

God's Plans For Your Life Are The Very Best

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and seeking His plans for our lives. It highlights the need to trust in God's goodness and welfare for us, to seek Him with all our hearts, and to learn gentleness and humility from Jesus. The speaker encourages living a life that glorifies God by finishing the work He has given us to do, whether in full-time ministry or in a secular job. The focus is on seeking God's will, being a witness for Christ, and raising the next generation to carry on the truth.

Duration: 1:07:56

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 11:29, Psalms 139:16, John 17:4, 2 Timothy 2:2

Topics: "Surrender to God's Will", "Trust and Witness for Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and seeking His plans for our lives. It highlights the need to trust in God's goodness and welfare for us, to seek Him with all our hearts, and to learn gentleness and humility from Jesus. The speaker encourages living a life that glorifies God by finishing the work He has given us to do, whether in full-time ministry or in a secular job. The focus is on seeking God's will, being a witness for Christ, and raising the next generation to carry on the truth.

Transcript

I want to turn to Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 11. This is a verse which the Lord spoke to Judah, the southern kingdom, through Jeremiah, just before they went into captivity in Babylon. See, they were going to spend 70 years under a heathen king, and it was going to be a very difficult time for some of them.

They were not in their homeland, they could not worship as they liked, like many of us in different lands where the country is not in favor of us or our faith. But the promise the Lord gave to them was, I have plans for you, and those plans are for your good, for your welfare, and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope. So he says, believing that, if you will call upon me and pray to me, I will listen to you.

But you will find me only when you search for me with all your heart. These are verses that have often come to my own mind. See, we always, every one of us, would seek the best for ourselves.

The reason all you people are working where you are, in the Gulf, is because you sought something good for yourself and for your children. Is there anything wrong in that? Absolutely nothing. Even animals seek what is good for themselves.

And it's good for us to seek not only what is good, but the best for ourselves. The problem very often is that we don't know what is the best for ourselves. In the world, if you talk about people seek the best for yourself, they only think in terms of comfort, money, prosperity, health.

All that is okay, and God is not against any of those things. But we will all find one day when Christ comes back and we look back over our lives. A day is going to come when Jesus returns, when we will look back over our entire lives, not necessarily from the day we were born, but from the day we were born again.

All the part before that, we didn't know God, we were away from God, and forget about it, it's blotted out. But from the day we were born again, remember this, my dear brothers and sisters, you and I are going to look back on our life and think of the choices we made at different points in our life. Not the general choices like whom we are going to marry or where we're going to live or what job we're going to take.

Those are all things which even the worldly people are interested in, but more than that, the choices we made at different stages in our life, which determined many aspects of our life, and I think of that myself, I think of it often. I say, Lord, in that day, I don't want to have any regret as I review my life over any choice that I made. If I made it purely in terms of, only in terms of some earthly benefit, and there's nothing wrong in that, to seek earthly good and benefit is okay, but if I made a choice for some earthly gain that involved giving up some spiritual value, I'm going to regret it.

And it's going to be a regret that I personally think I won't be able to get over, because there's no way of rectifying it at that point. So, you know how our children are. As our children grow up, the fundamental problem with all children is that they think they know better than their parents.

That's why they don't obey. If they believe that the parents know much better than me, they'd obey 100% every single thing you say. The reason for all disobedience with our children is because they think they know better, and even as they grow up and they come into their teenage years, they think they know to make the right choices, and we who are much older and wiser and know much more than them, we know that they're making a wrong choice.

Think of the number of parents who have seen their children marry the wrong type of person just because some good-looking girl or some rich man, they go for that. We know that if they don't have a spiritual foundation for their marriage, they're going to mess up their life. You see that, but they don't see it.

How many cases have we come across like that? I've seen people in CFC Bangalore who heard wonderful truths as young people, and then they finally go and get married to the wrong person. I can see crystal clear what's going to happen in the future, but they don't see it. And then think, supposing we had absolute confidence, if our children had total confidence that my dad knows much better than me what is good for me, if they were convinced about it, they would listen to their dad in everything, but they're not.

Particularly, they come to their teenage years, they think they know better, but you can't blame them, because we ourselves very often think we know better than God. That's why we don't take His commands absolutely seriously. One of the passages of Scripture in the whole Bible, I think I've preached more on the Sermon on the Mount and the verses there than perhaps any other passage of the whole Bible, those three chapters, Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Why is that? Because they were spoken by the wisest man who walked on this earth.

I mean, you all agree that Jesus was the wisest person who walked on the earth. And the wisest person who walked on the earth said right from the beginning of that Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, this is the man who's really blessed, who has these qualities. And I say, Lord, I want that.

I'm not as wise as you, and if that is what you think is the most blessed life a man can live on this earth, I want it. I want it. And in that section in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, there's not a single verse about being in good health.

Thank God for good health. I'm very thankful that I've had 82 years of good health, so I don't despise health. But sometimes people don't have good health for some time.

