in this way, and continue in it – you’ll be off to a good start.

However like Dave you might not have, maybe because you don't believe in God, or for some other reason. At any rate – now you're halfway through life and you're dissatisfied, unfulfilled and you're wondering if this is all there is to life.

First of all if you find yourself in that situation you need to ask yourself about your relationship with Jesus Christ. He said "I have come that they may have **life**, and have it to the **full**." (John 10:10)

One of the results of faith in Jesus Christ is that you are enabled to live a life that is full of rich, exciting, and rewarding experiences.

Now let's say Dave becomes a Christian and experiences the love and forgiveness of Christ, all of a sudden Dave realizes that all his previous experience in the business world wasn't a waste. God was preparing him for something, Dave is able to give excellent leadership to a team of people who are challenging business people to act ethically and treat their employees fairly. This can happen to you even if you've been a Christian for a long time. It's what happened to Moses remember? After he wrecked his life in the Egyptian court by

killing a slave driver, he spent forty years in the desert as a shepherd. Pretty dull and unsatisfying for someone who used to be a prince of Egypt. But as the scripture says

He was sent to be the Israelites ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness. (Acts 7:35-36)

So just like with Moses, just like with our friend Dave – that dissatisfaction you feel with life is the entryway for God to take you and whatever life experience you have and put it to use in some new way as part of his plan for you. It's the same, only different.

But maybe you've gone through life and you've never been dissatisfied, or felt empty but you're in the same position as our friend Connie who is looking back over her life and trying to evaluate it.

I know a lot of people look at there life and say something like this "you know, I've done my best, tried my hardest to be nice

to people, treat other like I would like to be treated etc...” We become the standard by which we measure our lives and given our selective memory and rather biased approach to ourselves I’m sure we’d all come out as pretty good people.

But if we’re asking the question “What’s God’s plan for my life” we have an objective outside standard that we can measure our lives against that can give us the right perspective.

Maybe we need to see the hard truth that our life has not been based upon the principles of making God honoring decisions, we’ve not done much to serve God with the talents and gifts God has blessed us with; we’ve not participated in God’s larger plan to save the world.

But that’s the good thing about getting this objective perspective – we realize, albeit late in the game, but we realize that we’ve still got some time to get with God’s plan. It’s never too late! Take the example of the prophet Anna.

She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,³⁷ and then had been a widow for

eighty-four years. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. (Luke 2:36-37)

Think you can’t accomplish much because you’re old, listen the scripture says

The **prayer** of a **righteous** person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

It’s never too late; you’re never too old to get with God’s plan for your life!

But what if your life is in jeopardy? What if you are facing an uncertain future like our friend Jared?

Let me offer you the comfort of God’s plan for your life that comes from discovering that God has a covenant relationship with us in Jesus Christ. This is a relationship where God has sworn that He will be our God and we will be his people and nothing can ever change that. No matter what happens in our lives it can’t change the outcome of how we fit into God’s larger plan for the whole world, To make all things new once

again – in fact tragedies and disasters in mind boggling way can even be a part of how we fit into that plan.

That's why the apostle Paul writes ²⁸ 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.

Friends this isn't being fatalistic – it's trusting the active loving hand of God in your life, as He turns what some intended for evil into something that will eventually bring blessing into your life, though you may suffer for a while.

Paul knew this; ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

And he knew that present suffering can't stop God's plan from coming to fulfillment so he writes

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else

in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8)

That's God's big plan for all of us friends,

Connected to God through Jesus Christ so that we may participate in the New Creation where there will be no more suffering, pain or evil of any kind.

What a sense of assurance and comfort and hope that can give us. And friends no matter what stage of life we're at – asking "What's God's plan for my Life" - we all need that!

So God bless you as you make decisions that honor Him
May He direct you in paths of righteousness for his Kingdom
May He teach you to examine your life by His standards
May He shelter you under His wings in the storms of life.

May He do all these things for you friends, so you may know with confidence, God's plan for your life.

Amen.