**God Knows What He’s Doing!**

Jeremiah 29:11; Philippians 1:6

**Intro:** Have you ever wondered - Does God really know what He’s doing?

Sometimes it just doesn’t seem like what is happening in our lives makes any sense!

But the Bible is clear - God actually does know what He is doing!

Jeremiah 29:11 - “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Background of the verse … God spent most of the book of Jeremiah and messages from Jeremiah telling what was left of Israel that an army was going to invade … their nation was going to be destroyed - their homes were going to be destroyed - their temple was going to be destroyed - many would be killed - most of those that were left alive would be taken to Babylon as slaves -

He told them this as an “or else” - so they would repent - but they didn’t - so God did it - But He knew what He was doing and He promised them this -

Jeremiah 29:10-11 MSG - This is God’s Word on the subject: “As soon as Babylon’s seventy years are up and not a day before, I’ll show up and take care of you as I promised and bring you back home. I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.”

Philippians 1:6 - And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

Philippians 1:6 MSG - There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

I don’t fully know the plans the Lord has for me - but I know that the Lord knows the plans He has for me - and that’s good enough for me!

When I was in college I didn’t really know the plans God had for me - I knew He had called me to preach - but that was about all - I couldn’t figure out the when or the where -

Story of door opening in Bellefontaine …

Story of going to the Philippines and everything shutting down …

Story of going to Indianapolis …

Story of Uncle Charlie calling me to the District Office …

Story of me coming here …

* Nine months before - Charlie in my kitchen … 5 words of prophecy … sudden change - whirlwind -
* When Don got elected - Lori in French …
* Jackie in tears …… she thought God had a different plan for us.
* That was October - November 16 years ago I interviewed with our Deacons - they are discerning - they pray - they hear the voice and the direction of God -
* 16 years ago was chosen to Pastor here … honor and privilege …

I know we have been here in God’s plan.

I have been sure of every one of these steps in which God has led me -

I am just as certain that it is time for the next step for Sharon and me.

Psalm 37:23 - *The Lord directs the steps* of the godly.

He delights in every detail of their lives.

Proverbs 16:9 - We can make our plans,

but *the Lord determines our steps*.

Sharon and I have been blessed here - but we know the Lord determines our steps.

Many that are here today weren’t here 16 years ago - a lot has changed - lives have changed - families have been changed - by the goodness and grace of God.

We are thankful for what God has done here. But it’s not our work - it’s God’s work -

This is not our church - it is God’s church. He is the Chief Shepherd - and we all follow Him and yield to Him.

We taught earlier this year from the letters Paul wrote to Timothy …

1st Timothy 1:18 MSG - I’m passing this work on to you, my son Timothy. The prophetic word that was directed to you prepared us for this. All those prayers are coming together now so you will do this well, fearless in your struggle, keeping a firm grip on your faith and on yourself. After all, this is a fight we’re in.

The time is growing near for us to pass this work on.

In the next chapter of the letter Paul encourages Timothy to build the church in Ephesus upon prayer. We must be a praying church. We must be in prayer about God’s plans and purposes for this church. When we pray the Holy Spirit will prevail and do His work!

In both of his letters to Timothy, Paul encouraged him to build the church on strong preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Timothy was charged by Paul to be a preacher of the Word of God! He was to proclaim, persuade and preach the whole counsel of God.

Paul also encouraged Timothy to partner with the family of God. Timothy was not to do all the work himself - he was to train and develop leaders to work with him as partners in ministry.

I challenge you to partner with the next person God is calling to be Lead Pastor of New Life Church.

Everything Paul said to Timothy is true for us and our church today!

God has plans for this church! They are greater than anything we have planned - or seen or imagined to this point! We must follow in the steps in which He is leading us in order to see it come to pass!

God has a vision for this church - and through prayer we will see this vision and we will proclaim it to our community and more people will come into a relationship with Jesus!

Big Idea: God knows what He is doing - He has it all planned out!

Can you see it? Do you know it?