But that's not the main thing in life. The main thing in life is not even making a lot of money, even though people in the world think that is the main thing. But what we see in those chapters is that God places us on earth and allows us to face all types of circumstances so that we can acquire a character that will be with us for eternity.

I've often thought, how is it to reconcile two truths that we think of in relation to eternity? I believe if you're a child of God, you'll think a lot about eternity. I think a lot about eternity. If you're not a child of God, the worldly people, they don't think about eternity at all.

They think only about this life. The closer you come to God, the more you will think about eternity, and that you choose things that have value for eternity, value forever and ever, things that will affect your life for eternity. And I read verses in scripture like, that your reward may be great in that final day, and be faithful, and I'll give you a crown of life, or promises like that.

And many, many promises, you know, that the Lord says, have you given up something for me on this earth? I'll give you a hundred times more, and your reward will be great in eternity. There are many verses like that. You know them yourself in the New Testament.

Jesus himself said. So when I think of all those verses, I ask myself, are we all going to be the same in eternity? No matter how we live on this earth? Just because we accepted Christ and our sins are forgiven? And that's the bare minimum. So the picture I have in my mind is like children in a school.

Supposing there's a very good school, the best school in the town, in the city. And there's a child that managed to get admission. It's not easy to get admission into a good school.

But this child managed to get admission into the best school. And we have a number of children who can all glory in the fact that we go to the best school in town. Great.

But then, when you see that one child is in the best school in town, but has been sitting in the kindergarten for 10 years. And he's 20 years old and still in first standard. What's his glorying that he's in the best school? And somebody else has made so much progress in those 20 years that he's working on his PhD.

There is a difference. I believe it's going to be like that in eternity. Yeah, we're going to be in heaven.

And some people think being in heaven is enough. If you're a selfish, self-centered person, as all human beings are, then we'll say, if I'm in heaven, that's enough. That is the most self-centered attitude you can have as a Christian.

That's all right for a baby Christian in the garden still. But I remember when I saw how much Jesus loved me, when I saw that very early in my Christian life, to suffer on the cross for me, and to die for me. That simple elementary truth, which we teach our children, that Jesus suffered and died because we were evil, to deliver us, forgive us our past life, and deliver us from evil.

And when I meditated on that, I said, Lord, how can I just think of going to heaven? Is that all when I go to heaven? That I occasionally come to you and say, thank you. Jesus spoke in pictures and parables. And one of the parables that Jesus spoke personally to me was the way I pictured my own life was like this, when I think of how the Lord saved me.

Very early, I mean, I was converted 62 years ago. And sometime then, way back then, 62 years ago, one of the pictures the Lord gave me was of me trying to cross a road, a very busy road. And I did not see a huge truck coming down.

It was going to run me over. And somebody came and pushed me out of the way just in time. And my life was saved.

But that poor man got run over by the truck, and his legs were crushed, completely crushed in such a way that they could not be joined together. And he's in hospital. And I go to see him in the hospital with his legs all amputated, cut off.

He has no legs. But he's lying there. He's alive.

What will I tell him? This is the picture the Lord gave me. It was a parable concerning my own life. What will I tell him? Of course, I'll say, thank you so much, dear brother.

I'm so thankful you saved my life. Here I am healthy and walking around, and you are lame, amputated. Is that all? Will I say thank you and go away? Or will I say, okay, I'll come and see you once in a while? Is that all? I thought I would say a lot more than that.

I would say to him, say if he was a believer, I'd say, brother, I can never repay you for what you did for me. I would have been dead today. But you have lost your legs for the rest of your life just to save me.

I don't want to just say a thank you and go away. I say, I promise you right now, I would tell him at his bedside in the hospital, any time in your life, for the rest of your life, even if you live another 50 years, if you ever have a need in your life, any type of need, financial need, a need to go somewhere and get something, a need to do something, a need to go to the market, you need to go to a government office to get some permit or anything, call on me. Give me a phone call.

And even if I'm doing the most important thing, I will drop it immediately and do that for you. I give you my word. That's what I would tell him.

That's the picture I had in relation to Jesus. It's not, he didn't just get his legs cut off. He gave his life.

He pushed me out of the way. I was the one going to hell, much worse than being run over by a truck. And he went to hell for me.

I don't know whether you realize that when it was darkness on the earth for three hours, you know, Jesus hung on the cross for six hours. The first three hours, he did not go to hell. He had a lot of things to do on earth, like he had to take care of his mother.

Imagine hanging on the cross. He had a commitment to take care of his widowed mother, ensure that John would take care of him. More important than that, he had to pray that all these people who killed him would be forgiven.

Imagine being so eager while you're dying. Oh, Father, these people will be punished. Please forgive them.

Before I die, let me forgive them. What a passion to forgive people before he dies. I say, Lord, make me like that.

And also, you know why he didn't take, if you read on the cross, they offered him some type of vinegar, make with myrrh or something, which is like an anesthetic. You know, it is a mercy they showed to people who are being crucified so that they could take this anesthetic type of thing, drink a little bit of it, and be relieved of the awful pain of being crucified. And Jesus refused it.

