

Sermon for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

“All Planned Out”

Psalm 104:33

9/30/18b

“All Planned Out (by Me)”

He had it all planned out (creatively retell James 4:13ff.).

Ever meet someone like that?

He had it all planned out (creatively retell Luke 12:13ff.).

Ever meet someone like that?

She had it all planned out. (A young, ambitious new graduate: Further schooling. Good job. Marriage. Children. A comfy home in the suburbs, and another in the mountains. Health and happiness. And in this young woman’s case, as the years rolled on, it actually all took place pretty much like she wanted. And for this person, along the way, life going so well as it was, she lost her religion. She forgot God. She fashioned idols, and didn’t even know it.)

Ever meet someone like that?

“All Planned Out (for Our Salvation)”

He had it all planned out. (The life and ministry of our Lord and Savior. Include Matt. 26 Passover references, including “My time is at hand” (v.18).)

Ever meet someone like that?

Today Jesus Christ is here to meet you and me. He’s here to deliver us from that pride-filled, self-centered, idolatrous, and ultimately *ruinous* “all planned out” life into the freedom of a life in which we joyfully follow Him who took up the cross for us. Through the cross-purchased forgiveness that flows to every believer in Jesus we learn this morning to say with the psalmist:

**I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.**

Our life as God’s baptized sons and daughters is “all planned out”—I mean, we have this plan and firm determination as we live our Holy Spirit-led lives, the plan and determination to sing praise to God always. Because in a word, God is worthy of all praise. We say in one of our chapel liturgies, “To Him belongs eternal praise” (Psalm 111:10 quoted in *All God’s People Sing*, liturgy of Wisdom and Knowledge). He has created us and sustained our lives down to this day, but even more He has redeemed the sin-stricken lives of us all; He has done it through the innocent suffering and death of His own Son, Jesus. God has furthermore called us to faith by the Gospel—wow, He has done it all. Yes, I will praise my God always.

And notice for us believers it’s not just “God,” but “*my* God”—which is saying something quite different. Many people “believe,” as they say it, “in God,” but only through faith in the Gospel can we with confidence name this supreme being *MY* God. And it is noteworthy: that is just what the psalmist, at the start of this psalm, and again here in our verse 33, near the end, says, that Yahweh is *his* God. In v. 1 the psalmist declares, “O LORD **my God**, You are very great”. And in v. 33, “I will sing praise to **my God** while I have my being.” This is not that “O my God” expression of surprise that is so casual today it even gets abbreviated to three letters in a text message. No, this is the heartfelt confession of faith and trust in the God who has forged a relationship with us: “**my God**—I will praise Him!”

And how long? (Remember the children’s message with the graphic depicting the stages of life’s journey.) The Living Bible translates verse 33: “I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will praise God to my last breath!” Wow—a lot is vividly communicated there by that translation “to my last breath”! It points up the fact that the redeemed children of God consecrate their entire bodies, their entire selves, their entire lives

(for they know all that they are and have come from God) to their God!
This is how God's life-giving washing of Baptism impacts His children!

All of Me—from God and for God—All My Days

Yesterday I took our children to swim lessons. I was holding Emma, who normally would have been in the pool but that day was sick. For whatever reason a song came to my mind to sing to her—it was one I don't think I ever knew as a child but that I've heard my wife sing to our kids:

(sung) Two little eyes to look to God
Two little ears to hear His Word
Two little feet to walk His ways
Hands to serve Him all my days

If the psalm verse deals with the praise of my mouth (which flows forth from the faith of my heart), then this fine little song that I sang to Emma rounds out the picture by dealing with the other aspects of the believer's body and life:

Two little eyes to look to God...

- Our eyes see so many things here in God's creation...
- But above all God has given me my eyes to look to Him...these are the eyes of faith that see those things that are (for now) unseen—God our Father and Jesus His Son, whom we have come to know as our loving Savior in the Gospel. Even if our physical sight should be taken from us, our eyes will still look to God, for He has revealed Himself and His love to us in the Gospel.
- Our lives are a continual looking to God. Especially when we have strayed and looked at the wrong things—coveting what is not given to us, lusting after wealth and all it seems to promise. Then God directs us to repentance and reminds us that He is still there,

and His love is still there, with His cross-won forgiveness. Our lives are a continual looking to God. And:

Two little ears to hear His Word...

