

Plans and Goals

Preached FCCW, May 12, 2019 (Senior Sunday)

Jeremiah 29:11-13

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Cheshire Cat advises Alice that, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." In the adventures of real life though, whether it's going from Point A to Point B on a map, going from High School to a future career, or going from a career to retirement, most of us would rather have a good idea of where we are heading and the most efficient route to get us there.

But not everyone starts the journey with a clear vision of where it is, they want to get to. Sometimes, all we know for certain is that we are hoping for a future that will provide us with contentment, security and a sense of fulfillment. So, there are guidance counselors, financial planners and spiritual advisors to help us identify our desired destination and formulate a plan that can get us there.

Nothing is certain though, and even the most carefully conceived plans can fall apart before they deliver us to where we are trying to go. Sometimes--possibly even more frequently than we may think--it is in the course of the journey we have carefully mapped out, that we make the unexpected discovery that our goals have shifted from what we started with.

Thankfully, one thing *is* certain. And one counselor *is* reliable. God. *Surely* I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Not maybe. Not, lets roll the dice and see what comes up.

Surely.

Surely, I *know* the plans I have for you, says the Lord.

What sort of plans might these be? We're not given the details. There are no brochures or websites to consult. But God's plans for you--whether your goal is to be an artist or a scientist, or you don't even know what—are plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Which is basically all we really need to know, isn't it?

So, how do we access these plans that God surely has for us? These are the instructions God gives us: *when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.* I think what God is trying to tell us is that it is in pursuing a relationship with God that all other plans in life somehow seem to fall into place.

By all means, let us seek the counsel of earthly advisors. But let us seek God with all our hearts, because even the most insightful human advisor does not know the depths of our hearts. Only God can see what is there.

A gifted monastic by the name of Thomas Merton has written a prayer that expresses what it is like to seek God with all our hearts and to trust God's plans for us.

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

God wills your well-being.

God desires for you to have a future marked by hope and not harm.

So, *give thanks* to God for whatever has brought you this far, regardless of how far upon this journey you have traveled.

Dream of what God may yet have in store.

And most importantly, *seek* God with all your heart.

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