

What's Your Plan? - Living Legacy part six - sermon | Shane Schlesman

DRAFT UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT -- may contain misspellings and grammatical errors

Sunday, February 10, 2019 | 10:00 am Service | WEAG 401 N. Parham Rd., Richmond VA

You didn't even know worship could be that good. You're new here. You're like, what? You're joining us online. You're like, I got to get there. We are so grateful you are here. Those of you who are alive with us joining us online as well. We thank you for coming and being a part of what God is doing here at West End Assembly of God. My name is changed last minute lead pastor here at we ag and we just have been looking at for the last few months what it means to be a living legacy, to, to continually live in a legacy that would go on generation after generation. In the last two weeks, we've been focused on this aspect of God's story around the world. We've been focused on the story of God around the world. We call it missions. Okay? Uh, we, we, we refer to it as missions because it is us joining the mission of God.

We talk about it many different ways and we say it in different formats, but I can tell you Jesus is the one who gave us the mission. He said, go into all of the world and preach the Good News, the Gospel, so that's what we want to do and hopefully you've gotten to see some of the tables around our building and met some of our missionaries and met some of the organizations that we support. And we do that through a giving mechanism called faith promise. And each one of you have a card in your weekly that tells you a little bit about faith promise and how you can be involved. But I, I wonder sometimes if we forget, uh, I know I do. I don't mean forget like I don't know the truth. I mean simply forget in the sense of, you know, what's the most important thing you ever need to be reminded of that, you know, like when you're hustling around the house and, and suddenly you're thinking about 10 other things and you're really late. So is this really important right now? Maybe not in your house, but that's, that's the question I ask all the time. Like, you know, you come up with something in the last minute. And we really, when we talk about what impacts the world, we get so concerned about so many little things, don't we?

Do any of them really changed the world? I mean, do they really make a difference? Is it that important? What kind of car we drive or what kind of house we have or what kind of, how our yard looks or that I know. I know it's important. I'm not saying I'm not, I'm not saying if you're here this morning, you think about that you're such a bad person. I'm saying

your normal just like me. Okay. There's some crazy people here too. And you're welcome. Okay, you're welcome to come join us. But normal people think about stuff like this. Uh, our son, our oldest son was in fourth grade and uh, when he was in fourth grade at Pemberton elementary school and the teacher was such a great teacher that year and she did an organic garden and she did this project with the kids and she brought them in and, and they were doing this organic garden and they were talking while they were doing the garden. What a great teacher thing to do. Just give them something kinetic, you know, something to use with their hands and all of a sudden the boys start talking and getting involved and they start sharing things like recycling would be a good idea that could help the world. And she said, well, what kind of things could really change the world? Like what could we talk about today that could change the world? And people started talking about acts of kindness and people talked about generosity. People talked about helping other people and and Bruce spoke up and he just said,

we just need to tell the world about Jesus. That's good. Public school education. Amen. Teacher reported that to us and we were like, that's what I'm talking about now. We had a revival that night. Come on, but it sounds so easy, doesn't it? It sounds so easy, but there comes a time in life like were you start to grow

up like in life and you start to realize, well, that's not so easy. Like how do you literally tell the whole world about Jesus? Like, what's the plan for that? How do you go about that and like, you know, when you're little kids and you just Kinda don't understand this and you're like, just tell them it's like so precious.

Who's going to do that?

What's the plan for that? How are we going to pay for that? I mean, you know, they're starting to get the logistics right? It's Kinda like when you're little and you just thought food appeared in the refrigerator, you had no idea you might be 25 and still think that you think you come home and you're like, it's eating time. I don't know how this food appeared, but it always magically seems to be here. And when you get older and you start buying your own groceries and you're like, Whoa, I guess we ought to have a plan for this, shouldn't we? And missions is a little bit like that. When you show up and you're new to your faith,

you just say, Hey Jesus, Jesus,

what are you guys talking about? What are you so worried about? Just tell the world about Jesus.

Okay.

You know, this stuff just doesn't grow on trees.

And for some of us in our maturity, it's time to step into a plan and not my plan. Let's not look at my plan. I don't know. Maybe you have a plan, but that's what I want to talk to you about this morning. What's your plan? What's your plan to change the world that I'm not saying you should go with mine and I'm not saying we should go with yours, but let's look at a plan together from scripture. Here's what the Apostle Paul. Now the apostle Paul was somebody who used to kill Christians.

