

# The Program of Jesus

by George Kulp

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*God's program for our lives is to follow Jesus and His will, and to be led by the Holy Spirit, which means obedience, separation, and abandonment, but also reward and eternal life.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 40:8, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 19:22, Luke 18:18, John 16:13, Acts 9:1, Romans 8:31, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 12:1

**Topics:** "Gods Will", "Obedience"

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## Description

George Kulp preaches about the importance of accepting God's program for our lives, emphasizing the need to abandon ourselves to God's will and follow His plan with obedience, separation, and abandonment. He contrasts the stories of two men who encountered Jesus and received the program for their lives, one who willingly accepted it and one who went away sorrowful, missing out on God's divine plan. Kulp urges the congregation to seek God's will, obey His leading, and find rest and victory by aligning their lives with His program, even in the face of challenges and sacrifices.

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## Transcript

Matthew 19:22 -- "He went away sorrowful"

He went away sorrowful." To live twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years of life and miss the thought of God is my idea of total failure. The Psalmist said, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? Thou hast made him lower than the angels for a little While." And there never was a human being created but to start from the very inception of that life -- and I go back farther than that, from the very foundation of the world -- God had a plan for that life; there was the thought of God for that whole life.

I am not much given to visions, not much given to impressions, but in the Word of God we get the vision of Jesus and we can get the program of our lives. We can and may know the thought of God for us. Jesus said, "The Spirit shall take the things of God and show them unto you, He shall guide you into all truth."

In the very beginning of this discourse I want to bring before your mind two men, each of whom had a vision of Jesus, each of whom met the Lord, and He gave to each the program for their lives. One was honest; one was sincere. He was on his way to Damascus when he met the Lord, and the Lord threw him to the ground, and said, "Why persecutest thou me?" He said, "Who art thou Lord?" And the Lord answered. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He was led inside the city, and God said to a man who lived near enough to Him to hear Him talk: "I want you to go and call on this man I have met just a few

miles out of the city and (mark you) I have showed him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." At the very beginning of his Christian life, the Lord meets him with a program for his future. Now, beloved, in that program were apostleship, ambassadorship, stones, stripes, perils among false brethren, among lions, in prisons, and, at the last, to give up his life just as the Master gave it. Amen, Lord! Prisons, Amen! Shipwrecks, Amen! Stripes, Amen! Perils among false brethren, Ostracism, Amen! Death, Amen! I believe he took in the whole program and, voluntarily, this man abandoned himself to all the will of God.

Let me tell you of another man, one who came running to Jesus. He was a hungry man looking for the Master, with a question upon his lips the answer to which meant all the thought of God to him, and for him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And from the lips of Him who spake as man never spake came this answer: "Go sell that which thou hast and come follow Me and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." He looks at the program, just as the other man did. He saw it clearly. As he got it from the lips of Jesus, so this man gets the program of his life from Jesus. He had propounded a question that was pregnant with eternal issues, but he stands there and fails to meet the conditions, and went away sorrowful, failing to take the program that divine wisdom, that the infinite God, marked out for him.

God has a program for you and me. God gives us His thought in His Word, and just as much as it meant to those two men it means to us today. It means obedience; it means separation; it means abandonment, and it also means reward. The program of Jesus Christ means life, not only from the cradle to the grave, but it reaches out through eternity, as long as God shall live. I am glad for such a program. I am glad for the will of God made known to us. I am glad for the whole Bible made known to us. I believe it from beginning to end as the Word of God. I am glad for the MAN of Calvary who got down on His knees in the garden and drained the whole cup, who prayed, "Father, not my will but thine be done." He made it possible for us to take the whole program. There is a program in this world for your life and mine. This man of our text "went away." What did that mean? Away from Jesus, away from God's thought, away from the program ordained from the foundation of the world for him, away into the night, away into the darkness, away to misery, away to death. One of the saddest things in the Word to me is the record made after Judas betrayed Jesus and went away -- "it was night." Oh, the darkness of the soul that turns down the program of God, and goes away, Away! Never mind if the enemy says, "There are the prisons, there are the stones, there are the stripes, there are the perils among false brethren; there is the ostracism; there is the death, the block, the axe. If is it God's will for you, take it, and count it a privilege to take it and keep step with God Almighty Every step you have a battle you shall have the victory, and for every victory there is reward, a crown of eternal life. The old devil told the truth for once when he said Job did not serve God for naught. Thank God, we do not serve Him for naught. We have the peace that passeth understanding; and today we are marching forward not on corduroy roads (every old soldier will understand this), not on sinking sands, not on slippery pathways, but on a rock of adamantine -- the Word of God -- marching forward with the sweep of conquest, looking forward to the eternal day. Oh, thank God for the privilege of having a part in the program, for the privilege of suffering with Him, of getting into the dark places Thank God for the privilege of knowing that whether you suffer, or bear, or are in the dark, you are foreordained to victory! There is a program for every child of God.

