

Audio Sermon ■ You Can Fulfill God's Perfect Plan

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God's perfect plan for our lives, even in the midst of failures and discouragement. It highlights how God can work through our repeated failures to teach us humility and prepare us to fulfill His ultimate purpose. The message encourages listeners to trust God's ability to turn their mess into a masterpiece, reminding them that even in failure, God is working to accomplish His perfect plan.

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Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Genesis 3:15, 1 John 3:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Revelation 13:8, Matthew 19:26, Matthew 6:34, Proverbs 21:1, Revelation 3:7

Topics: "Trusting God's Plan", "Overcoming Failure"

Description

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Transcript

I want to turn today to Ephesians and chapter 2. In these last days, these studies that we've been going through, we've been seeing something of God's wonderful purpose for us, and how that purpose can be accomplished, how Satan has been defeated on the cross, and how if we cooperate with God and His working in our lives, we can live the most useful, the most fruitful, the most profitable life that any human being can ever live. Now in Ephesians chapter 2, there are two verses I want to show you. First of all, in verse 10.

Salvation is by grace, verse 8, through faith. It is a gift from God, and it is not a result of works, lest anybody should boast. There's nothing we can ever do that can bring us that free gift of God, of forgiveness of our sins.

And no works that we can ever do can qualify us in any way for even one sin to be forgiven. But even though it says not as a result of works in verse 9, in verse 10 it speaks about the works that we have to do after we are born again, after our sins are forgiven. It says we are His workmanship, created in Christ

Jesus, a new creation for good works.

So just as much as no good works can bring us forgiveness, equally after our sins are forgiven, our life should be full of good works. Many people are taken up with that first part. No works of ours can bring us forgiveness.

I agree. But what does it go on to say? It goes on to say that once you're forgiven, God created you specifically for good works. And not just any good works, but good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Earlier in chapter 1 we saw how He has chosen us before the worlds were created. And at that time He not only chose us in Christ, but also prepared certain works, or we could say a certain plan for our life. I believe that includes every detail of our life.

The Bible says in John 17 verse 23 that God loves us as much as He loved Jesus. It's one of the greatest truths in scripture. We know that God loves us, but John 17 23 tells us that the extent of that love was as much as He loved Jesus, His own Son.

So when Jesus came to earth, all that God did for Jesus as a man, He will do for us, because He loves us just as much. As much as He cared for Jesus, the little details of Jesus' life, He cares for us. In little things, right from the time when Jesus was a little baby and the angel told His parents, Joseph and Mary, to take Him to Egypt, protect Him from the wrath of Herod.

So He cares for us too. And at different times the way the Lord protected, the Father protected Jesus, He cares for and protects us. Many times in the scriptures we read about Jesus' life that this thing happens so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Right from Matthew chapter 1 onwards we read that, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. And then something else, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. And right through to the cross.

Even His saying, I thirst, was so that the scripture might be fulfilled. Small little details. When He went to Galilee, it says, it was so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

So all these verses indicate that Jesus' life was specifically planned. The place where He was to be born, Bethlehem, the home in which He was to be born, the exact date on which He was to be born, which we don't know exactly what that date was, but it was a specific date. The exact date when He was to be crucified, that we know was the Passover day.

The day He was to be raised up and every day of His life was planned by God. Where He should be, how long He should be in Nazareth, and when He should go to Judea, and when He should go to Galilee, and different things. They were works planned beforehand.

And when Jesus did them, the scripture was fulfilled. Now if God loves us also, like it says in John 17 23, as much as He loved Jesus, I believe that God has planned like that for you and me too. For every little thing in our life, if we respond to Him, we say there is a perfect plan that God has for our life.

You know, we're not just to find out the best thing we can do and somehow do it. Jesus didn't have to find out what is the best thing I should be doing, where should I go now. He waited on the Father and the Father led Him to some places and did not lead Him to some places.

And that's how He lived. And He said in John 6 verse 38, a principle that guided Him throughout His life. And that is why Jesus' life was one of perfect rest.

You know, Jesus often said, come to me and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and you will find rest for your souls. That's because He Himself lived a life of perfect rest.

