

Subject: Sermon 11/15/16 - **Pray, Plan, & Persevere**  
By Robert Moxley

Premeditated acts of evil are powerful tools of Satan.  
These weapons of evil are meant to create doubt, unleash rage, & fan fear into hysteria.

It is a harsh reminder of Satan's power in this world, making it hard to believe that he is not winning the battle here on Earth.

Job 5:12 - "[God] thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success."

No matter how desperate things get, Satan can never claim victory.  
His schemes are destined to fail.

Blatant evil can cause us to doubt the ultimate power of God & the ultimate victory that lies ahead.

Proverbs 21:30. - "There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord."

In times of despair we are reminded that it is vital to build on God's foundation.  
Our greatest efforts are in vain if exerted from our own will, apart from God's direction.

Proverbs 16:3-4

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.  
The Lord works out everything to its proper end—even the wicked for a day of disaster."

How devastating is it to invest your heart in something only to see it slip away, or to have it ripped from your grasp?

On the other hand, is there anything more amazing than watching God work out a situation in such a way that there is no doubt who authored the miracle?

Proverbs 16:9 - "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps."

Proverbs 19:21. - "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

God reminds us that he plotted the journey of our lives before we took our first breath.

Our energy is best spent learning to trust & follow him, versus resisting & scheming ways to have our own way.

God urges us to embrace the struggle,  
Even we feel stuck in life, enslaved in frustrating & uncomfortable situations.

Though today is sometimes filled with sorrow, God's reassures us that his plan ends in celebration.

This is reflected in God's message to his people shortly after they were exiled in Babylon:

Jeremiah 29:4-14

"This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the Lord. This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For 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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

This scripture is often shared when we are overwhelmed to help remind us that God has better things in store for us.

However, it is can be easy to overlook the fact that this message was delivered to people who had been recently stolen from their homeland, taken captive by a vicious enemy, and set to spend the next 70 years in exile!

How would you receive this message as a captive recently defeated & torn from your home?

Would you resist God's instruction to embrace life in this strange place?

To marry, raise families, & work to build up the land where you are captive?

Could you accept a promise of redemption that would not be in effect for another 70 years?

Believe it or not, this is the same battle of faith & perseverance that we face in our lives today.

We may battle illness, pain, and suffering for years yet God has promised a new body to those who endure.

We will carry our sinful natures with us every step we take on this earth, yet God promises freedom to all who obey.

How do we hold onto God's promises, when we are faced with our own frailty each & everyday?

What gives you the faith to surrender to God's will when it goes against every fiber of your being?

In the end, we face the same dilemma as the Babylonian captives...

'Trust that God's plan for you is better than anything you could provide for yourself, or,  
Take the gamble that you can create a better ending than the author of life.'

If you believe that God loved you before you ever knew to look for him,  
then you must accept that he knows the path that will lead you to his glory.

Ephesians 1:3-14

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."

In this life as must Pray, Plan, & Persevere if we are to enter into God's glory.

Pray to surrender to God's will, as it is revealed to us each day.

Make plans by placing your dreams & desires in the hands of our knowing God.

And Persevere through the fog of fear, struggle, & doubt that Satan litters in our path.