He said no. You know why? Because he did not want to be anesthetized on the cross and be sleepy. Because he had to forgive one sinner on the cross and take him to heaven.

So he listened to the Father so much. The Father said, don't take that. Don't drink it.

And so when they offered that anesthetic to relieve his pain, and he was a human being, and you know how much we would be very happy to have pain relieved. It's like think if you're going through an operation and you're very happy that you're anesthetized because otherwise the pain will be awful, and the pain on the cross is worse than any operation. And the Father said, don't drink it.

And he didn't drink it because he had to forgive all those who killed him. He had to take care of his mother. And there was a thief who was going to hell next to him.

He had to make sure that guy was in heaven. So Jesus was alert to little things like that. And then when he had finished all that in those three hours, then at the end, we offered that to him a second time.

Then he took it. You read the Bible carefully, you'll see why did he take it the second time? Why didn't he take that anesthetic the first time? Because he wanted to do something for others, hanging on the cross. That's how his entire life was lived like that.

You know, we glibly say, Lord, make me like you. Make me like Jesus. I want to be like Jesus.

You know what it means to be like Jesus? It's like that. That you deny your own comfort and your ease in order to live for others so that they might come into God's kingdom. That is the true disciple of Jesus.

And I'm thankful that I was gripped by that when I was 21 years old and I took my baptism at that age. And I'm very thankful when I look back over the last 60 years that I understood some of those values at a very young age and that I didn't waste my life. I'm really thankful.

But it was these pictures. And very often I, you know, in a lot of my sermons, you've probably heard me use illustrations. Those are illustrations that helped me in my own life.

I see Jesus spoke in parables in the Bible, and he speaks to me also even now in parables and pictures, just like the one I used. And then the last three hours on the cross, that was hell. The first three hours he did not experience hell.

The first three hours he was doing all these other things I told you. Then came the time when he had to take the punishment for our sin, for my sin. I make it personal.

I look at the cross, and I don't say he died for the sins of the world. I say he died for my sins, all the terrible, evil things I did from my earliest memory. And even after I'm born again, the stupid, foolish things I did, and the harsh way I spoke to people, or the unforgiving attitude I had towards someone for some time, and all types of things, the demands I made on people, the demands we can make on our wife or husband, and so many things, I say, Lord, you died for all that.

And the punishment for that is hell. We need to meditate more on the cross. Many people think only that Jesus died on the cross.

The only thing of that physical death, you know, the pain and agony and all that. I mean, I've seen movies of Jesus, and many movies where Jesus is crucified. And I remember in my younger days, every time I saw it, I would really cry.

I said, oh, what suffering he went through. And I see the hammer nailing the hands, the nail into the hands. But after that movie of Jesus is over, the next day my life was the same.

It didn't change my life. But at that particular moment, I was very moved. And I think that's how it is with many of you who see movies of Jesus Christ being crucified.

But there was a time in my life when I realized that it was not those nails. Those nails and all were nothing. What he experienced was hell.

To be forsaken by God. That's why he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? As I've often said, 33 and a half years on earth, Jesus always looked up and called his God Father. Father, Father.

He never used any other word. Because there's such an intimate relationship. Father, even on the cross, Father, forgive them.

For they don't know what they're doing. The first three hours, it was Father. Father, forgive them.

But then darkness came. And he was forsaken. Then began the punishment for my sin.

You know the punishment for sin is hell, not physical death. If Jesus only physically died, he did not take the punishment for my sin. That's what we tell children, Jesus died for our sins.

But when you become mature, you realize the real truth is Jesus went to hell for my sins. Because the punishment for my sin is not physical death. Let me repeat what I've said many, many times.

Think of this. If physical death, when Jesus died, he physically died on the cross. If that is the punishment for sin, I can take it myself.

Why does Jesus have to die? Let me die, Lord. I take the punishment for my sin and I go to heaven. And every man who dies will go to heaven because he's taken the punishment for sin.

That is the clearest proof that physical death is not the punishment for sin. And if Jesus only physically died, he did not die for my sin. The punishment for our sin is what we preach to others.

It is going to hell for eternity. Not for three hours. For eternity, going to hell is the punishment for sin.

So if Jesus went to hell only for three hours, he's not died for my sin. Because the punishment for sin is not going to three hours in hell. I mean, anybody would be happy to go to live in sin on the earth, go to hell for three hours, and then go to heaven.

Punishment for sin is not going to hell for three hours. The punishment for sin is eternity in hell. And that's something of a mystery.

The reason why Jesus in three hours could experience eternity was because he was God. God is the only eternal person. We are all finite, limited people.

Angels are finite, not infinite, not eternal. There's only one person in the universe that's eternal, that's Almighty God. And if God were not three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it would have been impossible for him to die for our sins.

There had to be more than one person in God. Because one had to be the judge and the other had to come down and take our punishment. To me, that is the clearest proof that there is more than one person in God.