We can say that Jesus lived in a continuous Sabbath, a continuous rest in God and a continuous fellowship with His Heavenly Father all the time. And we read here in John chapter 6 and verse 38, Jesus says, I've come from heaven, what for? And we would say, many people say, He came from heaven to die for our sins. That's only a very small part of the answer.

That was only on one particular day out of the 33 and a half years of His life. But what did He do the rest of His life? And that summed up in this verse. He came from heaven to do His Father's will, to do the will of Him who sent Him.

And in order to do that will, it says here, He had to deny His own will. So we can say that the entire life of Jesus was spent denying His own will and doing the Father's will. One part of which was dying on the cross.

But there were many other parts of it in 33 and a half years. And He could never do the Father's will until He denied His own will. He says that, I came from heaven, we can say, to deny my own will and to do the Father's will.

You see when Jesus came as a man like us, He had a soul like us, and He had a will. And that will had to be denied. That means He had to say no to what He wanted, in order to do the will of His Father.

And you see that very clearly in Gethsemane, where it's very clear that His own will was, I don't want to drink this cup. And He expressed it, Father can you move this cup from me? But, not as I will, but as Thou wills. He denied His own will and finally drank that cup.

And that is how He lived His entire life. Now do you know that when you break bread and take part in it, you are saying the same thing to God. You're saying, Lord let my will be broken in this body.

Just like Jesus' will was broken in His body, and He did His Father's will, I also want to walk that same way. From childhood we have wanted to do our will. And we've seen that earlier as the root of all sin, when Lucifer said, I will.

And Jesus came with salvation by saying, not as I will, denying that He did His Father's will. And this teaches us that if you want to fulfill God's plan for your life, you know that perfect plan that God has made for your life, right from the day you're born again, till the end of your life, or till Jesus comes, whichever is earlier. If you want that plan to be fulfilled in your life, the most important requirement is that you deny your own will.

That you give up your own choice in everything. You know the story of that man who went to the Lord and said, Lord tell my brother to divide the property with me. If he had said, well Lord, if you want me to have my half share of the property, tell him to divide it.

But if you don't want it, that's fine. If that half share of the property is going to ruin me, I don't want it. Then he'd have been at rest.

Otherwise he'd be a perpetual unrest, because that chap is not giving him his share of the property. You know the number of believers who are going around in unrest because some family property has not been divided for them. There will always be unrest in your life if you're not willing to give up your own will.

Sometimes we want something. Maybe you want to marry someone. And you're perpetually at unrest, seeing whether it'll work out or it won't work out.

Will it work out? Will it not work out? You think God wants you to be at such unrest? You got to give up your own will. You got to say, well Lord, that's my desire to marry him or marry her. But if it's not your will, I don't want that marriage.

It'll just mess up my life. It may look so wonderful right now, but after getting married to that person, I may discover that he or she is a completely different type of person than what I thought. Who knows what type of person that person is? Only you, Lord.

I want your will. If it's your will, let it work out. I'm submitted.

I want your will. Don't let the devil hinder it. But if it's not your will, however much I may want it, Lord, don't give it to me.

Can you pray a prayer like that? We have so many desires. We want this. We want that.

You may want to build a house one day. You may want to travel somewhere some day. You may want to go to some place.

You may want to serve the Lord in a particular field. Or you may want to have a particular ministry. In all these things, you can express your desire to God.

But if you want to be at rest, you must say, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And if you will surrender to Jesus like that at every point. Jesus said, we got to take up the cross every day.

At every point, you say, Lord, in this particular area, this is my desire. But if it's not your will, that's fine. I want your will.

It's because I don't know your will, that I'm expressing my desire. We have every right to express our desire. But once we know the will of God, clearly, then our desire is gone.

We say, no Lord, I don't want that. Even though I wanted it very much, I give it up. That is the cross.

And a person who takes up the cross every day, like that, in every decision, yielding, yielding, yielding, at the end of his life, when he looks back, he will see he has fulfilled the perfect will of God. Nothing could hinder that perfect will. Nothing.

No man, no demon, not all the hosts of hell, not all the people in the world. That perfect will. That's why, in Jesus' case, every single thing in his life was so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

And this was the simple secret of his life, that he gave up his own will. So when we read in Ephesians 2, that God has prepared good works beforehand, that we should walk in them. Some of those things which God has planned, may not be what we plan.