> God has a plan for your life!

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Philippians 1:6 MSG - There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

Knowing God has a plan for us will give us peace in our minds and in our hearts even when we don’t know what that plan is -

John 14:27 - I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Isaiah 26:3 - You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Psalm 85:8 - I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people.

Psalm 29:11 - The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace.

In the midst of any situation, hardship, difficulty or confusion we face - as followers of Jesus we can have peace knowing God has a plan for our lives and His plan is for good!

Genesis - Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers … they thought he died in slavery while God raised him up to be leader of Egypt -

When they finally met years later …

Genesis 50:20 - You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.

God’s plan is for good! He wants you to be involved in His plan for this church!

We do go through difficult times - Joseph did - Paul did - Jesus did -

But - as in Joseph’s case -

God brings about His purpose *through* the pain and difficulty - not in spite of it!

John 10:10 - The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

Nothing can stop God’s plan!

The peace we can have following God’s plan for our lives is a peace that the world can’t give -

The world doesn’t seem to have much peace to give …

I have peace - because I’m following God’s plan! I hope you can say the same.

God’s got a plan for your life -

> God’s got a plan for this church!

Just like God had a plan for Israel -

* He called Abraham to leave his family and go to the place God called him.
* He took Abraham to Canaan - what is now the land of Israel -
* He gave him a family - that family grew into the nation of Israel -

It was even in God’s overall plan for them to be slaves in Egypt for 400 years -

It was in God’s plan to send them Moses to not only set them free from their slavery - but to teach them how to walk in the ways of God.

It was in God’s plan for Moses to turn the leadership over to Joshua so that they could take the land God was giving them.

It was in God’s plan to send them prophets - generation after generation - to continue to teach them and lead them in walking in God’s plan.

God’s got a plan for our church just like He had a plan for Israel -

And for the Church of the First Generation after Jesus!

* He told them to go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to everyone! That’s what they did!

He had a plan for one of those early leaders - Simon Peter -

Luke 22:31-32 - Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

Jesus was telling Him there were going to be hard times - very hard times - Peter went on to be the first preacher in the church - and the first day 3000 people left their old lives to follow Jesus -

It just continued on and on - until we find that God had a plan for a man who was a persecutor of the Church - Paul …

Paul became the greatest church planter in the New Testament - wrote over half of our New Testament -

Sometimes - God had to change the plans of Peter and Paul -

Peter in Acts 10 …

Paul in Acts 16 …

They had to stay sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit to know the plan of God - so that they would follow God’s plans - not their own plans or the desires of others.

Just like God had a plan for Israel - and for the Early Church - He has a plan for this Church -

We have to follow God’s plan - not our own desires.

> We must be people of prayer to know God’s plan!

1st Kings 3:5-10 - That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, “What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!”

Solomon replied, “You showed great and faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued to show this great and faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.

“Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn’t know his way around. And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?”

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom.

Here’s one for us -

James 1:5 - If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.

This gift is for everyone. God wants you to know His plan - He wants to reveal His plan to you - for your life - and for our church.

I am not the only one who will receive God’s plan - I share what I feel with the Deacon Team - they pray - they sense God’s confirmation - we move forward together - we have a peace about God leading us in His plan.

God’s people must receive His plan together and participate in it together for us to have the full success He plans for us.

We believe God has given us direction for His next steps in the life of this church - we are asking you to commit yourself to prayer - and fasting - so that we can move forward in unity in God’s plan for us!

He has such great things in store! Let’s look forward to it with anticipation!

More and more people are going to

* Know God
* Find Freedom
* Discover Purpose
* Make a Difference!

Sharon and I have always felt that every experience we have gone through has prepared us for where we are currently - and where we are currently is preparing us for what God has next for us.

That’s true for His church as well!

Everything we have gone through has prepared us for this time - and this time is preparing us for God’s next step for us!

I’m looking forward to God’s plan coming to great completion in the life of this church!

Philippians 1:6 MSG - There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.