And secondly, all these Jehovah's Witnesses who say that Jesus was a man, and many others who, you know, people say he was a great prophet. I say he was not a great prophet, he was Almighty God. If he was a great prophet, he was a man.

And no man can die for my sins because if he hung on the cross for three hours, that is not the punishment for sin. The punishment for sin is eternity. So, it's like, you know, I can explain it in multiplication.

One life multiplied by eternity, that's punishment for sin. But eternity, eternal God multiplied by even one second, that's an infinite God. If he spent one second in hell, it would be eternity.

Like, infinite into one is equal to eternity. Like one into eternity is equal to eternity. It's mathematically correct.

So, what Jesus experienced is very difficult to understand, but I've tried to understand it. What is eternity in hell like? We've got a mind and we can think about it. Jesus used pictures of fire and worms and a man crying out as soon as he went there, give me a drop of water.

And all that for eternity like that, ever and ever and ever and ever with no hope of rescue. That's what Jesus experienced, actually. And when I realized that, that's what brings gratitude.

Anyway, that's what brought gratitude in my heart at that time. It's like I told you that illustration of a man whose leg was cut off. And I saw Jesus suffered eternity.

And I said, Lord, when I think of this, I said this to the Lord more than 60 years ago. Lord, you can ask anything of me at any time. Like I would tell that man whose legs were broken.

Anytime in your life, call me. I'll come and help you. Because I cannot forget that you lost your legs for me.

And I said that to the Lord. I said, Lord, I cannot forget that you went to hell for eternity just for me. So anytime in my life, even if I'm doing the most important thing, you tell me to drop that.

I'll do what you ask me to do. Something that gives me pleasure. And the Lord said, no, I don't want you to do it.

Give it up. I'll give it up. I want to ask all of you dear brothers and sisters.

We all say we love Jesus and so thankfully died for our sins. But is this the type of relationship you have with Christ? If so, not only your life, you'll have a very satisfying Christian life. See, so many people, so many Christians, you ask them.

Are you born again? Yes. Are you going to heaven? Yes. Are you satisfied with your Christian life? They say no.

And the reason is they have held back something from God. And the best way I can illustrate this, illustrate it is a woman who's married to you, but she's had many lovers before you. And every now and then she's thinking of one of them.

Whatever marriage do you think you'll have? If your wife had a number of lovers before she married you. And even though she's physically not with any of them, her mind is sometimes going to one of them. And say what a good man that man was.

Those thoughts coming, coming. She'll never have a satisfying marriage with you. And the Bible says we are the bride of Christ.

And there are many, many attractions in the world for us. We can say they are like our lovers, like this woman who had lovers before she got married. We can say we had lovers before we got married to Christ.

And even after you're married to Christ, those lovers come back to our mind. We dream about them. We think about them.

And that's what robs us of that intimate relationship with Christ. Think of a woman who never had a lover but you. Your husband, you're the only one she ever loved.

And throughout her married life, you're the only one in her mind. She's devoted to you. What a happy marriage it is.

That's how it must be with us in Christ. When nothing, no comfort, no money, nothing can make it more attractive for me. Nothing on earth can become more attractive.

My dear brothers and sisters, that is the life I wish for you. Because I've experienced a taste of it and I know it's a taste of heaven. I know how wonderful heaven is going to be because I've got a foretaste of it here.

To me, it's not just going for meetings once a week or twice a week. It's not even just giving up some bad habits. All that is good.

We preach so much about give up this sin, give up that sin, be upright and all that. Love those who hate you and forgive everyone. All that is okay.

But the ultimate purpose is intimate fellowship with God. Have you come into that? And it's here on earth that we can prove it. To go to heaven and say, Lord, I love you more than anything else.

And there's no one like you for me. That's very easy to say that in heaven. It's like joining a political party after they came to power.

Then people can be ministers and cabinet ministers and all that. But before they came to power, they didn't want to join that party. It's like that.

A lot of people say, well, when you go to heaven, we'll rejoice and all that. Now is the time when our loyalty is being proved. I often think of why God allowed the history of Christians to be so different from when he blessed people in the Old Testament.

You read the way God blessed people in the Old Testament. It was always by freeing them from suffering. The Lord told you, read Deuteronomy 28.

The gospel of the Old Testament is in Deuteronomy 28. You know what it is? I will bless you with an amazing amount of money, wealth. I'll bless you with an amazing amount of health.

You will not be sick. You read Deuteronomy 28 sometimes. Health and wealth.

That is the gospel of the Old Testament. And it's clearly taught in Deuteronomy 28. And when people preach today a health, wealth gospel, I say, yeah, that's an Old Testament gospel.

It's Deuteronomy 28. But I say, you're 2,000 years behind the times. It's like living in the Stone Age.

It's like living in the days when there were no cars and no airplanes and nothing like that. You don't want to go back to those days. No electricity.

But that's what people are doing when they talk about the health, wealth gospel. That's Old Testament. Deuteronomy 28.

