

Love's Plan for You

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

The plan of God's love is a tremendous principle. Billions of years before we were born, the Lord Jesus Christ knew each of us by name. There is no reason for us to suffer from self-pity, because He has considered each one of us. Before we came into this world, Jesus Christ knew everything about our weaknesses. He knew every problem we would have. He knew every sin we would commit.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit sat down in an eternal convention before the foundation of the world (see Acts 2:23; Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:4) and perfectly planned the provisions we would receive the moment we accepted Christ as our Savior. Everything we would need to live in Him was provided for us at the point of salvation (see 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

God planned our lives so that regardless of what we do as Christians, everything will work

together for good. There is not a thing we can do to defeat God's plan. We can challenge it at times, but we can never, ever defeat it.

God knows our end from the beginning. He chose us before the foundation of the world. God was able to plan things on the basis of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done. He deals with us according to the fact that what Jesus did is a finished work. This booklet will show that no matter what you have done, no matter how much you have failed, if you have accepted Christ you will never be defeated. God is love, and He has a plan for you.

Chapter One

LOOK TO JESUS AND BE HEALED

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d” (John 3:14-20).

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live” (Numbers 21:8).

In Numbers 21, the children of Israel murmured because they were saddened over their physical needs. Murmuring is one of the greatest problems in the church today. Christians come under God’s discipline, mentally and emotionally and physically, because of it.

The murmuring in Israel brought out the serpents, and they began to bite. According to Isaiah 14:29 and 59:5, the moment we start to murmur, cockatrice eggs—eggs of the devil, eggs of the snake—start to hatch. Emotional and mental problems are produced through the painful bites caused by these snakes. Moment by moment, the bites aim to kill individual capacities and to assassinate the character of God’s people.

To heal the children of Israel, God commanded Moses to make a serpent out of brass and place it on a pole. Whoever looked upon the brazen serpent was healed. The brazen serpent

was a type—a figure—that represented Jesus Christ, who became sin for us. He bore the curse of all sin for all men. Christ placed Himself in the position of the serpent because all of our sins were placed upon His body at Calvary.

The Brazen Serpent Lifted Up

The brazen serpent represented the condemned Christ. He was condemned because the Father had to look away from His Son when our sins were upon Him.

God told Moses to take the serpent and put it on a pole. Those who were bitten by the real serpents only had to look at the serpent on the pole and they were healed. All they had to do was stop focusing on the pain that had taken hold of their bodies and look toward the brazen serpent.

Some in Israel refused to look at the brazen serpent, and they remained in their pain. They kept in touch with the feelings and the lumps and the swelling going on in their bodies. They were so occupied with the swelling and the pain that they would not look at the pole.

There are those who come to church and yet remain occupied with their troubles, their failures, their problems, or even their pleasures.

They are so occupied with their trials, their suffering, and their own ways that they simply will not look.

When we are going through terrible times of sickness and affliction, the one thing we really need to do is look and get a hold of the body of Jesus Christ—the Church. Yet, some of us will withdraw because we choose to stay occupied with our own lives, our problems, and our afflictions.

Foolish Things

Some just would not look because they did not understand how a seemingly foolish, brazen serpent could ever save their lives.

“You are in terrible pain,” Moses said. “Just look at the pole. Your pain is excruciating, but just look at the brazen serpent and be healed.”

“I don’t understand how it works,” some complained that day. “I cannot look. My pain is so much more than I can bear. I will not look.”

Oh, how many perished that day, and simply because they refused to look for their healing. They were so occupied with the sickness of their bodies. In the same way, some people stay so occupied with feelings of condemnation and sin that they will not look to Jesus and be saved.

If you are not saved, would you stop and take a good look at Jesus? He is the One who died for your sins. Never mind your problem and your sickness; forsake your sin and your weakness. Take your mind off of your problems. Look unto Jesus and receive His salvation.

This is love's plan for you. One heartbeat from now, you could be in eternity. An accident could send you out of this world. If you refuse to receive Him, you will be lost to heaven's glory—lost to living in a perfect place under a perfect government with a perfected people serving their Master. You will be lost because you never took a look to be saved.

Chapter Two

UNDERSTAND THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF GOD'S LOVE

In the wilderness, many of God's people would not look at the brazen serpent simply because they were confused. With the snakebites, there was complaining and murmuring. They were so involved with the problems and the heartaches of people around them, they did not look.