- Our ears are given to us by God above all for this reason: He has so much to tell us. And so, we listen. We listen to His fatherly instruction, we repent of all the sin that His holy Law reveals to us, and we gratefully listen as He assures us of pardon. As I explained to my boys in devotions last night, pardon means forgiveness. And God means it. The Judge has declared us “not guilty” by virtue of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
- Our lives are a continual hearing His Word. This is why the Christian cheerfully heeds God’s command to keep the Sabbath Day holy. We gather in church because we are God’s children, and He has something to say to us; He has so much to tell us. Our lives are a continual hearing His Word. And:

Two little feet to walk His ways...

- As I sang the song to Emma I was holding her on my lap and at this point I paid attention to her cute little bare feet. The question where those feet would take her in life went through my head. How about us? Where have our feet taken us? Not always where they should have gone. “Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet, in love, He sought me And on His shoulder gently laid And home rejoicing brought me” (“The King of Love My Shepherd Is,” *LSB* #709, st. 3) *Christ* our Good Shepherd seeks and finds His lambs; He fills them with His Spirit and directs their steps. Two little feet to walk His ways! And finally:

Hands to serve Him all my days...

- Our hands are given us by our Creator for a purpose, to serve Him as we serve our neighbor. Our Savior’s hands were servant hands:

blessing the children, touching the unclean, healing the sick, driving out demons, feeding the hungry, receiving the nails, and stretching out wide on the cross to embrace humanity and redeem us all. Redeemed by Christ, baptized in His name, we use our hands in service...

- caring for the little ones, guiding them
- assisting the weak
- working diligently and faithfully in our careers, not for selfish purposes but for the glory of God, and to assist our neighbor
- contributing to the common life of God's people in our church, through service and volunteer work wherever we are needed

And we do it, the children's song says, "all my days". Here is the echo of today's Psalm verse:

**I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.**

Yes, we God's children, have got it "all planned out". We, God's children, confident in God's love which He promises to us in the Gospel and bestows upon us in the means of grace... we, God's children, acknowledging that all we are and have is from Him, consecrate our lives to our God—to sing, to see, to hear, to walk, to serve.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

PSALM 104

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD my God, You are very great:
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
²Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment,
Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

³ He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,
⁴ Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire.

⁵ You who laid the foundations of the earth,
So that it should not be moved forever,
⁶ You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
The waters stood above the mountains.
⁷ At Your rebuke they fled;
At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away.
⁸ They went up over the mountains;
They went down into the valleys,
To the place which You founded for them.
⁹ You have set a boundary that they may not pass over,
That they may not return to cover the earth.

¹⁰ He sends the springs into the valleys;
They flow among the hills.
¹¹ They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild donkeys quench their thirst.
¹² By them the birds of the heavens have their home;
They sing among the branches.
¹³ He waters the hills from His upper chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

¹⁴ He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
And vegetation for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food from the earth,
¹⁵ And wine that makes glad the heart of man,
Oil to make his face shine,
And bread which strengthens man's heart.
¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are full of sap,
The cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
¹⁷ Where the birds make their nests;
The stork has her home in the fir trees.
¹⁸ The high hills are for the wild goats;
The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.

¹⁹ He appointed the moon for seasons;
The sun knows its going down.
²⁰ You make darkness, and it is night,
In which all the beasts of the forest creep about.
²¹ The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.

²² When the sun rises, they gather together
And lie down in their dens.

²³ Man goes out to his work
And to his labor until the evening.

²⁴ O LORD, how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.

The earth is full of Your possessions—

²⁵ This great and wide sea,
In which are innumerable teeming things,
Living things both small and great.

²⁶ There the ships sail about;
There is that Leviathan
Which You have made to play there.

²⁷ These all wait for You,
That You may give them their food in due season.

²⁸ What You give them they gather in;
You open Your hand, they are filled with good.

²⁹ You hide Your face, they are troubled;
You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

³⁰ You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the earth.

³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD rejoice in His works.

³² He looks on the earth, and it trembles;
He touches the hills, and they smoke.

³³ I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

³⁴ May my meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the LORD.

³⁵ May sinners be consumed from the earth,
And the wicked be no more.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!