

Encouragement

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God's plans... A perfect future?

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'The plans God makes are wise and they always succeed'

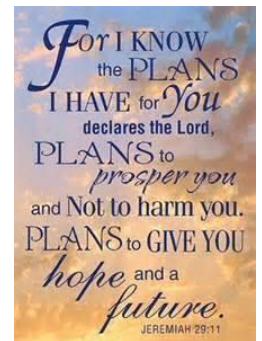
I wonder how you responded to that statement? Did you find yourself make a conditional 'yes but'...part of you may have thought that, of course they do, but then your mind said – well they don't always seem to succeed, they don't always feel perfect from my point of view for such and such died, such and such were not healed, all that poverty in the world, killing, rape, lack of communication, no peace. Can His plans include all that and yet be perfect? Can what seemed to have failed be a success and wise?

If I could answer all these questions and deal with the issues they raise I would not need God or be dependent on Him. We are not God and all answers are not available to us. We can only try to see a little fragment of truth at any time but he encourages us to seek and find. Yet, the statement stands, that all His decisions and plans are always wise and succeed. How can this be?

First of all we judge these things within a time scale and in a part of our history, in a time capsule. We can never see our own picture fully let alone others or nations or over centuries. Many things are prepared and planned in the mind of God that took centuries to materialise. The Promised Land is an example. Moses travelled a relatively short distance for over forty years. Abraham had to wait till he was an impossibly old man to produce a legitimate offspring as was his wife Sarah... How many centuries has it taken for us to understand our common humanity, the 'brotherhood of Mankind'? Was the Lord absent or had He planned a way of bringing this about through new forms of communication which we are slowly realising.

Second, our vision of life however beautiful is always too small. The Lords vision is immense. It includes every person, every nation, every

circumstance, every time unto eternity, plans are in yesterday today and tomorrow for all people. But it is not only 'earth bound'. Jesus himself said 'what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul'. Our plans *are* earth bound. We are planning this trip, this job, this house, or even this vocation. God uses these means to get us to his Kingdom which is His *perfect plan* for all people We plan and see things from an earthly, material perspective which allows us to have a limited understanding of Gods purpose for us, which is to attain perfect freedom as children of God and to enjoy a life which we cannot even conceive of, as it is so perfect. Yet Our God, this Saviour leads us often in ways that seem hard and daunting. Why? Because he shows us the temporal nature of our suffering and a limit to our vision.



A mother gives her children medicine which may be distasteful to the child but she looks forward to her child's wellbeing knowing that the child will recover as a result of the treatment. The Father treats 'His Children' sometimes in a similar way. We encounter many trials but victory will always be ours even though it may seem beyond our wildest hopes. A wise mother or father interprets the child's need, not just gives them what they want, as what they want may not be good for them. A wise parent waits and assess the real needs of that little person. Jesus Himself acknowledges this when he says that 'you give your children good things and not stones for bread'. The Father gives His children good things not what they want but that which in His wisdom he adjudges will bring them to a knowledge of himself in love.

One phrase learnt many years ago always makes me smile. Born of experience that Gods plans and

In everything, whether it is a thing sensed or a thing known, God Himself is hidden within. St. Bonaventure

sees things ‘differently’. My plans have often been confronted by challenge and change and indeed failure, yet He resurrects them in totally different and unexpected ways.

He makes all things possible and brings them to bear fruit if we let Him make the plans. The phrase that I like so much is—‘How do you make God laugh?’ Tell Him your plans!!! It is not that our plans are always wrong but that we do not always understand God’s purpose or what our true destiny and needs are.

Isaiah, who is quoted at the start (28.29) was a great prophet because he listened to God and did what was asked of him and spoke God’s word. His wisdom lay in mimicking God’s wisdom. The phrase itself incidentally was found by ‘chance’

But if you want to know how carefully God plans every minute detail of your life consider the hundreds of providential meetings in your life. Consider the daily little gifts of circumstance. Ponder the friendships that we have and the gifts we discover by chance. All our tomorrows are planned. Could we manage if we knew what they were, I doubt it. Yet each act is a place of God’s dream for us. These God incidences lead us to an utter dependence on our Creator and Father who knows and loves us and will not lead us badly.

Being human however, we also want to know what lies ahead or feel that somehow we control our destiny which in the sense that we have free will and can choose, we do in small part. How can we learn to find what God’s will is for us and therefore have a glimpse at His plan?.. There are indeed many ways of doing this. Certainly we can pray that we are given guidance of some kind. We can learn to pray by talking to Jesus directly telling him our hopes and fears. We can also learn to listen to Him in our hearts where man secrets are revealed. Reading ‘The Word’, His word in Scripture will also guide us as his purpose for all has been revealed. We can also be guided by those pearls of wisdom that sometimes fall from the lips of others sometime unintentionally, other times as advice, Godly advice. Our vision, dreams and passions too reveal much to us. A call to do something can start with a determination to action, a calling, a vocation. Finally we can learn to trust

in God and live by the Gospels and love and walk humbly with God at our side.

Jesus himself had to follow his Fathers plan for His life. He did so willingly and yet it could not have been easy to accept *and do*. He trusted His father knowing that even death on a cross was a Perfect Plan of a loving God. This plan saved us and does so every day of history.



Lord may your plans be fulfilled in me. May your grace encourage me. May I look to eternity and the promise you made to be with me always..

Halina Holman.

Pope Francis and two thoughts....

One of the features of the Christian identity: “it is being men and women of history. By understanding that the story does not begin and end with me”. Indeed, it all began when the Lord entered into history. Christians are men and women of history, because they do not belong to themselves, but are instead “included within a people, a people who journey. This is why there can be no thought of “Christian selfishness”. There is no such thing as a perfect Christian, “a manufactured spiritual man or woman”, but rather, a spiritual man or woman is always included within a people, who have a long history and continue to journey until the Lord should return.
Rome march 2014

The gift of the desire for eternity does not include with it the gift of fully understanding God’s plan for us. The latter is something that we discern little by little through the virtue of faith and the gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. In this life we really only catch a glimpse of God’s plan for creation; in the next life, we will see everything in God himself. We will see his goodness, justice, love and mercy. We will see how He has acted in history and in our lives.
Rome Sept.2015

Feasts in August:

1st St Alphonse Liguori 4th St Jean Vianney

6th The Transfiguration of The Lord

8th St Dominic

11th St Clare

15th/16th **The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
(Holy day of Obligation)

20th St Bernard. 21st St Pius X. 24th St Bartholomew

27th St Monica

28th St Augustine