

From The Pastors Study God's Plan Is Perfect

Last Sunday I was excited to get back in the pulpit, I was positive, I felt very good about the sermon, it was one I have looked forward to for a long time. First I received an email from a member that frustrated me, then my slides were messed up, next when I got up to deliver this sermon I had looked forward to and after beginning I discovered I had the wrong sermon up on my ipad. I was devastated, I had to stand before the congregation with two new visitors and admit I had the wrong sermon and scrambled to pull the right one.

I was angry, upset and completely rattled. My confidence slipped more than a notch or two and I struggled to get my feet back under myself. I felt like I never did lock in, never seemed to get in the flow. I was completely devastated. I don't think I have ever been so glad to complete a sermon. This ate at me the rest of the day, how could I possibly blow the sermon I had long desired to give.

This morning I began going through the day and came to a part of the day that I hadn't thought about. Before the service every Sunday I have my personal prayer time. I dedicate the service to the glory of God and a part of the prayer where I ask God to give me His words, not mine. I mean those words, I am sincere in my calling on the Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts and words so that the needs of the congregation will be met.

I'm not claiming that God guided my error in bringing up the wrong sermon, all errors are mine. When I went back and listened to listen to my sermon I was shocked because so much of the sermon was different than I intended. Then I listened to it again, and then one more time and couldn't recall the words I was hearing to be words I spoke and discovered the sermon was actually better than I remembered. This wasn't the sermon I intended, not the words I had written.

As a pastor I am teacher more than preacher but I don't teach what scripture says, but how to apply God's teaching applies to our lives. I try to make scripture relevant to our lives today, I don't teach Law and Commandments except the one Jesus left for us, As I prepare my sermons I *always* find I learn or perhaps God manages to get through my thick skull and brings small and great revelations. I sometimes believe my sermons are intended to teach me more than others.

What I have come to this morning is that people don't need to read about issues or my opinions of world events or the state of our messed up world. Every day the news is flooded stories of degradation in the world, people don't need the pastor to restate these stories and I certainly have no desire to preach on them. If I am going to continue the Pastor's Study it must teach truth as it comes to us from scripture, and how that relates to the world around us.

I pray my eyes continue to see what God expect from me, open my heart to the pains of His creation, and use whatever wisdom I may possess to share God's plan for us all. For whatever reason God seems to believe I should be one among many to take on His mission for humanity.

God desires that all His people, everyone in the world, spend eternity with Him. Jesus left the church behind for that purpose; remember the Great Commission? Go and make disciples.... John 3:16 was my sermon this last week, and I do like to preach out of John and in John 3 there are many sermons. I have time and again tried to get across to people to read all of John but focus on John 3 but particularly John 3 and even more specifically 3:16 and 3:36.

Not many people know what 3:36 says: ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

What John is speaking of here isn't obedience to a bunch of rules and laws, but a new way of thinking and a new mission in life. Jesus called His disciples to get off their collective butts and spread His word, bring them into the fold, baptize them, and teach them all Jesus had taught.

Next the new commandment to love God, which really wasn't anything new, just stated differently. Then He says to love one another; while He was speaking to the disciples I can't help but believe Jesus intended that to be a part of all of us. Love is a tough one for most of us; oh, I can love people who are like minded but how do we love a murderer, a rapist, child molester, abusive husband? Yet this is all Jesus commands us to do, to love, even the unlovable. Not an easy thing to do.

As we look at our world, or more specifically our nation, and find God in our people and when we see there are many who don't know Him, who are hateful, angry, deny God, or have some perverted image of God, can we love them. When they would desecrate our churches, can we love them enough to show them God's love? If not, we are failing and this doesn't exclude me, in fact it convicts me.

Love is what we share with those who love us, but love is what we are to have for the stranger, the enemy.