

Life Isn't Perfect, BUT...

- I. God has the perfect plan for us.
- II. God is carrying out His perfect plan for us.
- III. We can be sure God will fulfill His plan for us.

Dear Christian friends,

What did you think of that OT reading? I doubt if anyone has **Job 7** bookmarked or **hi-lighted** in their Bible. ***"I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of agony. My flesh is clothed with maggots and caked with dirt. My skin scabs over and then oozes again. My eyes will never again see good fortune."***

ADD to that what we saw in the gospel reading. **Peter's mother-in-law** sick in bed with a fever. Later that evening **with the Sabbath** over a huge crowd gathered outside Peter's house. IN that crowd were ***"many people who were sick with various diseases and demon-possessed."***

Today's readings are BLUNT REMINDERS that we are sinners living in a **sin-cursed – sin-corrupted** – world. Now we have ***"our present sufferings"*** as Paul put it a few verses before these. **God's Word** won't let us hide from the REAL WORLD we live in!

People may not have **Job 7** bookmarked in their Bibles but you will certainly want to SOMEHOW MARK **Romans 8** in your Bible. The whole chapter is SO GREAT – so **comforting**. As we see in these verses – LIFE ISN'T PERFECT, BUT... 1)God has a **perfect plan** for us, 2)God is carrying out His perfect plan for us and 3)we can be sure God **will fulfill** His plan for us.

I. God has the perfect plan for us.

NOTICE that I didn't say God has A **perfect plan** for us. No, God has THE **perfect plan** – ONE very specific – **definite** plan for us. There are no contingency plans – no BACK-UP plans in case this plan somehow or other gets messed up.

We call God's **perfect plan** for us the DOCTRINE OF ELECTION or PREDESTINATION. Now many find the doctrine of election **confusing** – even SCARY. Their problem is that they DON'T STICK with just what God reveals about our eternal election. Election becomes confusing when we TRY TO ANSWER and **explain** things God doesn't reveal to us. God didn't reveal our **eternal election** to CONFUSE us but to COMFORT us – and it is so very comforting WHEN WE STICK to **what God tells** us in His Word.

God's **perfect plan** for us takes us BACK INTO eternity – before God had even created this world. ***"We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose, because those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son."*** Paul put it this way in Ephesians 1, ***"(God) chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ. He did this in accordance with the good purpose of His will, and for the praise of His glorious grace."***

BACK BEFORE there was time or **this world** God ***"foreknew"*** and ***"chose"*** – ELECTED – us ***"according to His purpose."*** God ***"predestined"*** us – God PRE-DETERMINED our **destiny** even before we were ever born. Back when ALL THERE WAS was God – God determined that "THIS IS HOW" our lives would work out. ***"His purpose"?*** That we ***"be conformed to the image of His Son."*** WHAT GRACE! God's **perfect plan** for us is that WE BE His beloved children in Jesus – that we spend all eternity BASKING in His **love – presence – blessings**.

God's **perfect plan** for us puts our focus SQUARELY on God's grace and Jesus' work as our Savior. God "**chose**" us NOT BECAUSE we're such great people – or we're **at least not as bad** as others. We too should be going to hell **because of the way** we've treated God. **Grace** is totally UNDESERVED love – God giving us the EXACT OPPOSITE of what we had coming.

God's grace is always "**in Christ Jesus.**" God does not ignore our **sin** and **guilt** – God dealt with our sin and guilt BY SENDING us Jesus to be our Savior. These details of God's **perfect plan** for us are so familiar but SAVOR them again. God's own Son was born one of us to take the place of **all** people under God's law. Giving us all the credit Jesus actually lived a LIFE PERFECT **in every way** – a life fully approved and accepted by His heavenly Father. **Then** the sinless Lord Jesus took the blame and punishment for the sins of the **whole** world. **On** the cross Jesus sacrificed His own innocent life to "**take away the sin of the world**" – to fully pay for **all** sins of **all** people. But DON'T STOP there! We have Jesus RISEN **triumphant** from the dead – ascended into heaven to "**prepare a place**" for us – coming again in glory on the Last Day.

Life isn't perfect but God has the PERFECT PLAN for us – Jesus as our **perfect Savior**. When you GET DOWN – frustrated – **discouraged** – **depressed** with LIFE NOW in our **less than perfect** world – refocus back on God's PERFECT PLAN for you and on your PERFECT SAVIOR. Yes, life isn't perfect, BUT...