He would murder anyone who was following the way of Jesus back then and Jesus met him on the road to Damascus is recorded. Luke records the story of how a man transformed by Jesus now takes Jesus to the world. And so this is who writes to the church at Corinth in his second letter in Second Corinthians chapter nine, the service that you perform. Now, if you read the whole chapter, you will realize he is speaking about gifts, about money. The service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but it's also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God because of the service by which you have proved yourself. Others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession. Others will praise God for the obedience that is accompanied by your profession of the Gospel of Christ and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. So Paul had this

election of sorts that was happening and you have to Kinda understand that. Paul was actually talking to churches all the time. He would go and start a church and then he would follow back and he would help support that church. He would collect money from different churches and then go out and start another church and yet another town. And so the church began to grow, but he always in his teaching and you can see it clearly as you read the letters in scripture to all of these churches that really existed in a real time and a real place. Actual letters that were written to these churches about giving, about how you ought to give to your church and how you ought to give beyond that and every now and then collect an offering that was special over and above your regular giving. We learn in the book of that not you didn't have to give, but if you said you would give it was really important to God and if you committed to giving that you ought to give a percentage or the first fruits of what you earned to your local community. Now that's not my plan. That's a plan that you can read about through each one of these churches, but

then the plan to reach the world. I'm just going to let you in on what God's plan to reach the world look like in the practical level today.

So this is not a sermon about getting your money. This is just a sermon to raise awareness for the plan that God already has in place. Whether you want to join it or not is up to you,

but I want to show you in scripture what this looks like. First of all, God's program, his program is to send

God's program is to send. Now, we talked about it last week. Pastor Lisa didn't you do an amazing job by the way. I love her heart for missions, the way she just just wants to go around the world and she's just never lost that fourth grade thing even though she didn't even know Jesus in fourth grade. She just never lost that. That wonderful beauty of faith to say let's just go. And she challenged us to make it personal. I made it personally. I've been to Ethiopia. That's why I look like a rabbi this morning. I'm not going to speak in Hebrew. First of all, I got to see and Hebrew in the uh, in, in seminar. No, actually, I'm sorry. I got a d first and had to retake it. Okay. They didn't count it. Apologize. And any middle live from the pulpit. Okay. Hey, cs. Get degrees y'all so don't, don't hate on me. All right. They gave me one of those things. Nobody cares. But you know, I got it. So, eh. So I, I made it personal. This is from our son are one of our Ethiopian sons who we support through compassion Hanoch who gave me this, and this represents probably a house payment to me, but he gathered everything he could, few weeks worth of income, and he gave this to me and it's precious to me because it's important to make it personal, but if you can't go,

even if you do go, there is a plan of God that he has about sending that is his plan, not just to go, but to send others. In fact, we ag has over a hundred and 10 missionaries and organizations that we support and more than half of them came as homegrown missionaries from this church in the last 50 years. We. It's important to raise up people with a mission to reach the world, to take Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith and take him around the world with you and you know what? We want to send you there.

So how are we going to do that? Well, here's what Paul suggested to the church. Listen to this in Second Corinthians nine. Let's back up to the beginning of the chapter. There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people

for I know your eagerness to help.

I already know

Paul didn't have to wonder. They were already chomping at the bit. Can you imagine that?

They already showed up. They're like, how do we get involved? How can we help them? How can we help this other church, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians. Now the Macedonian church, we're going to learn about them in a minute, but the Macedonian church is going through massive trials and difficulties and Paul was there with the Macedonian church is by the way, not just one church but multiple churches and he was encouraging them and boasting about this and telling them that since last year and your enthusiasms, your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to what

action

you ever met. Somebody who believes something but it just never showed up.

You know they came to church, but you know you've seen them. Their instant story. You've seen their,

their facebook or you've seen their pros, you've seen their whatever. Just doesn't seem to match up, you know, somehow you know. Everyone hates that. We call that a what?

Yeah, you know you've been called it before. I'm one. You're one because you know what, there's no been no, no, none of us who can hold to the standard that God presents.

That's why it is is standard. It is through his righteousness. It is what he gives me, not what I give him, but this is an opportunity to show up, but I am sending the brothers. This is what he does. This is the plan in order that are boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow,

but

that you may be ready.

As I said you would pay. This was Paul's plan.

This is how he was going to spread the gospel. He was going to ask them to give above and beyond what they were already giving to the church at Corinth and show them how

they could do this. Then it will be ready. He goes on in verse four and five

for if any Macedonians come with me and find you on prepared. We not to say anything about you would be ashamed of having been so confident,

so I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in and finished the arrangements for the generous gift you had. Promise. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one, grudgingly given you ever forget a birthday. Don't raise your hand.

