

## “God Has A Plan For Us!”

Lent 5

1) Tomorrow

Isaiah 43:16-21

2) Today

April 7, 2019

May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance. 2 Thessalonians 3:5

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have an exercise for you this morning. Imagine that I’ve given you two pieces of paper and asked you to write down on one piece all of the things that you don’t like, that are wrong with the world, and that make you feel miserable. On the other sheet of paper, write down everything that is good, everything that brings you joy and everything that is right with the world.

When thoughts turn negative, it’s very easy for us to long for the past and remember the good old days? Back to the times of what life was like as a kid...or every time Facebook brings up a memory from a few years ago. Or every time you find yourself in a good job, good relationship, good place in your life and it turns sour, it’s easy to think back and say – “Do you remember when?”

It’s very easy to fall into the sin and trap of discontentment. It’s the sin we commit whenever we complain, and at times it leads us to complain that God isn’t making life fair – b/c it’s not the easy going, fun life I think it should be.

700 years before Jesus was born people were susceptible to that same sin. So God sent his prophet Isaiah with a special message for them to lead them to repentance and to give them hope. It is a message for us too. It’s a message that says, “God Has a Plan For Us – Tomorrow; and Today.

### Tomorrow

Put yourselves in the Israelites shoes. They had a lot of history to fall back on –

- King David – who brought them victory
- King Solomon – and his wisdom
- Deliverance from Egypt
  - The 10 plagues
  - Moses leading God’s people through the Red Sea on dry land
- These were the “good old days” for God’s people, and definitely tempting for them to look back on

<sup>16</sup>This is what the LORD says—  
    he who made a way through the sea,  
    a path through the mighty waters,  
<sup>17</sup>who drew out the chariots and horses,  
    the army and reinforcements together,  
    and they lay there, never to rise again,  
    extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:  
<sup>18</sup>“Forget the former things;  
    do not dwell on the past.  
<sup>19</sup>See, I am doing a new thing!

And what was this new thing that God was doing?  
<sup>19</sup>...I am making a way in the desert  
    and streams in the wasteland.  
<sup>20</sup>The wild animals honor me,  
    the jackals and the owls,  
    because I provide water in the desert  
    and streams in the wasteland,  
    to give drink to my people, my chosen,  
<sup>21</sup>the people I formed for myself  
    that they may proclaim my praise.

God did not want his people to dwell on the past – but to look forward to the plans he had for his people. He wanted them to look forward the highway back to Israel that he would build for them – leading them out of exile – home.

We look back on the past all the time. Every time we bring up what life was like when we were kids. Every time Facebook memories assists us with a picture or memory from 5, 7, 10 years ago – to when our kids were even cuter than they are today; or to a specific memory in a relationship of yours.

Think about God’s promises and plans he has for us. Jeremiah 29:11 tells us – **“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”** These aren’t empty words. God has a plan for each of us. God’s way of working it out in our life – and the way he’s done it in the past. He’s done the same thing for every single person on the face of the earth. God’s plan

for mankind when it fell into sin – came to completion when he sent his one and only son Jesus to take away the sins of the world. Jesus took away every sin of ours – every worry, discontentment, every time we’re miserable with life.

God’s promises –

- Surely I am with you always to the end of the age. (Matthew 28)
- He will work out all things for our good. (Rom 8)
- Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. (Hebrews 13)

God’s plans and blessings are evident throughout our lives. He gave us parents or someone in our lives that shared God’s word with us, that brought us to be baptized. He offered us the good news and encouragement through a friend.

Ultimately, we see God’s great plan for us beyond this life – in the plan he has for us in the life to come. In Revelation, we’re told how heaven is a place where there will be no more weeping or mourning or crying or pain. A place where we will praise him day and night. The former things will be gone – passed away.

### Today

This thought comes from the last section where our God says –

<sup>20</sup> **...because I provide water in the desert  
and streams in the wasteland,  
to give drink to my people, my chosen,  
<sup>21</sup>the people I formed for myself  
that they may proclaim my praise.**

Do you remember that list I asked you about a few minutes ago? It’s easy for us to go back to the “grumble and complain” list. Or better, go back to the list where declaring God’s praises on the good things in life. At the top of the list is or should be – the forgiveness of all our sins. We have no need for fear, anxiety or worry – b/c God has forgiven our every sin. God did this very good thing when he sent Jesus to take our place.

Now, think of the endless opportunities we have to proclaim his praises. It happens at home with our families, at work, everything that we do and everything that we put our mind to. We

are God's chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation – a people belonging to God – with the distinct purpose and privilege of declaring God's praises.

It'd be very easy to focus on one or the other – tomorrow or today. But let's remember that it's not what you or I make of it – it's about what God has already done for our tomorrow – securing us heaven – and for today – giving us full and free forgiveness – b/c of what he has made of it in Christ. It's all the more reason that we can declare God's praises – for the forgiveness of sins, new life and salvation. In all the plans we make, we know God will bless them in Christ. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

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19See, I am doing a new thing!  
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I am making a way in the desert  
and streams in the wasteland.  
20The wild animals honor me,  
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