On the surface of our text we see free moral agency. He went away. He might have stayed with Jesus as the other man did. He might have stayed and listened as did others of the disciples. He might have had the privilege of walking with God. He was at the crucial period of his career. He had come to the parting of the ways. One way leads up, and up, and ever up, an ever-ascending plane, and the other down, and down, into the darkness that is eternal. But he chose deliberately to go away.

You are a sovereign. You came from the hand and heart and brain of God, a king, clothed with kingly powers. You are sent out to step like a conqueror. You are sent out to have the victory over the flesh, the world, and the devil. These are the gods of the worldling, but in the conflict every day you may enlarge your caliber, make your fiber stronger. You are sent out every day to increase in size mentally, morally, and spiritually, though the path leads through blazing, red-hot plowshares, and devils howling on every side. You are sent out to walk in the footsteps of Jesus 'Christ. You are sent out not only to be a conqueror, but more than a conqueror. You are sent out that you might have the privilege of waving a palm, and decking your crown with stars, putting it down at the feet of Jesus, that you might have the privilege of putting stars in His crown and making it radiant throughout eternal ages.

Hear it young man, young woman! You can go away; you can go away into the darkness like the man of our text; you can enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; but, if you do, it is to crucify the Son of God afresh and to grieve the Holy Spirit.

We are living in the midst of eternal verities. We are dealing with moral certainties. We are either believing on Christ, are either following and walking with Jesus, or we are going away from Him. We are accepting the program or we are rejecting it. This young man turned his back on Jesus, refused to walk in the light, and said, "No" to God. He said, "Go thy way for this time," and it proved to be for all time, for we never hear of him again. My friend, if you are weak, if you are defeated, it is because you have said "No" to God, rejecting His program for your life. It is because you knew the price and refused to pay it. He might have paid the price. He might have abandoned himself to God, and let other things go. He might have said, "Thy will for me."

Beloved, what you are doing? How about the program of Jesus for you? Paul wrote to a young man and said, "Fulfil thy ministry." Have you fulfilled up to date God's program for you? Either you are either doing it, or you are grieving the heart of God. You are either doing it, or you are adding to the burden of Jesus. You have the thought of God for you, and you know what He is asking you to do. Are you doing it? Stop, look, listen! It is important that you should obey God. You have not the peace, the joy, the victory, in your soul. You are missing God's program for you. No matter what may occur; you can be a victor. Yoked up with God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, you can defeat all the powers that hell and the devil can array against you. He that is for you is more than all that can be against you. Stop your trembling and get to believing God. Faith is the victory. God bless you, look up! God's people are a conquering people when they measure up to God's thought for them. I remember there was a time when God came to me and talked to me and I said, "Lord, you do not seem to be leading anybody else that way; you are not asking anyone else to walk that way." Thank God, I never, any more, question Divine leadings; it is enough for me to know that it is God. I never hesitate any more. I am saying Amen! Whether He ever asks any other man in the universe to do what he asks of me, I am accepting the whole program. Uncomplainingly? Banish the Word! I am accepting it joyfully. All I want to know is, is it His will? But I am afraid of the programs of men. I do not like to go to conventions where men have put me on the program. I like committees that pray and ask Divine direction as to meetings and preachers. I sometimes question the wisdom of men, but I like the program of God.

God puts it before every man. It will come to each one. I dare you, I challenge you. Ask God, "What wilt thou have me do?" Mean it from your heart, and in due time you will hear from Him. Jesus was walking along one day and He saw a man sitting at the receipt of custom, and all that He said to that man was just two words, "Follow Me." And he arose, left all, and followed Jesus in the way. Customs, good-bye; Roman office, good-bye;. shekels, good-bye. That is what it means -- separation. Go every step of the way. I was

honest. I joined the Masons when I was a young man. I had not been converted very long when they made me a preacher that is, they gave me a license to do the work to which God called me. I knew before I was saved that if ever I got religion, I would have to preach. I did not know the secret of that until many years after I had been preaching, and then, one day, my mother told me that before I was born my parents had given me, their first baby, to God for the ministry. After I was made a Mason they made me Chaplain of the Lodge, and one day a good Christian friend of mine said to me, "You cannot utter the name of Jesus in a Masonic Lodge." I said to myself, "I'll show you better than that." So the next Lodge night, when I as chaplain dismissed the lodge I used the Apostolic benediction: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, abide with you now and forever. Amen." I had no sooner got through than the Senior Warden, who was in the East that night in the absence of the Master, said to me, "Kulp, keep your Jesus to yourself." I at once told him that when it came to a question of choice between Masonry and my religion, Masonry could go. That fellow was wrong and I was right. I had a perfect right to keep a good conscience, but I was only a youngster and it meant something for me. But 'God helped me. He will help anyone who will go all the way with Him, even though it leads outside the orders to which so many ministers belong. No one says to me, "You do not know what you are talking about." I know, and they know it. God says that separation is the price of victory.