In the New Testament, it is not health and wealth. It is spiritual health and spiritual wealth. And that's why as soon as people became Christians, right from almost the very first day, for the first 300 years of Christianity, they were persecuted.

They could not be in one place. They had to lose their job. They had to run and hide in the caves.

And that never happened to Israel. When Israel had to run for their lives, it was when they were disobedient. You read in the Old Testament.

Israel would flee before their enemies when they were disobedient. And the Lord would say to the prophets, you'll be obedient and then your enemies will all be under your feet. When you're disobedient, your enemies will chase you.

That's what you read. Ten of you will run away from one enemy. But in the New Testament, it's so different.

From day one, God allowed them to be persecuted. His greatest apostles were all killed. Their heads were cut off by heathen emperors.

Is this Christianity? The Lord was showing thereby, I have a people on earth. Who will show by their life, that eternity is more important than this earth. That the future in eternity is far more important than what I have on this earth.

Now we don't face persecution. You and I have faced zero persecution. Some folks from Hindu families.

If some of you are from Hindu families, yeah. Perhaps you have faced some persecution from your parents, maybe throwing you out or not giving you an inheritance. I had born again parents who gave me an inheritance, who gave me a good life.

And so I live very comfortably. But I appreciate those who come out of Hindu families. They have suffered some persecution.

Most of us are not. Almost 99% of us have come from Christian families and we have faced nothing. Why did God allow that? Why does God allow even today some of the finest Christians in China to be persecuted and killed? Many parts of the world, it's very difficult to be a Christian.

So I see that you have the values of eternity. We read in Jeremiah 29, I have plans for you. Like I told you, our children sometimes don't realize that my dad knows better than me.

I want to say that we also sometimes don't realize our heavenly father knows better than me. Would you be willing to go to the Lord and say, Lord, I want every single thing that you have planned in my life perfectly. If a young man says, Lord, I want to marry the girl you chose for me.

I don't care whether she's good looking or educated or not. I want the girl you chose for me who will really be spiritual and wholehearted that will make me a better Christian. That's what I said.

And I'm very thankful that I did. And in everything, Lord, I want to get a job where you want to make me a witness for you. I remember when I was in the Navy, there were some ships which were more comfortable and more exciting to be in, warships, and where we could have exciting maneuvers and things like that.

And the Lord sent me into a very boring ship. And I said, Lord, why didn't you send me here? And that ship never had war games and all because it was a survey ship. We used to go to these ports of India that had not been surveyed, where there were no human beings living, deserted areas to survey the sea on the coast there.

And so we had no – there was nothing to do by going ashore, and we'd be getting bored on the ship. And I had just become a Christian, just baptized. The result was I had so much of free time with nothing to do.

And that was just about one year after I was converted, way back in 1961. And the result was I had a lot of time to study the Bible. And that's where I started studying the Bible.

No other outlet. And then I saw why the Lord sent me into one of the most boring ships in the Navy that anybody would want to go to. Now when I look back, I say it was the best one whole year.

There was no outlet for me outside. I was alone in my room with the Bible. I didn't even have much contact with the other officers because they were all drinking and playing cards and all.

I had no interest in them. How God planned my life so perfectly. I look back and I say, Lord, I know you had a plan for my life, and that's why you put me on that ship.

Not what I chose, not what I thought would be most comfortable for me, but which you saw would prepare me best for my future, which you had for me, which is to serve him. So if you surrender yourself to the Lord like that, he may withhold certain things that you think you want to have, which other people in the world have, but he will prepare you for a ministry of usefulness to him. Why is it that so many of us, even after so many years of being a believer, I'm not criticizing, I want to ask you, why is it your knowledge of the Bible is so pathetically poor? Is it because you have no time? Haven't you studied hard for your profession, whatever profession you're in? You sit late at night perhaps and keep up to date if you're in the computer field, for example.

You have to constantly keep in touch because it's always developing. What you studied 10 years ago in college won't help you today. If you're in the computer field, you lose your job.

You have to keep up to date all the time. And even Christians, they have time for that. But for the most important thing, to know God.

Why is it that that is last priority? You ask yourself, my brother, sister, is your fellowship with God number one priority in your life? It should be. I often tell people the first four words in the Bible, the first four words, Genesis 1, verse 1, in the beginning, God. That's how your life must be.

That's how your day must be. Every day, I tell people, when you wake up in the morning, before you get out of bed, in the beginning, God. Think about God as soon as you wake up.

Discipline yourself. Talk to your father. Begin your day by saying, our father.

Jesus told us to pray and call him father. It's brought a great security into my life when I began to know God as a father. Theoretically, I knew God as a father.

That means I heard that God is my father as soon as I was born again. The assembly I went to said, now God is your father. He's not just God.

Jesus said, our father who art in heaven. But let me tell you honestly, I knew God as my father inwardly only about 16, 17 years after I was born again. Yeah, before that, I prayed our father, but I did not know him.