Do that.

If we're a good Christmas who hook a lot. How about just a person at Christmas? You know they were coming over your house and you scrambled through the tree and you were looking and you're like, no, this can't be happening right now. Quick run upstairs in my closet and wrap something. You laugh. Don't laugh at me. Laugh with me because that's happened. Okay? I once wrapped an old pair of sneakers and gave it to one of my kids. Thankfully it was the one who doesn't notice anything. I'm not gonna say who that was, but one of them received a pair of sneakers on Christmas Day because you know, sometimes Santa just doesn't remember and then got it. Needs Helpers. Okay, so I

I know, but here's what happens in that moment when you don't prepare, you give it in panic, not generosity. When you don't prepare, when you don't plan, when you don't put it in. That's why I honestly, this is how I give my 10 percent to the job. I give my 15 or whatever we can do. We want to grow that number every year to our local church and I put it on automatic. I set it and I worship with it every week. It's on automatic, it's online, it's out of my. It doesn't. It goes right out of my check and my faith promise that we commit to. I put it online as well. You can put that online. You say, Oh, pastor, you're just trying to get money. I'm just trying to tell you that if you're coming to the faith and just saying Jesus, Jesus, that there has to be a plan. It's time for us to grow in our feet and realize that the plan of getting the Gospel to the world has to be planned.

This is biblical. This is Jesus. This is the one who he turned on the Damascus road and changed his life

forever, who couldn't shake it, who had to tell the whole world, who devised a plan and with all the churches to participate to give to their local church and then go above and beyond that. That was his program to send. And secondly, here's God's principle. Here's God's principle too. So

now you've heard this word before, right? Usually on a televangelist when they say, oh, so that seed rather, so that seed and it will become millions of seeds. Your \$10 will become a 100 year. 100 will become a thousand years. A thousand will become \$100,000 a year. 100,000 will become 1 million, so the seed and reap the harvest, and so we get turned off by other's plans, but let's look at what God's plan was. Here's this principle. Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap what? Sparingly. Whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what? Who has the church has decided, no. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give not reluctantly or under compulsion, not guilted, not because someone preached a sermon. You know what? The great thing about planners are the people who are giving right now online, they're loving this sermon. They're like, this is preach it, brother. I got a plan. I'm so glad to know I'm a part of God's plan. Not Reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. God loves the cheerful giver as it is written that they have freely scattered their gifts to the poor. Their righteousness endures forever. Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also surprise supply your increase

supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your bank account. MMM. See? Sowing and reaping is not about getting rich. Quick. Sowing and reaping is about planting the seed of the Gospel around the world and the one who plants the seed knows that the supplier is God himself, and that supplier will not only take care of bread for food, also supply and increase your store of seed and enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. Listen to this. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.

See, that takes planning on our part, doesn't it? We can't just show up and be generous. If you, if you are, if you are maxed out in your life and you are spending way more than you make, then it is difficult for you to be generous, but the Lord will enrich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion and through us. Your generosity will result

in Thanksgiving to God. This is God's principle, so I know there's some misconceptions out there. I know that we have adulterated and taken the opportunity to to gain money for our own desires and I know there's people out there that do that, but when you give, because it is a principle that God is putting your heart, let me tell you something that happens.

There's a transfer that happens. I don't give to a church because I agree with the church I give to the church because it is my worship to God, not to the church. Amen. Listen, I'm going to say it plainly. If you stop, you're giving because you're not sure about a church. You have stopped your worship, so where are you about God?

Okay.

If somehow what I can do determines what you can give, then you are given to me.

Is it not the truth?

If you are giving based on an organization, if you are giving based on real results, if you are giving based on anything other than God's command, then you are giving begrudgingly and you are not the generous and cheerful giver that God loves. You are not in God's program and you are definitely not living the

opportunity and you are missing the opportunity to receive the blessing of God when you. So

this is an opportunity for you and I to step into this principle, not to get rich, but that's so every that every need would be taken care of. I have a friend who told me they just were convicted recently about tithing and they said I haven't been giving them for first fruits I haven't been giving. Uh, and so they started and said, you know, I haven't ever done that. Just kinda got done it sporadically and I felt convicted recently. They started giving. But I, the reason

why I wasn't giving is because honestly I just couldn't afford

ward it.

I mean, I live paycheck to paycheck. I have one income I have and it's not a big income. And, and it barely, I mean I scraped by every single month to pay my bills and, and I wasn't sure how it was going to happen, but I took this challenge from God and just said, I'm going to test you on this, Lord. I'm going to put my money in your hands, but also I'm going to put my needs in your hands and you know what? That person reported back to me. It's been about six months and they haven't missed a bill. You know why?