Brother, the price of victory is separation. If you are going with God, He will test you before you go very far. He will allow you to be tested. Obedience, then separation. "You say you will follow Me?" "Yes, Lord. Customs, good-bye; World good-bye, Fashions good-bye, world's politics good-bye." O beloved, if you are going with God, you will come clear out of Egypt. Go with the people of God; pay any price, and you will have victory no matter where you live, no matter what people say; you will have victory, for it is the heritage of those who go with God. If you have not victory, there is a reason. You are not meeting the thought of God for you. I declare unto you, that you may have all the salvation that you want; you may be a temple of the Holy Ghost; you may have communion with God all the time. He will walk with you and dwell in you.

I went into a brother's room and he brought out a record. He gave me a piece called "Old Time Religion." Then he played "God be with you till we meet again." And I said, "Give me that Old-time Religion again; I like that. I am not seeking something new. I am standing in the way, and inquiring for the old paths, and have rest for my soul. I want you to know that I am tremendously, completely, abundantly satisfied." But "how about young men who are In the glow of health?" I am in the glow of health; I stand as straight as any of you, and I can walk as fast. I am in the glow of health and salvation suits me abundantly. I like the program and am measuring up to it. If you choose the world, you may have it, but it means away from Jesus. You may go with the world or you may go with Jesus, but you cannot go with both at the same time. Please bear that in mind. The program of Jesus means separation from the world, and separation unto God. Are you so separated this very hour?

He went away sorrowful, for he was very rich. He had his eyes on the things of this world, he had his eyes on position, he had his eyes on popularity. The devil is a master painter, and he can make the world look very attractive to you; but, if you go that way, you will miss the thought of the Christ. A man who is called of God to preach the Gospel does not need anything else but fellowship with the Triune God through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Now, do not misinterpret me. You say, "Brother Kulp, what do you mean?" I mean that you do not have to join a lodge to get along, that you do not have to sacrifice your political convictions to get along Onetime a committee was looking for a preacher and they asked some preachers about a man named Kulp. Well, those preachers said a lot of good things about him -- he could do this and

that, and the other, but--. Did you ever do anything of that kind? Did you ever say a lot of nice things about some brother, and then look down your nose and say, But? What do you suppose the but was? It was this "But he is a third-party prohibitionist." My, oh my! Was not that awful in a preacher? I had voted a third-party prohibition ticket for thirty years and would do the same thing over again.

If you are in the program of Jesus you will not have to seek human assistance. You do not have to lean on the arm of flesh. It is vain to put your trust in princes, or bishops, or general superintendents. You take the program of God, and everything that He offers you means a promise goes with it that He will see you through. God help the men and women who are standing around waiting' for a job. If you are in God's program He has work for you as long as you are able to do it, and then at the end, He will give you your last appointment where all the brethren are true, and the Church is eternally triumphant.

O beloved, it means so much as to whether we go with God or not. If we abandon ourselves to Jesus, He gives us the Holy Ghost. If any man has not the Spirit of Jesus he is none of His. If you abandon yourself to Him, He will take control. Your wife will not be in control. The bishop will not be in control. Your friends are not in control. The Holy Ghost is. They that are after the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit. When you have Him, you are just as sweet at home as you are when you are away from home, and in company. You are just as nice to your wife when you are all alone as you are when there are folks around. You are as good in the dark as you are in the light. You are walking abandoned to the Holy Ghost and you have the best company that there is in the world.

There was a young girl stepped off a ferry boat and a young dude stepped up to her and said, "Miss, may I have your company?" She said, "No, Sir." Not satisfied with this rebuff, he asked her again, and she said, "No, Sir; I have company." "May I ask who your company is? I seen one." And she said, "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." "Too good company for me," he said, and then left her. God bless you, we are never left alone, and never lonely when we are with Him. I have heard folks say that they feel just as good when they do not feel good as when they do feel good, and just as happy when they do not feel happy as when they do feel happy. Do you know what I mean?