We make a plan for our life, and God's plan may be in another direction. And when we come to that place, we have to say, well Lord, I want your will. And there will never be a disappointment concerning anything.

Maybe you apply for a job, and you don't get it. And you sought to honor God in your life. Well, that may not be what God wants you to do.

That's not God's will. It's maybe God has something else for you. Better.

Better does not necessarily mean a higher salary, but better because it fulfills God's plan. Sometimes the job with the best salary, it may not be God's plan. Sometimes the girl with the prettiest face, may not be God's plan.

Or the man who is most good looking, may not be God's plan for you. If you are willing to say, Lord, I want your will. You'll find that even those closed doors, the Lord has closed them.

One of the things you must remember as you walk through life, seeking to fulfill God's perfect plan, is what we read in Revelation and chapter 3. Revelation 3 and verse 7 and 8. In the middle of verse 7, the Lord says, I have the key of David, and when I open, no one can shut it. And when I shut, no one can open. That is authority.

Jesus has the key to every door in front of you. He opens, nobody can shut it. He shuts it, nobody can open it.

And he says to this particular church, now in this particular case, I've set before you an open door, which no one can shut. You don't have power. Verse 8, you have very little power.

You can't keep that door open, because demons and men may try to shut it, but it doesn't matter. You kept my word, and I will keep that door open for you. And it's like these automatic doors.

You may have seen some of them in some places where there is a little photoelectric cell which signals that somebody, something has crossed its path, and that triggers an electrical mechanism that opens a door. So as you come near the door, the door opens. And when you go past it, it shuts.

The doors that God opens in front of your life will be like that. You won't have to bang and bang and break it to go through. You pray and seek God, and when the right time comes, when you come right up there, it opens.

He doesn't very often open it well in advance. You know, when the children of Israel came right up to the Red Sea, it is when they came to the edge of the waters that the Lord opened the waters and they went through. It wasn't many hours before that.

Later on when they came into Jordan, it says when the feet of the priest touched the water, it opened. So very often God opens doors for us in our life like that. You think it's closed, it's closed, it's closed, it's closed, and when you come right up there, it opens, if it is God's will.

And if it is not God's will, it keeps it shut, and there's no use wasting your time there. Back up and go in the other direction. And God has wonderful ways in our life to make us fulfill his plan, if you are totally committed to do God's will in your life.

Let me turn you to Psalm 139. Psalm 139, it says, verse 16, in the last, in the middle of that verse, it says, in your book, they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not even one of them. Now I understand that verse to mean that before I was born, you know, verse 13, it speaks about forming my inward thoughts and weaving me in my mother's womb, and you saw verse 16, my unformed substance in my mother's womb, and when I was even unformed, there was a diary up in heaven, a diary that specified what I should do with my life, where I should go, and what I should do.

And it says, all the days that are ordained for me are written in that diary, before I had started living even one of those days on earth, before I was born. Now when we believe this, it brings tremendous rest into our life. We're not restless, because we believe we live under a sovereign God, who knew us, when we were in our mother's womb, before that, and he formed us in our mother's womb, and brought us to the place one day, where you found Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and then allowed you to hear the message of salvation, of freedom from sin, and how God can fulfill his plan for your life, and you opened your life to the Lord, so that his plan can be fulfilled, and now your job is only to seek that will.

Say, Lord, show me what you want me to do. Each day of my life, you've got a plan, help me to fulfill it. Lead me to the right person to get married to, lead me to the right place for ministry.

Some of you may have heard of Adonai Ram Judson. He was an American missionary who came to India to serve the Lord, but he couldn't stay, and so he had to get onto a ship. I think it was in Madras.

I don't know what were the reasons why he couldn't stay, but he had to leave, and he went to Burma, because the ship was going to Burma, and he spent the rest of his life there, doing a tremendous work for God, but that wasn't where he planned to go in the beginning. When he left the United States, he thought he was going to come to India, but God shut the door and opened another one, saying, that's where I want you to go, and that happened through circumstances. Circumstances which were beyond his control, but at the end of Judson's life, when he looked back, he would have said, well, praise the Lord.

