

## “So What’s the Plan?”

Psalm 2:1-12

Good morning! It’s great being here, sharing this time in worship with you, and coming into a new area and starting a new ministry. One of the things that people keep asking is, “What I’m going to be doing?” One of the things I’m going to be doing is casting a vision for what Tommy and Tom have been doing for their entire ministry, God’s plan for ministry and about how we fit into that plan. So, we’re going to be looking at that and seeing how that arises out of even the Old Testament from Psalm 2. If you’ll turn in your Bibles to Psalm 2, I want you to have that open and handy to follow along while I read it.

*<sup>1</sup>Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>“Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” <sup>4</sup>He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. <sup>5</sup>Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, <sup>6</sup>“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” <sup>7</sup>I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. <sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. <sup>9</sup>You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” <sup>10</sup>Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <sup>11</sup>Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup>Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (ESV)*

In January of 1971 my best friend, Dale Ward, shared the Gospel with me. Dale and I were both attending Baptist churches at that time. I was a member of a Baptist church. I’d been immersed when I was 12, walked down the aisle, raised the hand, gone down front, talked to the pastor and my brother was immersed the same night. But now seven years later when I was nineteen none of that had any real part of my life. There was no change. There certainly wasn’t anything dramatic. I saw myself as being a Christian, being a member of a church –(it could have been any church). Being a member of a church, I sang in the choir, I was president of our little Sunday school class. What’s the big deal? Dale told me, “No. You need a personal relationship with Jesus. It’s not enough that you go somewhere or you join. That’s fine, but you need Jesus.” Dale said that to me knowing me really well. He said that knowing that in our relationship he could be that honest and cut to the chase with me as his friend. But to be honest, I got really mad at Dale. How dare he presume that I’m not a Christian when he knows we go to revival meetings together? He knows that we sit on the back pew and fall asleep together. He knows that if the preacher says, “We’re not going home until somebody comes forward, we’re going to sing another verse of *Just As I Am*, and that one of us better be ready and go. But Dale had really come to Christ. And God had used at that time a little booklet that Campus Crusade had produced called *The Four Spiritual Laws* (you can go on their web site right now and read it at <http://www.ccci.org/wij/index.aspx>). The first law says, “God offers you a wonderful plan for your life.” Now, being Presbyterian I now know that God in fact has a plan, and yet I wonder why being Presbyterian now, I wasn’t hearing a thing from the church at large – the Reformed church at large – about that plan. I heard very little communicated to the community as a whole about the fact that God had a stalwart plan that was going forward, that was not going to be stopped, that was unchangeable, that was going to bring all of the nations under the rule of Christ. That’s what Psalms 2 says.

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The nations are determined to destroy the kingdom of God. That's what the Bible teaches. They are not interested in pursuing the will of God. They conspire, they're determined to do their own thing no matter what. And they take offense at the cross. But God says in verse 4,

<sup>4</sup> *He who sits in the heavens laughs . . . (ESV)*

God sees the nations in an uproar. He sees them trying to fulfill their own purpose, their own agenda. And nobody in the process of any of that wants to acknowledge their own personal accountability or their own wrong.

My wife and I lived in Australia for almost thirteen years, and we are citizens there as well as America. One of the things that struck us when we started hearing some of the Parliamentary debate was the ferocity at which people would go at each other in Parliament because, "We're from the South and you're nice, and you don't just talk that way to each other." It was literally foreign to our ears to hear people in ferocious debate. But you know what – we came back to the States and stepped into that pond on a different side of the ocean. One of the things we will miss out in if we fail to see our part of God's purpose for our life is that fact that at times we're all wrong about different things. God alone is right about all things all the time. God has a perfect plan, and all of us here on this planet are going to either struggle to pursue our own course or our own life, or we're going to yield and bow our knee to Jesus. And we're going to say, "We don't always understand or know what it is in this particular circumstance that you want, but we're bowing our knees to You. And we're asking for Your will to be done, You're kingdom to come because we can't figure it out."

