

God's Plan For My Life

1. Warm-up question: We love to make plans, but often our plans get disrupted. What's something simple you've planned recently that got blown out of the water?
2. Read Psalm 139:13-16, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. Verse 16 says, "In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed." What do you think this means? Do you think God's plan for your life exists in broad outlines or in intricate detail?
 - b. Suppose someone asked you, "What do you think God's plan for your life might be?" How would you answer? What would be your best guess?
 - c. Pastor Steven Furtick says, "You're not just here to survive. God put you here because you've got something to do, something to build, something to be." How does that statement make you feel? Do you believe it deep in your bones?
3. Believing that God has a plan for each of us is one thing; figuring out that plan is quite another. Occasionally God's plan for someone's life is obvious from a young age and unfolds in linear fashion. A musical child prodigy like Stevie Wonder is an example. But for most of us, Jeff suggested, "The important things we've been put here to do get revealed in fits and starts, in peaks and valleys, in real time as we're feeling our way along through life, stumbling into moments of opportunity." If that's true, finding our greatness requires a both patience and readiness. Patience to wait expectantly without giving up hope. Readiness to act when our opportunities arise.
 - a. Jesus is a great example. Thirty of his 33 years – 91% of his time on earth – was spent waiting and being prepared, followed by three intensive years of wondrous action and accomplishment. How do you think Jesus felt when he was, let's say, 28 years old, working as a carpenter, still living in obscurity despite all the predictions of greatness that accompanied his birth? What kind of questions or doubts might have occurred to Jesus at age 28?
 - b. When John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus sensed his moment had come. Mark 1:14 says, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. . .'" How do you think Jesus felt in that moment? What thoughts or feelings might have swirled in his heart and mind?
 - c. Think of a time in your life that you sensed was an important moment of opportunity that God hoped you'd seize. Tell us about it. What happened?
4. The main point of Sunday's sermon was: **God's plan for our life is not something that most of us can be mapped out in advance; it's something we discover along**

the way. The story of Esther's life is a classic example. Read the portion of Esther's story printed on p. 3.

- a. Here's some background. Esther was an orphan raised by her Uncle Mordecai. Her family had been forcibly removed from Israel during an invasion. So Esther was a Jew living in exile in a foreign land. Many Jews refused to assimilate into Persian culture. As a result, they were viewed with suspicion and dislike. Because of her beauty, Esther was inducted (probably without choice) into the King's Harem. On the advice of her Uncle Mordecai, she hid her Jewish heritage. How do you imagine Esther felt about her life when, as a young woman, she was inducted into the harem of the King of Persia?
 - b. When the Queen of Persia, Vashti, disobeyed the King, he dumped her, and Esther was elevated from the harem to replace Vashti. Suddenly Esther, a secret Jew, finds herself Queen of Persia! Now what's she thinking and feeling?
 - c. As time passed, eventually a senior advisor to the King convinced him that all Jews should be eradicated, so the King authorized their mass execution. Imagine you're Esther and you've just learned of the decree. What are you thinking and feeling?
5. Esther's Uncle Mordecai urged her to go to the King to plead for her people. When she hesitated, Mordecai said, "If you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." Esther 4:14. Esther took the risk, seized the moment, went to the King, and persuaded him to revoke the decree, thereby saving her people. As such, she's a classic example of what it means to meet our moments in life.
- a. Jeff said, "What's true of the broad sweep of our life is equally true for every season of life, each year of life, and each day. You have no idea what even tomorrow will bring. But I'll guarantee you this. If you stay alert, sometime tomorrow a moment will come where you have an opportunity to do something meaningful and important. Don't miss your moment." Tell us about a small moment to do something meaningful that has arisen so far this week for you. Did you rise to meet the moment or let it pass?
 - b. Jeff described a long list of plans he's had that God disrupted with surprising twists. What are some plans or expectations God has disrupted in your life?
 - c. In this particular season of your life, does it feel like you are in a time of waiting and preparation or a time of action and realization?
 - d. In this particular season of your life, what's the most meaningful opportunity that has opened (or is opening) up for you? How do you feel? Are you seizing the moment to make the most of the opportunity?

Psalm 139:13-16

13 It was you, O God, who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. . . . 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed."

Esther 3:8-11 and 4:3-16

8 [A man named Haman, a senior advisor to the King of Persia, said to the king], "There is a certain people scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not appropriate to tolerate them. 9 Let a decree be issued for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, so that they may put it into the king's treasuries." 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. 11 The king said, "The money is given to you, do with them as it seems good to you."

3 In every province, there was great mourning among the Jews. 4 When Queen Esther's maids came and told her, she was deeply distressed, [for she herself was a secret Jew]. 8 The queen's Uncle Mordecai sent her a copy of the decree, and charged her to go to the king to entreat him for her people.

11 But Esther said, "Everyone knows that if anyone goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king." 13 Mordecai said, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." 16 Esther said, "Go, gather all the Jews, and hold a fast on my behalf. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."