It wasn't the way I planned it, but God worked it out perfectly. That's exactly where I'm supposed to be. God wanted to do a work in Burma through Judson, but he allowed him to think for a long time that he was going to come to India, and then he finally took him where he wanted him to be.

You know, if you're one of those who's totally committed, and you've got no complaints, and you say, Lord, whatever you plan for my life, I want that. You can be sure of one thing. God himself will work out his plan for your life.

You don't have to be afraid. At the right time, certain doors will open, certain doors will close, and that's why we are at rest. The Bible says in Proverbs 21 and verse 1 that even a king's heart, a king, in those days, nowadays kings don't have much power, but in those days a king had tremendous authority.

He was everything. His word was law. It says the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord like rivers of water, and he can turn it wherever he wishes.

The king's heart can be turned wherever he wishes. God can turn it. Have you seen a river? Have you seen a picture of a river in a map of a state or a map of India? No river flows straight.

All rivers are this way and that way. Sometimes it's flowing north, sometimes flowing south, sometimes flowing west, and then again east, and that's how a river is. And it says God can turn even the king's heart to the north or south or east or west any way he wants, like the rivers of water.

This is why our life is at such perfect rest, that if you commit your life to God totally and you only want his will for your life and you don't want anything else, you don't want anything but God's plan, that which is written in the diary in heaven for you every detail of every day, you want that to be fulfilled in your life, nobody can stop you. You know, no human being can hinder God's plan for your life. No demon in hell can hinder God's plan for your life.

Only you can hinder it by disobedience, by not doing God's will, by not yielding your own will. And in other words, you say, no, I want this at any cost. You're not willing to give up your will, then of course you can miss the will of God.

And lots and lots of people miss God's perfect will because they are stubborn and they want to do what they want to do. And they go their own stubborn way and at the end of life look back in regret over how they lived. The Bible says in 1 John and chapter 2, a wonderful word, verse 17, the world is passing away and all its lusts, but the one who does the will of God will abide forever.

The one who does the will of God will abide forever. So who's the one who's going to abide forever? The one who seeks to do God's will in every detail of his life. So if you realize that God's made a plan for your life, you must believe that that plan must be better than any plan you can make for yourself.

Because God sees the future. If a man who can see the future makes a plan, won't that be better than somebody who makes a plan who cannot see even what's going to happen tomorrow? You and I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but God sees all the way till the end of time. And he's got wisdom.

He knows all the factors and circumstances surrounding your life. He knows your temperament. He knows your background.

He knows what you're fit for. He knows what type of ministry you can fulfill. He trained you for that.

He equipped you for that from the time you were born, for a particular task in his body, in a particular place, in a particular time in this generation. And you say, Lord, I can never make a plan better than the one you made. So I want to know your plan every day of my life.

I don't want to do my own will. To make the maximum amount of money, that's not the greatest thing in the world. To live a comfortable life, that's not the greatest thing.

But to do the will of God, even if it means pain and suffering and ridicule and all types of problems. You look at the Apostle Paul. God never told him right at the beginning of his life what all he's going to face.

In fact, he asked the Lord on the Damascus road, when he fell down from the horse, Lord, what do you want me to do? And the Lord told him only the next step. Go into the city. Then you will be told what to do.

So that's all. God shows us one step at a time. He went to the city.

Then he was shown the next step and the next step and the next step. And when he looked back at the end of his life, that plan of God included being beaten 195 times on his back, being stoned three times, being imprisoned so many times he couldn't even count, being shipwrecked and traveling in dangerous circumstances and through jungles and danger of robbers, shivering in the cold sometimes, sometimes not having enough food. It was all part of God's plan.

But at the end of his life, Paul could say, I have fought a good fight, 2nd Timothy 4.7. I have finished my course and I have kept the faith. Do you think there are many believers who can say that? People who have not sought God's will but sought their own comfort and their own gain and their own honor? Well, they may have lived a comfortable life on earth, but they can't say at the end of their life, I have finished the appointed course God has for me. Paul said, now I'm ready to go, because I have finished the allotted task God had for me.

He had that sense, I finished it. It was a very difficult path, but at each point he didn't turn back. He didn't say, well Lord, this is getting too much.