It's like some of these children. Most of you have your families with you in the Gulf. But there are some people who are not rich enough, who don't have a wealthy enough job to have their families in the Gulf.

You know that. They can't afford to bring their families to the Gulf. They have to be in the Gulf alone.

Their families are in Kerala or somewhere. They go once a year to see them. Think of a family like that.

Those children who see their father maybe one month in a year, you ask them, do you have a father? Yeah. They'll say yes. Do you see him? Yeah, once in a while I see him, once in a year.

We feel sorry for those children. I mean, you folks are so lucky. Your children see you every day.

But think of those children out in the, whose parents are too poor to bring their families to the Gulf. They see their father once in a year for a short time. But that is exactly how many Christians are.

They don't see their father regularly. Their father in heaven, I mean. Yeah, occasionally.

And that's why their life is so shallow and empty. That's why they don't take reading the Bible seriously. The Bible is a boring book for them.

Tell me honestly, my brother or sister, do you feel that you get something out of the Bible and you read it? Or do you read it as a ritual? Yeah, I have to read it. I must clear my conscience and read the Bible every day. Do you get something out of it? I'll tell you, I've been reading the Bible for 62 years.

And I get something out of it even now. Sometimes in a whole day, I read one verse. That's all.

I mean, in the early days, of course, I didn't know the Bible, so I read the old chapters. But nowadays, I know the Bible, so I read one verse and God speaks to me. This is a lot to meditate on.

The Bible says the man who's blessed is not the one who reads the Bible. It's the one who meditates on the Bible. You know Psalm 1, blessed is the man, not who reads the Bible.

Blessed is the man who meditates on your word day and night. That means even if he wakes up in the middle of the night, he's thinking of something that he read in the scriptures. Psalm 1 verse 2, in God's word, he meditates day and night.

Have you read that verse? Have you ever meditated on God's word at night when you're in bed? What do you think about when you're sometimes in bed, we have not yet slept, or sometimes in the middle of the night, we wake up and you're awake for a while. What do you think about that? The psalmist says his personal things about God's word that came to him during the day. Such a man is so blessed.

There's a tremendous promise here, and that's what blesses me. Whatever he does will prosper. This man who longs to hear his father speak to him intimately, he wants to have the father close to him, and he reads God's word.

Maybe he doesn't read it all. He doesn't have a Bible with him all the time, but he meditates on something he read or heard that is in his mind. Throughout the day, whenever he gets a few moments spare, whether in the middle of his work or driving a car or whatever it is, some word comes to his mind and he thinks about that.

He builds an intimate relationship with his father. He's a blessed man. It says here that whatever he does will prosper.

Whatever he touches, there will be a blessing in it. What a way to live. When I read that, I said, Lord, that's the life I want.

That's the life I want, that my life will be blessed every day, and that spiritually I'll prosper all the time. I will not be a poverty-stricken man financially. Poor person who's struggling, struggling financially, can't even make ends meet.

You guys are not like that. You have more than enough to meet your needs. Imagine if you're like that spiritually, that you're not struggling day by day to overcome sin, but abundance.

When you have no shortage of money, your life is so free on earth. Spiritually, it's like that. When you get God's riches, there's a freedom that comes in our life, which is the worldly equivalent, that that man doesn't have to struggle for money.

He's got plenty. The spiritual equivalent of that is what I'm talking about. Such an abundance that there's never a time when he's not blessed.

There's never a moment in his life where he's bored. Do you get bored with your Christian life? Do you feel your Christian life is sort of a ritual that you have to go to? Going to a meeting is a burden? No, to me, it's the opposite. It's the days when there's no meeting that I'm bored.

Going to a meeting is exciting. It's because it's the presence of the Lord. I feel that many of us do not have a very satisfying experience with our Heavenly Father and with Jesus Christ.

And let me tell you the reason. Because we don't believe that God's plan for us is the best. Everything that He says is the very best for me.

For example, when He says you must forgive everybody who hurt you, not 99% of them, every single person, completely forgive them, whatever they have done. Can you honestly say that that is the way you live every day? That there's not a single human being on earth against whom you have a grudge, no matter what evil they did to you or to your family or whatever you or your family suffered because of them. You have no grudge against anybody.

I can raise my hand and say it's true in my life. That's one reason my life is so happy. It's not that nobody's done me harm.

I've served the Lord now for 56 years, full time. And you can be sure that I'm more a target of the devil. The devil targets me more than many of you.

And he targets me through other people who trouble me in so many ways. But I don't have anything against them. I can easily say, Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. They haven't harmed me. Everything they did worked for my good.

I believe that, Romans 8, 28. So every day I can say, Lord, I don't have a single human being on earth whom I have not forgiven. Please live like that every day.

Your life will be blessed. And the other thing the Bible says is that we must always seek to humble ourselves. You remember how Jesus said how some people, when they go to a feast, they go to take the most important seat.

He said, don't do that. Take the last seat, he said. Luke chapter 14.