II. God is carrying our His perfect plan for us.

God made His **perfect plan** for us "**before the creation of the world.**" NOW IN TIME – yes, right now! – God is carrying out His perfect plan for us. "**Those He predestined, He also called. Those He called, He also justified.**"

God "**so loved the world**" that He gave His own Son to be the Savior of "**the world**" with the promise that "**whoever believes in (Jesus) shall not perish but have everlasting life.**" God's perfect plan CALLS FOR us to trust in Jesus as our Savior and SO HAVE God's **love, forgiveness, eternal life** in heaven.

Life now isn't perfect but SEE GOD carrying out His **perfect plan** for us! "**Those He predestined, He also called.**" It's NO ACCIDENT that we are Christians. THROUGH the gospel God has "**called**" us to faith – to TRUST/RELY on – Jesus as our Savior. The circumstances of that calling CAN VARY from person to person. It may have come when **Christian PARENTS** brought us to the font to be baptized. **Maybe** it was a Christian friend telling us about Jesus or inviting us to church or Sunday School. **Maybe** it was reading a Bible at home on our own or stumbling across a **Christian devotion** on the internet. HOWEVER it was don't thank your "**lucky stars.**" THANK God for carrying out His **perfect plan** for you. THANK God for both bringing you to faith in Jesus and keeping you trusting in Jesus as your Savior THROUGH His gospel in Word and sacraments.

"**Those He called, He also justified.**" "**Justified**" is another way of saying that God HAS FORGIVEN all our sins **for Jesus' sake**. Literally justify means to DECLARE **innocent** – **not guilty**. Washed clean in **Jesus'** precious blood – clothed by faith with **Jesus'** perfect life – God HAS DECLARED us innocent of every charge of **ever disobeying** Him. **Trusting in Jesus** as our Savior God now sees us as SAINTS – **holy** people – and He declares us FIT TO LIVE with Him forever in heaven. Life now isn't perfect but TRUSTING in Jesus as our Savior **we have** God's perfect forgiveness of **all** our sins. How can we NOT LOVE a God who loves us SO MUCH and who graciously does ALL THIS for us?

Life now isn't perfect but "**we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose.**" TREASURE that "**all things.**" Nothing is EXCLUDED from "**all things.**" We can't make "**all things work**" for our eternal God but GOD CAN. We don't always know WHAT'S BEST for us but **God does**. We don't always understand **what** or **why**

things are happening but **God does**. SO MUCH of life is out of our hands but our **good and gracious** God is ALWAYS **in charge** and in control of **“all things.”** And God promises us that AS HIS ELECT He will work **“all things”** for **our good** and **His glory**. **“All things”** – the good – the **bad** – and everything in between – working together to CARRY OUT God’s **perfect plan** for us. God will never let anything INTERFERE with or WRECK **His plan** for us. SO don’t wallow in **self-pity** – REVEL in God’s **grace** and **promises!**

Life now isn’t perfect BUT God is carrying out His **perfect plan** for us AND...

III. We can be sure God will fulfill His plan for us.

“Those He predestined, He also called. Those He called, He also justified. And those He justified, He also glorified.” Did you notice something? Paul puts all this in the PAST TENSE – says it’s ALREADY happened. God **“predestined”** us – **yes**, that’s in the PAST. God **“called”** us to faith in Jesus as our Savior – that too has ALREADY happened. God **“justified”** us – in the PAST too. **“Glorified”**? WAIT a minute! We’re definitely not in heaven yet. Our Christian loved ones and **friends** who have ALREADY DIED – they’re already enjoying life with Jesus in heaven. But we’re STILL HERE. Our lives may not BE AS BAD as **Job’s** but we have **“our present sufferings”** and God tells us that **“we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.”**

Our eternal glory is YET TO COME but Paul can and does speak of it as a PAST – ACCOMPLISHED historical fact. **Paul’s point** is that we can be ABSOLUTELY SURE that God will fulfill His **perfect plan** for us. We can be so sure **because** GOD HAS PROMISED us this and God never goes back on His Word.

WHAT COMFORT! What joy and **peace** AS we now live as LESS THAN perfect people in a **less than perfect** world. One day soon EVERYTHING will be perfect. WHAT GLORY God has promised us – life FOREVER in a **“new heaven and new earth, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain – where God will have wiped every tear from our eyes.”** Our mortal bodies raised **“imperishable, transformed to be like Christ’s glorious body.”** **“AND SO we will be with the Lord forever.”** THAT’S what God **“predestined”** – ELECTED us to - and THAT’S what God will soon fulfill for us.

“We know” this Paul writes – NOT BECAUSE we’re smart enough to **figure** this out on our own. **“We know”** it because God has revealed it to us in His Word. God wants us to know that **while** LIFE ISN’T PERFECT He has the perfect plan for us and He will fulfill it. Amen.

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