He said, that's fine, if that's your will, I accept it. Like David said in 2 Samuel 24, verse 24, I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. That's the principle of sacrifice by which Jesus lived.

And any person who wants to do the will of God in his life, must accept the principle of sacrifice. There are lots of people today who are seeking to serve God without this principle of sacrifice. All I can say is, they completely miss the will of God in their life.

You'll never find the will of God in your life if you don't accept the principle of sacrifice. I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. To follow the Lord means a way of painful self-denial.

There's something I want to do, and God says no. And I yield my will, and my will is broken. That's the meaning of the breaking of bread.

Let me repeat. Every time I break bread, Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me. That's the way he went.

So even though the way is painful, when you come to the end of life, you look back and say, well, it was worth it. All the few sorrows and difficulties are all forgotten, because we were able in a life of service and self-denial to show Jesus that we were grateful to him for dying for us on Calvary. To say, thank you, Lord, for dying for me in that way, that is the question.

And it's not something that you just say today at the end of this meeting and say, well, I've done it. No. It is a decision that you have to renew every day.

Jesus said, if you want to follow me, take up your cross, deny yourself daily. Say no to your own will daily, Luke 9, 23. Say no to your own will daily.

Take up your cross, put that will to death, and do the will of God. You have to renew it tomorrow morning. And day after tomorrow, you have to renew it again.

Say, Lord, today I choose your will. I say no to my own will. I want to do your will.

And it's not just once a day. Many, many times during the day, we take decisions. Say, Lord, I'm going to go the way of the cross.

And finally, ten years from now, you will become a spiritual man if you have taken those decisions day by day by day by day by day. Another brother or another sister who's heard the same message, but does not respond in that day-to-day way to the Lord, in denying himself or herself, at the end of ten years, will either be exactly where he or she is today, spiritually, with no growth of maturity, or what is more likely, they'll be further behind than where they are today. It is the decisions you take every day in relation to

God's will and your own will that determine what you're going to be five years from now, ten years from now.

This is why you find two people born again on the same day ten years later, yes, completely different spiritually. One is still a carnal Christian, another man has become a man of God. How did that happen? It didn't happen overnight.

It didn't happen because they were just baptized in the Holy Spirit. Maybe both were baptized in the Holy Spirit. But one man took up the cross every day, denied himself, painful, gave up his own will, chose the will of God, went upright before God, chose God's will, allowed the circumstances of life to break him, and finally came through to maturity.

And as he continues like that, one day he'll be able to say at the end of his life, I finished my course. I accomplished what God wanted me to do. And you know, it's such a blessed thing if you can realize this when you're young.

How sad if you discover this truth when you're 50. I discovered it when I was 20. I'm very thankful.

I'm thankful I didn't discover it late in life, because so many years would have been wasted. I think of so many brothers and sisters I've met. They're good brothers.

They don't commit gross sin. They're good brothers sitting in the church, but they don't have a passion to fulfill the will of God for their life, to make their life count for God on this earth. They are just drifting.

They are good church members like passengers in a train, sit there, sleep there, and the train takes them somewhere. No, God doesn't want us to be like that. God doesn't want you to be a passenger.

He's got a plan for your life. He's got something to fulfill, and you'll never find that if you don't seek Him. And if you resist all the circumstances that come in your life where He's trying to break you, it'll never be fulfilled.

Maybe one day God will just give up on you and say, go your way. I won't disturb you anymore. That would be terrible.

I think I've seen some believers like that. I can't explain any other way. They never, they, the strongest message in the world will not shake them.

They're like icebergs. Nothing can melt them. They're there just the same year after year after year, never seeming to learn the lessons God wants them to learn, because they are not willing to deny their own will.

When you seek to go this way, sometimes, as I said, it's painful. One of the verses that can really help us is 2 Corinthians 12, 9, which says, my grace is sufficient for you. That means in every situation, exactly what your need is, God will give you grace for that.

He won't give you grace for tomorrow. He'll give you grace for today. Jesus said in Matthew 6, 34, sufficient unto every day is the evil that there is in that day.

Every day has got a certain quota of evil that we encounter. And the grace God gives us is sufficient to overcome that day's evil. That's enough.