People today do the same thing. They become so focused on the whining, crying, begging, and pleading of others that they do not look to Jesus. Moses told the children of Israel, "Look, and you will be healed. Your children will live. The swelling of the bites will go down. Just look!"

That is also the answer for today. People just need to look to Jesus. But because Jesus Christ's death is foolishness to them, they will not look and really, truly be saved.

This is love's plan: Look to Jesus Christ and be saved.

This plan is the reason we have a Bible college with a tremendous emphasis on missions. Even while you are reading this, some mother in India is throwing her baby into a fire to appease her god. In other distant and bleak cultures, crowds are dancing all night under the influence of demons. Thousands of the heathen are putting themselves through amazing rituals—eating the dung of cows and using that as a means of worship. All of these things are happening because people have never heard about the scope and depth of God's love; they have never been introduced to Jesus Christ.

We pray that God will continue to send out many missionaries. We pray that keen-minded people who love God will come and be trained in Bible college. As they study the Word, God will intensify their understanding of how God so loves all people, including those who do terrible things in the name of religion. As missionaries, they will be trained to understand the truth about the love and grace and forgiveness of God.

Not long ago, millions of frustrated and perplexed people in Eastern Europe were living

under the iron hand of Communism. Godless ideologies gripped their lives. But as people got alone with God and began to pray, God opened up many wonderful doors. Many Christians received a burden from the Lord, and they laid down their lives to serve God and bring the Gospel to people, both at home and in the uttermost parts of the world. My prayer is that we would continue to give and to pray and to watch as God blesses, secretly and quietly, in these places. Think of China. Think of the countries ruled by Islam! The Lord's plan of love must be communicated in these places.

Changed Lives Make a Difference

Let me tell you this story. An old farmer had a daughter who died suddenly after suffering terrible burns in a freak accident. This man and his wife attended a church but had never been saved.

This incident drove the farmer to Christ, and he began to have family devotions and readings around the Word of God. He became a quiet and loving Christian and a member of a good Bible-believing church.

A while later, this man and his wife were killed in an automobile accident. At the funeral,

several missionaries came forward and spoke of the hundreds of dollars this farmer had quietly given to support their works. The attendance at their funeral was so great that the ceremony had to be moved to a larger auditorium. The man owned only one suit of clothes, yet he gave sacrificially to support the work of God. What a testimony of what three and a half years of Christian living had done for this couple.

That man could have become very bitter over the death of his daughter. Instead, he came to Jesus and got a vision of the scope of God's love. "The world is going to hell," the farmer once said to his wife. "So many are really lost. We must help to reach them. With what little time we have left, we must do something to bring God's love to them."

Chapter Three

THE GREAT SCOPE OF GOD'S LOVE

Love's scope is to reach the world. Let's not be insensitive to the tremendous needs of the world. Our hearts must spend more time in prayer. We must trust God by faith to give and to send out missionaries. God wants us to send out our brightest and best so that we can have a greater worldwide vision of love's scope.

The one great thing about God's love is its unselfishness. Today we see so many trends in Christianity. Different people put forth different philosophies, principles, and ideas. New ways of thinking come flying across the theological circuit continually. People play the role of Pharisees, magnifying little differences and judging motives.

All of this is going on while Jesus Christ's love is longing to reach the world. Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it (John 3:17).

He did not come to criticize. He did not come to malign.

Certain philosophies have put people in strait jackets. They have no inner joy, no inner peace, no faith rest, and no liberty. Certain people can cause frustration and may put you into limited situations where you cannot be yourself in Christ. They bind people with their traditions, customs, and rituals. Unless you follow everything you are told, they will reject you.

Look for Ways to Save Any Situation

A Christian who is Spirit-filled is always looking for a way to save a situation. He watches, observes, and considers ways to build up, edify, and change difficult circumstances. He will always be ready to let Jesus Christ communicate love and life, and he will always avoid condemnation. He is always trying to save and heal and bring something good out of the situation (Genesis 50:20-24). Satan means things for evil, but God can turn those things around for good.

God will take things that are not good and bring something good out of them. Even if you have failed and fallen flat on your face, Jesus Christ loves you and He wants to redeem your situation. He wants to save your failed marriage.

He will do whatever it takes to deliver you, to give you an abundant life (John 10:10) and fullness of joy (John 15:9). He wants you to have perfect peace (John 14:27).