In October 2003 my wife and I, shortly after obviously all the impact that was spinning off of 9/11, had to come back to the States because we had two family members that suddenly died. In the course of all of that, we were wondering how God could possibly have a plan? I remember coming into the airports in the States after having been gone for so many years. For the first time in my life seeing the military officers at the airports with their M16s standing there, fixed eyes doing a job, doing their duty to protect America. The world had changed. When everything starts to come apart around us there needs again to be a sound, clear clarion voice from God saying, "But my plan, my counsel still stands." At that time it came by the ministry of Rick Warren through a book called, *Purpose Driven Life*. It was helping people to discover God again. He was helping people realize amidst everything that was falling apart, people could come to God, yield their lives to Him, and find Christ and God's perfect will and purpose for their life. Individuals and communities were even transformed as they again had hope. But I started out with the question, "Why weren't we found in that clarion call? We above all people know that God has a purpose and a plan. We are reformed in our theology, and we are proud of our historical lineage in the faith." But sometimes we don't know how to simply communicate the truths of God's Word to people so that the guy living beside us can have hope and encouragement and the extension of the Gospel offered to him so that he knows God is concerned about his life, too.

I don't want anybody leaving here this morning without knowing three simple things. The first thing you simply need to know is that God has a plan. We see that here in this Psalm where the Psalmist is crying against the rage of the nations, saying "God is in control of all that is." God told Job in Job 38:4 that His plan had existed before the foundation of the earth. Job was also wrestling with how this relationship with God was applicable in His circumstances. He was not helped by His friends. His friends were well intentioned, they came along side him trying at first to comfort him, they kept their mouths shut for about a week, but made the failure of talking after that. Then in the course of their trying to figure out why Job was going through so many things, they then started to blame Job. Job then started to try to defend himself, and in the end of trying to defend yourself the only place

that argument goes is taking offense to God. Ultimately, if you logically defend your own cause to the end, you're saying that God's cause doesn't exist in this. So, God came to Job and said, "Okay, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding" (Job 34:8). Whoops. God's plan not only existed from the foundations, God's plan is comprehensive including everything in the heaven, the earth, and the universe. Have you seen any of those pictures of the refurbished, renewed, re-fixed Hubble? Go online to [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov) (or [http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/hubble/main/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/main/index.html)). Have a look at some of the new things that are being photographed in the heavens. They are incredible attestations to the fact that the whole universe has a designer, has a creator, has God behind it.

Isaiah 40 verse 22 and following says this:

*<sup>22</sup> It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; <sup>23</sup> who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. . . <sup>25</sup> To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. (ESV)*

God is inviting Isaiah and He invites us. "If you don't want God to be God, figure out somebody else that can do what I do." But you can't. In that we should know that since God is who he claims he has a plan not only for the universe, but also for us. He's made that plan clear to us in His Word. Psalm 33:11 says, "The council of the Lord stands firm forever and the plans of his heart to all generations." The council of the Lord—His plans stay firm forever—the council of his heart to all generations.

Gloria and I, when we were praying about coming here and working through that process, were really excited. We accepted the call to come here. We started trying to figure out how on earth we were going to get here because we had so many things that needed to happen back in Florida, house selling and all of those kinds of things, and thousand things going on with us and Mom. Our daughter, Shirene, is in Florida. Our son and his family is in Australia and we're somewhere in the middle on this side of the ocean. How is all of this going to work out? People would ask, "What's your plan?" I'd say, "I don't know, but I'm glad God has one."