It's like God saying, every day, whatever your expenses are, I'll give you the money for that. Isn't that enough? If you have more expenses tomorrow, I'll give you more money. If you have less expenses tomorrow, I'll give you less.

My grace is exactly sufficient. So, we can face the whole future with confidence. Maybe a time of tremendous persecution.

Let's say a time of tremendous persecution comes. In fact, many of our fellow believers in other parts of India are being persecuted right now. And let's say, like in the 3rd century and all, they begin to torture Christians in prison.

They start pulling out the nails and burning them at the stake and throwing them to the lions, or harming us in some way. And when we look at it, you and I may say, boy, I can't imagine. How will I face it if they start pulling out my nails and burning me and cutting off parts of my body? Will I deny the Lord? Well, right now, we don't have grace for that because we don't need grace.

But at that particular moment, you'll get grace. And you'll be able to bear it. It's like, you know, if you need only 50 rupees today, that's all He'll give you today, 50 rupees.

But in that day, you may need 5,000 rupees. He'll give it to you. That's the wonderful promise of God.

My grace is sufficient for you. And there's another wonderful promise in this connection in 2 Corinthians 9, in verse 8, where it says, God is able. This is a bound to you, so that always, always means 24 hours a day, you will have all sufficiency.

You need 50 rupees, you get 50 rupees. You need 50 lakhs, you get 50 lakhs. All sufficiency in everything.

Nothing is excluded. So that you can have an abundance for every good work that God has planned for you to do. Wonderful.

God, it's not a matter of you are able. Notice those words. God is able.

If you look at my ability, your ability is nothing. But God is able, according to your needs, to give you grace, to put your own will to death, and to do the will of God, to face the future, to face any situation that can ever come into your life, difficult or easy, to conquer it and to be more than a conqueror in Christ. This is our calling.

To demonstrate to the world that Jesus conquered Satan. And that we follow in Jesus' footsteps. We may be mistreated, abused, persecuted, but we conquer Satan.

Our goal in life is not to have comfort. Our goal in life is to conquer Satan, to do the will of God, and accomplish his purposes on this earth before we leave it. And now I want to say a few words to those who feel that they have missed God's will some way, or made a mess of their life, or you've fallen so often into sin, and you say, well, Lord, there's not much hope for somebody like me.

I'm always falling. I heard these messages before. I'm still defeated, still frustrated.

Remember this word. God is able. What is God's plan for those who have failed in their life? The Bible is full of encouragement for such people.

I want to spend a few moments speaking specifically to those who feel their life is a failure. Those who feel I'm perpetually defeated by sin. I never seem to overcome.

I'm always discouraged. I'm always gloomy, depressed, no matter how many messages I hear. In Genesis chapter 1 we read that when, we already spoke about that, that when the world was created perfectly by God and Lucifer came and sinned and messed up the whole thing, we read the earth became chaotic, empty, dark.

And what did God do? God had a perfect plan for the heavens and earth when he made them. But Lucifer came and messed it up. Did God give up on that? Did he destroy that heaven and earth? No, he remade it.

That's what you read in Genesis 1. The first day he did something, the second day he did something, and every time he said, that's good, that's good, the third day is good, good, good. Finally on the sixth day he completed everything and he says, it's very good. So what is the message in the first chapter of the Bible? That God can take a situation or a life that has been messed up by Lucifer and the devil and he can work on that life and that situation until finally what comes out is very good.

That's the message in the first chapter of the Bible. It's a message for failure. It's a message for those who have messed up their lives.

It's a message for those who feel the devil has messed up their lives. 1 John 3 verse 8 says, the Son of God has come to undo all the works of the devil. And I pictured it like this.

When we are all born, let's picture that we've got a nice beautiful ball of string, you know a big ball of string, neatly wound up together like a ball. But from the day we were born, as we've grown up, we have opened up that string and tied it in knots and today there are hundreds of thousands of knots and it's such a mess. It's no longer like that beautiful ball of string we got when we were born.

And the Bible says Jesus has come to undo all those knots. I can't undo it. I get discouraged when I look at it.

But he has come to undo all those knots and put it all back in and says here is your ball of string. Isn't that good news? It certainly is and that's what you see in Genesis 1. And you move on to Genesis chapter 3 and again you see failure. In fact the Bible begins with failure.