Don't look for the most important seat. Otherwise, somebody more important than you will come, and you'll be asked to get up from there and go. So he said, take the last seat.

And maybe the one running the feast will one day come and tell you to come up higher. These are little, little things. And I said, Lord, that's what I want to do.

I want to take the last seat everywhere. I don't want to be famous or great or any such thing on this earth. I don't even want to be famous in Christendom.

I want to take the last seat everywhere. That's why right from the beginning in all our CFC churches, I would never sit on the platform like all the other pastors, and even when I go for a conference, I don't sit on

the platform. I say, I will not do that.

I sit with all the congregation. I'm just an ordinary brother. And I remember in the early days, I used to go to Tamil Nadu, and I would sit on the floor with all the others in the congregation.

When they asked me to speak, I'd go up and speak and come back. I said, Lord, I do not want to be an important person on this earth. Do you want to be an important person? Do some of you who have a longing to become an elder in your church? What for? To help people and serve them or to become known as an important elder? There are various reasons why one can want to be an elder.

One is because you want to serve the needy people, and the other is because you want to be recognized as an important person. I hope it is to serve other people. If we believe that God's plan for our life is the best, and when he says, humble yourself, humble yourself, you never find words like that in the Old Testament.

Humble yourself is a New Testament commandment. Jesus said, learn from me, for I am humble and gentle in heart. Are you familiar with that verse? It's a very important verse.

Let me turn you to Matthew 11 and verse 29. Matthew 11 and verse 29. Learn from me, in the middle of that verse.

There are many things Christians seek to learn. How to preach. People spend three years in a Bible school to learn how to preach.

To learn Hebrew and Greek and a lot of other nonsense. But the one thing that Jesus told people to preach, to learn, they don't learn. Jesus never told us to learn the Bible from him.

Learn humility and gentleness from me. Spend your life learning humility before God, and gentleness in your dealing with your wife and your husband. We are not gentle when we deal with our wives and husbands.

I'm sorry to say that. Human beings are not gentle. We are pretty harsh in our speech and behavior.

Why is that after so many years we are still harsh? I'll tell you why. You have never taken Matthew 11, 29 seriously. We can sit and sing songs so beautifully and improve our singing.

I say that's all worthless if you don't learn humility and gentleness. Let me put you into the class from today and say, Lord, I want to learn these two things more than other things. You said learn gentleness and humility in heart from me.

And I want to do that from today onwards. Because what did you read in Jeremiah 29? I have plans for you, plans for your welfare, for your good. And if you pursue this, it says here in Matthew 11, 29, you will always find rest in your soul.

There'll be no anxiety. There'll be no tension. There'll be no fear.

Even if there's turmoil around you, you will be calm. You'll have a confidence in God as my father. That doesn't come to everybody.

It comes to those who are willing to learn gentleness and humility from Jesus. So when I look at Jesus' earthly life and I see his gentleness and his humility, I say, Lord, I want to be like that. These are the things we need to concentrate on, dear brothers and sisters.

It will change our personal life. It will change our family life. Let me say something further from Psalm 139.

Please turn with me there. Psalm 139. This is another wonderful psalm.

Because here it says that we're talking about God's plan for our life. That God had a plan for our life, it says here in Psalm 139, verse 16. Before we were born, fathers and mothers make plans for their children.

In India, sometimes you have to book a seat in a school many years before the school starts. Your child may go to school even when they're six years old. You have to book the seat five years earlier.

There are cases where you have to book a seat in a school as soon as your child is born. If you want to get a seat in that school six years later, you have to book it as soon as the child is born. And parents plan on that because otherwise they won't get admission in a good school.

God's got plans for our life. Before we were born, he planned the very best for us. Psalm 139, verse 16.

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance that is in my mother's womb, when I had not even taken proper shape as a human being. Heavenly Father, you saw me there. Unformed, not even looking like a human being, just a lump of flesh.

You saw me in my mother's womb. Meditate on that. Just think about that.

In your mother's womb, you were just a lump of flesh. And there, the Lord, the Father saw me. And he knew what I was going to be one day.

I would come out of my mother's womb as a human being. And he planned for me from that time. When it says in your book, and your book means in his mind, in God's mind, everything was written down.

Where I should be born, who my parents should be, where I should study, where I'll grow up, and one day I'll give my life to Christ, and how my life should be after that, what job I should take, whom I should marry. It's all planned. It's not necessary that plan will be fulfilled in your life.

That depends on whether you seek it. I think the vast majority of believers, God's plan is not fulfilled in their life. They somehow drift along somehow or the other on this earth.

Life is not meant to be like that. Our life is meant to be from the day we are born, everything planned right until the day we finish our earthly course. That's what it says in Psalm 139, 16.

All the days, not only the number of years I was supposed to live, it says here in verse 16, the number of days that were ordained for me to live on this earth were all planned even when my first day had not started. Before I was born, my entire life was planned. That's a loving father.

He does far more for us than we can do for our children. We read in Jeremiah 29, my plans for you are to do you good. I'm pretty foolish to think that I can make a better plan for my life than God can.