God does not want us to live in guilt complexes, insecurity, frustration, or fear, with its hundreds of different expressions. He wants us to be free. He wants us to be sound. He wants us to be Spirit-filled. He wants us to understand grace and mercy and love and forgiveness and faith. He wants us to understand that all we have to do is look to Him and be healed—no matter what we have done (Hebrews 12:2).

As believers, all we have to do is look to Him and be healed. Just go back and look to Him—at the Cross. That is where your sins were forgiven. That is where you were set free. That is where God took care of your old nature, once and for all time. That is where you can be made free to serve God (John 8:36).

The Cross is the place where He gives you a song in the night (Psalm 77). That is where you find patience (Romans 5:3). That is where you can have power (Acts 1:8). That is where you find true conviction that agrees with the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). That is where you can find calmness and joy that glorifies God (Isaiah 32:17;

Proverbs 15:13).

Look to Jesus and develop the kind of conversation and manner of living that honors the Kingdom of God and represents His grace to all of the angels looking on. Look to Him and grow up, and become a real follower of Christ. Bad situations will be healed, mended, and corrected if you will simply look to Him.

Never allow yourself to look at your affliction, your suffering, your disease, or your frustrations. Never look at your failure. Look to the One who took care of it, the One who paid for it, the One who has forgiven you and who wants to set you free forever.

It matters not if you have failed a thousand times. God never came to condemn you. He came that you might be saved and delivered from the very condemnation of the flesh. Jesus Christ did not come to earth to place misery upon your emotions or to torment your soul and harass your mind to subdue your will to Satan and this world system. God's changes will set you free.

Be Set Free by His Unselfish Love

God's love is unselfish. Jesus Christ did not seek something for Himself. He came to make

us free. He came to set our personalities free and to help us to live as God wants us to live, not as servants of sin, but as those who are free in holiness and purity and righteousness. We can be purified by faith (Acts 15:9).

Those who belong to God's true corporate body, wherever there is a local expression of it, do not condemn others. They do not live judgmentally. They do not point fingers. They build up (1 Peter 2:5). They edify (1 Corinthians 14:12-19). They are always trying to minister life (2 Corinthians 3:6). They allow the love of God to be shed abroad in their hearts (Romans 5:5). They have one single, eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:11). They are out to bless you, to help you, to build you up, to strengthen you, to edify you, to take you by the hand no matter the problem in your life. They look to help others in the power and the grace of the risen Christ no matter what condition they are experiencing.

That is the corporate body of life.

Overcome Feelings of Condemnation

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Romans 14:22).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

Jesus Christ did not come to condemn. God wants to bless you, to give you life, and to build your faith. He desires to give you courage and the assurance of His love. Most of all, He wants to give you His life and to manifest it through you as a channel of love, a channel of purity, a channel of mercy.

His life was lived in total unselfishness. As He went through the six illegal trials on His way to Calvary, He kept saying, “Not My will, but Thine.” On the Cross, Jesus cried, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” When those at Golgotha challenged Him, saying, “Save yourself and come down off the cross!” He would not do it. He would not preserve His reputation; He would not preserve His own right to be saved from death.

That is love’s plan. It is unselfish in its purpose to seek and to save and to set free whosoever will come to Him.

CONCLUSION

Given these truths, there is not a reason in the world for anyone to feel defeated. If you have not accepted Christ, then you are going down a dead end street. You are condemned already (John 3:18). You are lost and destined for a Christless eternity.

It is no mystery to me why our services are filled to capacity three times a week. People are hungry to be built up in life with eternal truth. They are hungry to be edified and strengthened by the Spirit and the Word of God. They are hungry to be a part of a soul-winning ministry. They desire to be in a corporate body where each member contributes to one another in the love of the Holy Spirit. People do want to hear the Scriptures and hear them taught with power in an anointing.

A ministry that does not reach out and operate according to prayer and love in the situations we face is not a ministry of the Lord Jesus

Christ. Those people are interested in things that are not vital to the purpose of Christ. They are not motivated in love's plan for the lost.

In the power of God, families that come together at the Cross to receive Christ will be transformed. People who suffer with unhealthy emotions simply need to look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, and be healed. Teenagers, seniors, and middle-agers—everyone needs nothing more than to look to the Cross, to see Jesus and be healed.

That is love's plan. That is love's purpose.

In these times, let us draw near to Jesus Christ and live, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as members in particular of His corporate body, in the plan and the purpose of love.