You see Adam and Eve, God had made a perfect plan for Adam and Eve's life and they messed it up. You think God wanted them to sin? Certainly not. But when they did sin, God said don't worry, I'll sort this out.

The seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. And there itself he had already planned that Jesus Christ should come and destroy the power of Satan. Right there in Genesis 3. What does that teach us? You mess up your life, God can sort it out.

That's what God did on Calvary. Sorted out messed up lives and failures. Calvary is a tremendous power to do that.

Now there is a verse in Revelation 13 verse 8 which says that the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world. I mean in some places it says the book was written from the foundation of the world or the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. Anyway I believe that God who knew the

end from the beginning knew that Jesus Christ would die on Calvary's cross.

And do you know that the world would never have known the greatness of God's love without Calvary. We could have heard about God's love, God telling us I love you so much, I love you so much. But there was never, there could never have been such a demonstration of it as there was on Calvary.

And then when we ask ourselves, was Calvary part of God's perfect plan? Or was it his second best? Well I know it was part of God's perfect plan. But then you say, do you mean that therefore God planned that Adam should sin? No, Adam's sin was a failure. Now if a man fails, how can God's perfect plan still be fulfilled? The devil says according to logic, impossible.

Right, according to logic impossible. But according to God, possible. That even though Adam's failure was not in God's perfect plan, yet the cross of Calvary was.

Now if you ask me to explain that, I can't explain it. There are a lot of things in the Bible I can't explain. But one thing I discovered, that God can fulfill his perfect plan for your life even after you have messed it up like Adam.

Not his second best, but his best. Now if you can have faith for that, it will be fulfilled in your life. But you say, then why, how can my failures be part of God's perfect plan? Do you know that even in failure, God is teaching you something? We know that our Christian life is an education.

Not an education like in school where you have to get every sum right and get 100%. But in this school of God, he teaches us many lessons through failures which we cannot learn by constant success. For example, when the disciples went out fishing all night, they caught nothing.

They tried, they failed, they tried, they failed, they tried, they failed, just like you have tried so often to get victory over sin or something or the other. You try and you fail, you try and you fail, you try and you fail and it's perpetual failure. That is how those disciples were that night.

Perpetual failure. And then in the morning, Jesus came and filled their boat with fish and it was success. Now, there was a difference there.

On the other occasions when they went out and caught fish and brought it in, they could be proud of their catch. But this day, they couldn't be proud. They had to be humble and say, we didn't catch this.

God gave it to us. And that is the reason why God allows you to fail again and again and again and again. Because through those failures, God works humility in you.

I believe it's very easy for God to give us victory over anger, the lust of the eye, the love of money, bitterness, jealousy, any sin. God can give us grace to overcome. But the difficult thing is, after you have got the victory, to remain humble, that's very difficult.

God can give you grace to accomplish a tremendous ministry for Him, to bring many souls to Christ, to build churches, to do a work for Him, very easy. But after you have done it, to keep you humble, very difficult. Have you noticed that? Even if you bring one soul to Christ, have you noticed how your head becomes a little bigger? And you have to tell somebody about how you brought that soul to Christ? Can you imagine what would be the size of your head if you bring ten souls to Christ? Or a hundred? Or you do a work for God? You build one church from scratch.

I mean a fellowship of people. Can you imagine what the size of your head would be? The difficult thing is not for God to bless us, that's easy. But to keep us humble so that He can continue to bless us, very difficult.

That has been the history of so many people in Christian work. He anoints them, they begin to do a work, and they see the blessing, they get puffed up, and the Bible says, God resists the proud. And He has to resist them, because that's His nature.

So He blesses and then He resists, because the fellows become proud. And that's why God takes us through repeated failure, failure, failure, failure, failure, failure, failure, failure, till we have come right down to the dust and say, Lord, I am a total failure, I am a wretched man. And then God fills our boat with fish, fills our life with victory and blessing and anointing, and we can never be proud of it.

Our head does not increase in size one bit. We say, what have I that I did not receive? We can never look down on another person who has been defeated. This is how it was in my life.