Now, it's not a real good thing to start out on a cross-country trip without a plan. It's not really helpful to be driving through the desert when it's 115 degrees and even your GPS doesn't know where you are. We got off of one ramp off of one exit at a little town called Needles. And the GPS started going crazy. It took us up one road, another road, another road, all through a subdivision, brought us back out and it told us to go back the same way we'd just come from. So I said to my wife (now this is sanctification after 38 years) "Honey, I don't know where we are." "I'm going to actually ask for directions." So I pulled into this one grocery store, a tiny outlet store kind of thing. I saw two young men standing outside and I said, "I'm trying to get bearings on where I am and there's this highway out here. Can you tell me what the name of that road is?" They said, "We don't know." I said, "OK, thanks for your help." I went inside the store, I saw two people getting out their goods, going through the line, got the groceries organized and everything – pushing her cart out. I said to them, "Excuse me. I'm lost here. I just need some bearings. Where are we? What's the name of that road out front?" "I don't know." I said, "OK. Thank you so much." I went back to Gloria in the car and she asked, "Did you get directions?" "I don't know." So I got back in the car, drove down the street just about ½ block and there was a Shell station. I pulled up in the Shell station. The mechanic literally jumped up out of his chair – he was just sitting there in the bay – hot afternoon – all the routine – Saturday afternoon – nobody's coming by – but us. He jumps up out of his chair, comes running toward the car, and I'm starting to get out of the car. I've never seen anybody that excited who

doesn't know me to see me. He yells across, "You're here about the tires, aren't you?" "No. I'm here for directions." He said, "Well, come around here." The tread was starting to separate and bad news. So, here I am in Needles and three of them had gone so you might as well get the fourth one. He pulls the two front wheels off (and this is after about an hour) and he comes into the shop and he says, "I need you to come look at something." I say, "Okay." So I go out there and he says, "Your front brakes have also burned up." "I've got to go talk to my wife. . ." Sometimes when you are making plans, when you are making trips, when you're trying to do everything you possibly can to sort out things and do the right thing and be on the right road. Sometimes the wheels literally fall off, and it doesn't matter what you try to do. The only thing that is going to give you encouragement or hope when life gets bad and desperate and things are coming apart is the fact that you've got a God that is in control. You have a God who has a plan and Who has promised to work that out in your life for His purpose and His glory. And I can only say, we're here because God is gracious and He's kind, and He continues to work it out. God has a plan and He unfolds it in our lives. But secondly He has a blueprint for His plan. We're all trying to sort out our temporal affairs; we have to do that. But God's plan includes not only the minute details of our life, but also the bigger picture of what He's doing in the nations. It starts with Christ; its central focus is Christ. And it ends in Christ Who is the beginning and end of all things. The Bible enjoins us, commands us to come to Christ because He is God's resolution for our lives. That's why in Psalm 2 where the Psalmist says, "The nations are in an uproar and kingdoms fall." The Psalmist says, speaking of God's voice in verse 6,

<sup>6</sup> "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." <sup>7</sup> I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." <sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage . . . " (ESV)

The Bible is clear that God is on the throne. Christ right now, having ascended to the right hand of the Father is seated with Him. It says in Hebrews 1:8, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom." The incredible thing is that now that Christ has ascended to the Father He has poured out His spirit upon the church to execute His plan. Where can His plan be found? The design of it is in Matthew 28:18-20. You all know those verses very well. But it's our commander-in-chief who has had victory over sin and death saying, "All authority is now vested with me. I am now giving you a mission to go, to baptize and to teach people all things." The astounding thing is that the blueprint for God's plan had been entrusted to us, the church. God has the plan, He has the blueprint for that plan to be fulfilled, and He has entrusted that to us, the church. When we execute the will of the Father, when we come along side what God says in His Word, we are most happy. When resist God's plan and somehow try to follow it out in our own thinking or our own will, we come up with all kinds of things that ultimately hinder and cause stumbling among members of the church. The issue remains, "Where do we stand in relationship to God's plan?" The Psalmist invites us in verse 12,

<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way . . . (ESV)

The Psalmist is preaching the Gospel in this Psalm. He is saying that God is in control of all the earth. He's calling people to repentance because God Himself has a plan for the earth and He's established that plan through the Son, so He calls people to repentance. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." Come to Him. Rejoice in Him. Find in Him the life that you need.

I've been in ministry for over 30 years. My wife and I have had the privilege of seeing God work all over this planet. The plan does not change. God's determination to bring that plan to bear has not changed and when we follow the blueprint of God's plan, we will know His presence, we will know His blessing, and people will be brought to king of glory.