Can you honestly say that you're willing to surrender your whole life to God and say, Lord, whatever you say, I'll do. Whatever you say, I'll do it. I want to do your will in my life because that's the only worthwhile life that I can live.

Now, some people think that in many Christian circles, they think the great thing is to go into full-time work. No, God's will is not full-time work for everybody. As you look around among Christians, I think less than 1% of believers are called to be full-time Christian workers.

99%, God's plan for 99% of his children is to be in a secular job. That's why in CFC, we have encouraged people to be in a secular job. That's why all of our elders in all our 100 churches, we are a unique church.

We don't have any full-time workers who are supported by any church. Everybody takes care of their own expenses and supports themselves. We encourage people to be faithful in your job.

God has a plan for you. Make sure you fulfill that plan and make sure you don't pursue things which are not in God's will for your life. It's not that God speaks from heaven saying, go here, go there.

If we walk in humility, that's what I've discovered. I don't hear voices from heaven saying, go here, go there. But I've discovered that if I walk in humility and say, Lord, I'm dependent on you for everything, unconsciously, He will guide my life.

And I will not miss out His will for my life. And I wish that for every one of you, that the plan God ordained for your life will be fulfilled. You know, we often pray, Lord, I want my life to glorify you.

Well, there's only one way I can glorify God on earth. And that is what Jesus said in John 17, verse 4. I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. Even Jesus, God had a plan for him.

He couldn't do what he liked. And 90% of his life, he was not in full-time work. He was in a secular job as a carpenter right up to the age of 30.

But he finished the work God the Father gave him to do. And then he says, I have, Father, I have glorified you. How? I have glorified you by finishing the work you gave me to do.

My dear brothers and sisters, you're not in full-time work. God's called you to be a particular job and He's planned your life such that you are where you are. But wherever you are, I want to say to you that God has got a plan for you.

He has planned that you should contact certain people and lead certain people to a more godly life. Wherever you are in your secular job, be an example to others. He's planned for you that you should have some children whom you can bring up in a godly way because the next generation also, there needs to be witnesses for the Lord.

That's what's gripped my heart. It's not enough, Lord, that I live for you. What about after I'm gone? There must be another generation also that carries on the same truth.

And so I must raise up my children. Whether I have ten children or two children, I must raise up all of them to carry on the truth that God gave me. Otherwise, I'm a failure.

If I just live for myself, it's not enough to just give your children a good education and a lot of comforts. That's what a lot of Gulf parents do. And I'm sorry to say that a lot of children who've grown up in the Gulf

don't have a very good testimony.

They don't have a testimony of humility and seeking after God. I pray it won't be like that with your children. I pray that you will raise your children to convey in a better way the truth that gripped you in your life.

It's not enough that you are gripped. You have to convey that to your children. Otherwise, you have to say, Lord, I'm a failure as a father.

I live for myself. I didn't think of the next generation. I want to be a witness.

I'm not here just to serve the Lord and disappear. No. Paul said to Timothy, listen, I trained you to do something.

He wasn't married, but Timothy was like a son to him. He trained him for the next generation. And he told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, you must train other people as faithful people who will train others.

You read 2 Timothy 2. He was concerned about the fourth generation. God has a plan for us, and we must have a plan for our children, not just that they get a good education, which is okay. That's fine.

Give them the best education in the day. Get good jobs. But they'll be witnesses for Christ.

And be faithful in every little thing. God has a plan for our life, and that's the thing that we must seek to be fulfilled before we finish our earthly course so that we can say, Father, I've glorified you on earth by the work you gave me to do. And even if you don't understand the specific details of God's plan for my life, here are two things.

Learn gentleness and humility from me. The other things will fall into place. In every situation, say, Lord, how can I react to the situation with humility and gentleness? Two words.

I'm not telling you 10 things. Jesus said, learn two things from me. Matthew 11, 29.

Gentleness and humility. So whatever situation you face in life, in your home or in your work spot or anywhere as you look to the future, Lord, how can I react to the situation with gentleness and humility? You can look back over your life. You may find there were many situations, excuse me, where you would have done things differently if you had asked yourself, how should I react here in gentleness and humility? So we can't do anything about the past, but let's do something about the future.

In your home relationship, when there's a tension in the home due to something going wrong, in all of our homes, something can go wrong frequently. Husband and wife, what should you say? Lord, now there's a problem here. How shall I react to this problem with gentleness and humility? Please tell me.

I want to do that. Think how different our homes will be. Think what an atmosphere of heaven we can bring into our homes that our children grow up with, knowing that atmosphere.

May God bless you all. Thank you. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, there's so much we have to learn from you. We want our lives to be a lifelong expression of gratitude for your having given everything up for us. We want our lives to demonstrate that God's plan is the best plan anybody can have.

We want to fulfill that plan in our lives. Help us each one, Lord, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/gR3tfqYg_wU.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/gods-plans-for-your-life-are-the-very-best/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net