The years I struggled for victory, and I was only failing, failing, failing, failing thousands of times. When I say no, the Bible says, sin will not have dominion over me. One of these days it will be true.

I don't know when, but I'm trying to catch fish, and I'm getting nothing, trying, trying, trying, trying, trying, and I learn through all those failures, I can never make it. Lord, it is impossible. I can never get victory.

Maybe other people can get it, but I can't. It is impossible. And then God fills my boat with fish, and suddenly I get victory.

And I realize, that wasn't me. I can never be proud of it. I see another brother losing his temper, and I say, Lord, I can't despise him.

I'm worse than him. I see another brother sinning in some way, and I cannot despise him. Impossible.

God has allowed me to fail so many times in my life, before he brought me to victory, that I can never now despise one human being, no matter how deep they fall. I say, well, it's God's mercy, God's grace that made me different. I'm no better than him.

How does he accomplish that work, of giving you victory, and keeping you humble by repeated failures? Do you see how failure itself is part of God's education? It's no use getting victory, and then being proud. Pride is a deeper pit than any other sin. Supposing you get victory over anger.

That's like coming out of a hundred foot pit. And then you fall into spiritual pride, which is a thousand foot pit. Is that victory? That's not victory.

And that's why God has to allow you to fail. In that failure, he teaches you a lesson. And if you can trust God, Lord I trust you, in spite of my failures, you're going to teach me a lesson like you taught those disciples who repeatedly tried to catch fish.

And you will fill my boat with fish. You will make me more than a conqueror. And even through these failures, you're teaching me something.

You're humbling me. You're breaking me. You're crushing me.

You're accomplishing your purpose. This is part of my education. And I'm going to come through it triumphantly, because I seek your will.

And you'll find at the end of all those years of failure, where you think where the devil says, God can never fulfill his perfect plan for your life, my fellow, because you have messed up his plan so often. And you say, no. I believe God will still fulfill, not his second best, but his perfect plan for my life.

I believe it. The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. But supposing after hearing this you say, oh well brother, you don't know my condition.

My life is an absolute mess. I don't believe God can do it for me. Well, according to your faith, be it unto you, God can't do it for you.

Not because God could not, but because you would not believe. And one day at the judgment seat of Christ, you will see some other brother whose life was a much bigger mess than yours, but who trusted God and fulfilled God's perfect plan for his life. And you say, oh Lord, that man's life was worse than mine and he fulfilled God's plan.

God will say yes, because he trusted me. But you wouldn't trust me. You kept on looking at yourself.

Don't have any regrets when Jesus comes. I tell you, the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. God can fulfill his perfect plan for your life, even if you have messed up everything right under the nose today.

You know those people who came to work at the eleventh hour? Eleventh hour means eleven out of twelve into a hundred is more than ninety percent of their life wasted. And they came and gave the rest of that ten percent of their life to God and God did something through them. And they got a tremendous reward.

All these things in scripture are written for our instruction and encouragement. Don't look at the past. Put the past behind you and say, Lord, let me learn lessons from my failures.

And I want to trust you today that you will accomplish your perfect plan for my life. Will you trust him? Let's pray. I want you to respond to the word of God that you've heard all these days and especially this evening.

Trust him. This is the work of God that you believe. He doesn't want you to do anything else.

Just say, Lord, I trust you that you will accomplish what you have planned in my life, even though I made a mess of it in so many ways. I trust you to accomplish your perfect plan in my life. And that even through my failures, I will learn something.

I will learn humility. I will learn never to despise another human being again. And I will learn to give you all the glory and never take any glory for myself because I received everything freely from you.

And I believe at the end of my life I will be able to say, I have finished my course. I have fought a good fight. I did not get discouraged by God's grace.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the word of God that encourages us, that lifts us up, that picks up the weakest person, the most discouraged person, and makes them a conqueror. And I pray that every

brother and sister here who has listened to the word in these days will have faith that in Christ he or she can be a conqueror and can fulfill your perfect plan for their life. Lord, help us to trust you.

The devil's a liar. He's always been a liar. Jesus Christ is victor.

Your word is truth. We believe it. And we believe that for the weakest and the most desperate person here, you will fulfill your will, lift them up and encourage them, and make them walk in triumph all their days.

We ask you in Jesus' name.

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