Out in Kansas a cyclone came along, and wrecked houses and barns and everything in its path. Picked up trees, and everything generally was badly wrecked. It picked up a cradle in which was a baby asleep, and it carried cradle, baby and all, over the fields for half a mile and set it down gently, and the baby never awoke. What was the reason? The cradle was in the center of the cyclone, and in the center there is a calm. Oh, get into the center of His will and be at rest! The devil may start up a tempest; he may set the Galilean sea to rocking and roaring; but he ought to know by this time that He who rides upon the storm can say "Peace be still," and there will be a great calm. Oh, thank God, when He says "Peace," there is calm, and rest! If we are in God's program we have His mind and we are at rest; we are humble. Self-effacement does not hurt us. We can sit in a congregation as well as on a platform, and we can enjoy the sermon just as much. If we have the mind of Jesus we are humble. Our Master was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

One day a brother went into an auction store. The auctioneer was selling a painting. He was standing behind it, almost out of sight, and telling the merits of the picture and the reputation of the artist. The brother got a lesson from this. I want to hold Jesus forth so He will be seen. Brother, are you living so much like Jesus that folks think of Jesus when they see you? That does away with lightness; that does away with trifling. Oh, it means so much to walk with Jesus, and this is God's program for us. When Paul got into the program of Jesus, it was a great thing to look down the years and see what there was awaiting

him, and say, "Yes, Jesus! Yes, Jesus!" In the time of Bloody Mary, there were three men condemned to the fire. To make it worse the executioner came to them and said to the first martyr, "You will burn Monday." To the second one he said, "You will burn Tuesday." To the third one he said, "You will burn Wednesday." When Monday came the first one went out to the stake with head, hands and heart uplifted, and he was praising the Lord. But the man who was to be burnt on Wednesday said, "Oh, I can't burn! I can't burn!" Tuesday came, and the second one was led out to the stake, and he went praising God and shouted when they started the fires. But the one who was to burn Wednesday kept saying, "Oh, I can't burn! I can't burn!" But when Wednesday came he came out from his cell shouting, "I can burn! I can burn!" And he passed away in a chariot of fire, shouting the praises of One who never will leave us alone. I heard Bishop Foss say as he told this, "I do not think he ever felt the fire." Beloved, do not be afraid of the whole program. He who walked with the three in the furnace is still the same, and ever mindful of His own. He will be with you everywhere you ought to be, to the admiration of the angels and the astonishment of hell. Do not talk about the days gone by. Our God is the same, and His Word is good everywhere. You do not have to have someone else's experience; you can have one as good as anyone, in any age, if you will mind God.

We not only get under Christ's burdens when we are in His program, but we joy in His joy. If you are a preacher, you can shout because some other brother is having a big revival. When you see another brother in honor preferred. you can rejoice because God has such men. You will not think that you are the whole thing; you will know God has some folks. It may be seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. You will rejoice in anything that makes God glad.

Some of the old theologians say that the rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell was this young man who went away sorrowful. I do not know, but we do know that he never was worth reporting afterward. We never hear tell of him. The other man went away to shipwrecks. He was on the bosom of the Mediterranean fourteen days and nights; no light, all storm and darkness. It was night when some One stood by him and said, "Fear not, Paul; I will not only save thee, but I have given to thee all them' that sail with thee." The one went out into the darkness and was heard of no more. The other sat in jail with bleeding back. He and his companion began to sing and God did hear and said to an angel, "Go down there and shake that old jail where Paul and Silas are singing and let my servants come forth." Again we find this old man coming forth from a prison -- old, not because of years, but made old by the hardships he had been through. He is covered with the slime and mire of the Mamertine jail, but he walks along the Appian Way with the tread and the air of a conqueror. He has fought a good fight. He has finished the course. He has kept the faith. There is a stir among the angels above and the choir-lofts of Heaven are emptied as they hasten to the battlements of the Celestial City to welcome home this man who kept God's program, for they have heard that Paul is coming Home today. Glory be to Heaven's King!

Which way are you going? You can take the program, if you will. Lord, I will go. If it means to sell my farm, I will go. If it means give up all my plans for the future, I will do it. Thy will for me. Smash every plan. Let all my ambitions lie in ashes at my feet. Amen! I will not only sing, "Where He leads I'll follow," but I am now following even to the end. Some folks are like a man in one of my meetings where God had called me. He came and said to me, "If I were to die tonight, I would go to hell. I am a member of the church, but I have no power at the family altar. We go through the motions, but no fire falls." Beloved, have you a family altar? Are you living where fire falls from heaven on your souls when you pray? Are you so completely in the will of God that you would not be more so if you moved an inch either way? No chafing there, nothing irksome there. But with the Psalmist you can say, "I delight to do thy will, O God." Get God's program for

you and live in the victory.

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