

Sermon Title: God Has a Plan

Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of May 15, 2011

Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

Icebreaker

Big Idea: Trust God's plan (providence) for your life, and find comfort in His presence.

Sermon Text: Psalm 118:22-23 (New International Version, 1984)

²² The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
²³ the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Digging Deeper: Each of us turns to many different people for all kinds of advice during our lifetime. When we don't feel well, we go to the doctor and seek his or her advice. It is the same with any other ailment we might have. If we can't see, we go to the eye doctor or the dentist for our teeth and so forth. Sometimes, beyond that, we ask other people for advice and direction in our life. Sometimes, we might trust in our own advice or wisdom or strength. Yet, we realize that if we do that too often, we see that we may forget God's wisdom and strength and knowledge.

In these verses of the Psalm, we find the theme of the stone rejected by the builders becoming the chief cornerstone. The cornerstone is the most important stone that is laid in a building. It is the stone that all the others are measured off of.

The Psalmist prophesizes that Jesus himself is the cornerstone of the Christian church, the cornerstone of our Christian faith, and he also becomes the cornerstone of our life. The wisdom Jesus has surpasses all the wisdom of this world, surpasses all of the advice that others might give us.

1. In what sense was Jesus like the stone the builders rejected? Have you ever felt like that stone (rejected)?
2. In light of who was being prophesied about in verses 22-23, what day did the head stone of the corner become the head in verse 24 (i.e. the day Jesus died, the day He was born, etc.)?
3. Consider times in your life when you have been able to see providence. How does knowing that God has a plan affect how you?
4. Close your eyes for a moment and listen carefully as your group leader reads the following quote.

Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When a person is in this faith, he is in peace, for he then fears nothing, and no solicitude about things to come disquiets him. A person comes into this state in proportion as he comes into love to the Lord. —Secrets of Heaven 8455

What would it look like to hand your fear and worries over to the Lord? What images come to mind? What do you imagine your life would be different?
5. Is it easy or difficult for you to rely on God during difficult times? Why?
6. Sometimes God's plan appears illogical. Read and reflect on the examples below:

Q: Why whittle a 32,000-man army down to 300 men and expect any kind of victory?

A: Judges 7:2

Q: Offended, Naaman asked why not wash in better looking rivers back in Damascus rather than in the Jordan River to heal his skin disease?

A: 2 Kings 5:15 and 2 Kings 5:17-18

Q: Why did Paul and Silas sing songs to God from jail after being beaten with rods?

A: 2 Corinthians 1:9-10

Q: Why doesn't God always stop his enemies from doing evil and hurting his people?

A: Daniel 3:16-18

Q: Why is God so swift to act sometimes (like the fiery furnace) and so slow other times?

A: 2 Peter 3:3-9

7. Is there a specific area of God's plan that you are struggling with? Whether or not you choose to share it with the group, write it down in the space below and ask God for an answer during prayer time:

1. Know what GOD says about who we are - Go by GOD's word, not my power or logic
2. Believe what GOD says - trust the way Abraham did (Romans 4:19)
3. Act upon what GOD says is true. For example, "consider it all joy when you fall..." (James 1:3)

Prayer Requests and Praises:

Taking it Home

Reflect on the following steps throughout the week. Especially when God's plan seems illogical: