



1st Sunday of Lent
February 21, 2010

Message: Life Beyond the Credit Cards - Plan

We start a new worship series today – Life Beyond the Credit Cards.

Crying kids? Career crisis? Credit crunch? If so, then do something.

Life is hard – you need a plan, but where does the plan come from?

That is really the question of the day.

Does the plan for your life come from you or God?

If its mostly yours, how is that working for you?

Might Jesus have a better plan he is suggesting?

We encounter Jesus this day as he is beginning the key last three years of ministry and life.

He was just baptized to show his connection to us as humans who are broken.

He then is immediately tempted – interesting.

Just when he seems to be on his way, he gets tempted.

Does life ever feel that way for you?

Just get started and a big bump in the road happens?

Four comments why we CAN'T let God plan out our life.

We can't because we lack the confidence that God's plan is really the best thing for us.

Human wisdom suggests such.

Pick yourself up by your bootstraps.

You are weak if you need help – right?

What if we believed that God really had a better plan?

Then we resist accountability in our lives; we want to do our own thing.

It is human nature to accept human wisdom and be independent.

That is the biggest learning for this congregation over the last year or so.

Accountability is at the heart of living a good life.

I can't do it on my own – I need you to hold me accountable.

No judgment – hold me accountable to God's plan.

Next we are blind to the fact that God is nurturing us every step of the way.

It is hard for us to believe that God has the time and energy for every one of us.

How would your life change if you believed God was involved in all of it?

God disciplines – not in the human sense of punish, but divine nurture.

Finally, we CAN'T because we don't trust that He will be here for us through thick and thin.

Most people say they believe in God, but trusting God with our lives is very different.

Even, and especially, the devil believes in God – so what?

Trusting in God is the beginning of finding His plan for your life.

Can we learn something about this from the experience of Jesus?

All three temptations of Jesus come down to power.

First, is the power of urges.

Jesus hadn't eaten for 40 days – so hunger was a huge concern.

The devil suggested that Jesus make a stone into bread.

Jesus said that was wrong, but why?

“One does not live by bread alone” from the Bible.

As immediately vital was his hunger, it was not the point.

The point was overcoming the temptation.

Second, is the power of wealth and greed.

The devil clearly had control over all the powers of the world.

Jesus was offered all that control if he would worship the devil.

What could it hurt to worship the devil?

What difference would it really make?

Worship and serve God only; It is that important to God.

You can't seek worldly power and worship God.

Third, is the power of God, Himself.

God is loving and gracious right, eager to help His people?

But Jesus says we should not test our heavenly Father.

I shouldn't jump off a cliff to see if angels will catch me.

That is no way to show love.

It is trying to have power even over God.

So it seems that God's plan is very different from other plans.

We are tempted to have a plan that focuses on ourselves.

The irony is that such a plan seems to fail in all aspects, especially for ourselves.

We aren't happy – no one is happy.

Went to the Lemp Mansion in St. Louis for Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre.

Family became very wealthy through brewery business.

But both dad and son, as well as a couple others, committed suicide.

They seemed to have it all – so what happened?

God has a plan for you to do great works through Him.

There is no carefree life, but there does seem to be more joy with God's plans.

That, to me, is the difference.

Life always has joys and sorrows regardless of circumstance.

But people who follow Jesus seem to have more joy.

In good times, and especially in difficult ones.

We are going to spend the next several weeks looking at aspects of God's plans.

For today, we just introduce the journey.

That God's plan for your life has five P's.

You have been completely prepared to do something great.

God has given you all you need to handle the crying kids of life.

There is a simple purpose behind everything you do.

Your life has far more meaning than whatever career crisis you might experience.

What we will do will sometimes involve pain.

The pain of a credit crunch might force you into a new blessing of abundant life.

God has provided power to do something.

You have the ability to live out the joy of God's hopes for your life.

Doing something significant will require a passion that constantly declares: I won't quit!

Abraham Lincoln lost most of the battles of his life and eventually lost his life.

He took office saying that his mission was more important than his life.

His passion ended the injustice of slavery and preserved a nation.

Are you ready to do what you need to do to do something?