Because God doesn't Miss Bills.

He might miss one of your needs, but he's not gonna. He are one of your wants, but he's not going to miss your knee. God takes care of those who give. Now you can say that. You're just hyping that up. I don't want to. If you're hearing, hi, please

dismiss it. Listen to God, not me. Listen to the one who gave everything because here is the last principle. God's promise. God's promises this or I don't have time to go to that. God's promise is this sacrifice. This is his promise sacrifice. It doesn't sound like a real great hype speech, but listen to how Paul encouraged those in corinth. In Second Corinthians, Chapter Eight, the chapter before

and now brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches in the midst of a very severe trial.

If Paul, the apostle,

whose life has been threatened and had been in prison many, many times, been beaten to an inch of his life, multiple times, almost died for giving the gospel is calling it a severe trial, it must be bad. Let me tell you about this church who is in very severe trial, their overflowing joy, their extreme poverty welled up in a rich generosity

for I testify that they gave as much as they were able

even beyond their ability.

Wouldn't you love to give beyond your ability? That's why we call it faith promise to believe in something

I cannot see, to hope for something that I don't see as possible, so they gave

beyond their ability entirely on their own. They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege and sharing of the service to the Lord's people. This is not a hype speech,

but

here's the reality. We have 110 over 100, 10 missionaries on the field, nearing 120 organizations and missionaries that we support to the tune of about \$35,000 a month.

Good.

That isn't my responsibility. Yes, it is. As a leader, I take full responsibility, but as a child of God, we must take full responsibility. Say I didn't hire any of those people. Don't know what you're talking about. Preacher a, here's the reality. The people who give to our church, you know what? Back in 2000, 11, eight years ago, I did, uh, uh, asked the business office, do a study, and here's what we learned. The generational giving broke down this way, that two thirds of the giving back in 2011 was given by boomers. Now look 46 percent boomers, 26 percent gen x, that's growth. Fifteen percent builders, six percent millennials and to Gen z is this past year. Come on,

a middle schoolers given to faith. Promise. Hallelujah.

Hey Man, listen, this is a beautiful picture to me. Of 488 people total. I'm sorry, up 488 households in 2018, who gave an eight years ago, almost 70 percent of all of the faith promise was given by one generation.

God is uniquely positioning you in a church that has many generations that worship and serve and lead together. We are moving from just having generations to serving together and now giving together as an intergenerational church who takes ownership, not have we asked plan, but of God's plan. That is a generational

giving in our church. Here's my application that we ag missions legacy is at stake at \$35,000 a month in faith. Promise that is huge and I don't know how that comes in. I believe in faith because it needs to come in, over and over and above our regular budget and over and above all the things that God does through this place, and I don't know how he's going to do that. I'm going to trust God with it, but are you trusting God with it? This is his legacy. This is the name of Jesus, so what's our plan? What's our plan? Second Corinthians, chapter two, this service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but it's also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God because of the service by which you have proved yourselves. Others will praise God for the obedience that Accompanies Your Confession of the Gospel of Christ. He goes on to say this, and for your generosity, in sharing with them and with everyone else and in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace of God has been given to you, so thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

That's God's plan. So what's your plan? What's your plan today? It didn't start with you. It started with a gift that has already been offered to you. It started with his indescribable gift, and if we really believe that Jesus is the answer for the entire world and we have received this indescribable gift, then what's our plan? It's time to step into the story of God

and step into what he's doing, what he's already doing. He's going to do it with or without you, with or without us, but this is an opportunity for us. Next week we're going to ask you to come and pray and ask what God would have you give, not what we would have you give, not what your spouse would have you give, not what your parents would have you give, not what your friends would have you give, not what you would panic and say, I got to give something, but that what God would have you give. Now here's the for

188 people right now in this room. There's probably about 12, 1300 people gathered in this space right now. Probably 15 over 1500 people in this building right now. How many of them will join God's plan? Don't give out of compulsion, but conviction and ask God, would you be one of the 500, 600 of the 700. What if you. I don't care if you gave a dollar, if you gave \$1 a week or \$1 a month, if you gave, if you gave a basically a starbucks, just let one star bucks a month. Why not participate? Not In our plan, but in the plan that God has. Take his name around the world that he gave everything in this indescribable gift to receive. Step into God's story, step into God's giving because he's already given you everything. It's time for us to pray and consider. What would we give.

