

“Best Laid Plans”
Romans 15:22-29

Introduction:

1. The Famed Scottish Poet, Robert Burns:
 - Once Wrote A Poem About:
 - “The Best Laid Schemes O’ Mice An’ Men!”
 - And How - For Both:
 - Mice And Men:
 - Our Schemes & Plans:
 - So Often Go Awry!
 - And That Can Be Very Frustrating:
 - Especially For Men - For All Of Us:
 - Because For The Most Part:
 - We Are A Planning People:
 - And We Don’t Like Surprises!
2. You Can See This:
 - In Your Own Life:
 - When You Are Inflexible:
 - To Change!
 - We Can Even See This:
 - This Morning:
 - In That Most Of Us Are:
 - Creatures Of Habit!
 - Just Look At Where You Are Sitting!
 - Same Place As Last Week, I Bet! And The Week Before That Too!
3. But - The Question:
 - We ***All*** Need To Consider This Morning Is This:
 - Where Is God’s Plan In Our Plans?
 - Where Is God’s Plan In Your Plans?
 - This Question Is Important:
 - Because - Even Though:
 - As Burns Put It In His Old Scottish Dialect:
 - “The Best Laid Schemes O’ Mice An’ Men Gang Aft Agley!”
 - This Is Never True:
 - About God’s Plans!
 - God’s Plans For:
 - You!
 - Your Family!
 - Our Church!
 - And Even The World!
4. So - As We Head Back In Our Bibles:
 - To Romans 15 - We Will See:
 - From The Plans The Apostle Paul Was Making:
 - For ***His*** Service:
 - To The Lord:
 - That We Need To:
 - Leave Room:
 - In ***Our*** Plans:
 - For ***God’s*** Plans And Work!
5. And So - In Romans 15:22-29:
 - We Read About Paul’s Own Travel Plans:
 - As An Apostle & Missionary To The Gentile World:
 - Sent By The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - “For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. / But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; / Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your [company]. / But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. / For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. / It hath

pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. / When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. / And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ!"

6. In These Verses:

- We Will Find 4 Things:
 - That God Often Uses:
 - To Reveal His Plans:
 - To Us As His People!
- And - When He Does So:
 - You Need To Be Ready & Willing:
 - To Adjust Your Plans Accordingly!
 - So - First - As We Just Read In 15:22:

* You Need To Leave Room In Your Plans:

1. ***For Providential Delays!***

- **IE:** Have You Ever Experienced A Delay In Your Travel? Like Thousands Recently Did - When SouthWest Airlines Had To Cancel Hundreds Of Flights - Allegedly Because Of "Weather!" That Can Be A Very Frustrating Experience, To Say The Least!

- Well - Paul Experienced Many Delays & Many Hindrances To His Plans - For Far Worse Reasons - Than "Weather!"

- He Describes This For Us Again In 15:22:

- "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you!"

- Just Think Of Some Of:

- The Hindrances & Delays:

- He Faced In:

- His Service For The Lord!

- There Were:

- Personal Difficulties!

- Like The Difficulties He Describes:

- In 2 Corinthians 7:5 - When He Was:

- "Come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears!"

- In Other Places:

- He Describes Personal:

- Injuries & Health Needs:

- As Well As Ministry Obligations!

- He Also Faced:

- Satanic Defiance:

- To His Plans - Like The Defiance He Describes:

- In 1 Thessalonians 2:18 - When He Wrote:

- "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us!"

- How Did Satan Hinder Paul?

- We Don't Know!

- But - It Delayed His Plans:

- To Visit The Thessalonian Church!

- But He Even Faced:

- Divine Direction:

- For His Plans - Like The Direction That Took Place:

- In Acts 16:6-7 - When:

- "They had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, / After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not!"

- Again - We Don't Know Exactly How:

- God Directed Paul In His Travels!

- But Paul Could Have Become:

- Very Frustrated & Bitter:

- Because He Was "Much Hindered" In His Travel Plans!

- But He Knew That God's Ways:
 - Were Far Better Than His Ways - And That:
 - God's Plans Were Far Greater Than:
 - His Plans!
 - So - Paul Gave The Lord Room:
 - To Work **His** Plans:
 - In And Through Him!
- And In Doing So:
 - Even Though Paul's Plans Were Delayed:
 - God's Plans:
 - Were Never Derailed!
 - **IE:** Back In August - Not Too Far From Our Home - Train Derailed - Made A Mess!
 - Will Never Happen To God's Plan!
 - So - How Did Paul Respond:
 - To These Delays & Hindrances:
 - To His Plans & Goals:
 - To Serve The Lord?
 - He Saw Them - And:
 - He Used Them:
 - As Divine Appointments And Opportunities!
 - Do You Get Frustrated:
 - With Delays & Hindrances:
 - That Seem To Mess Up Your Plans?
 - Leave Room For Them!
 - Because Through Them:
 - God Himself Might Be Making Known To You:
 - His Plans!
 - Leave Room In Your Plans For God's Plans & Work!

* But You Also Need To Leave Room In Your Plans:

2. ***For Providential Desires!***

- Desires That May Even Go Against The Grain Of Your Own Plans!
 - But - These Desires Come From The Lord!
 - In Philippians 2:13 - We Are Told:
 - "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure!"
 - Godly Desires Come From God Himself!
 - **IE:** Now - It Can Be Very Easy For Us To "Give Up" On Dreams & Desires That We May Once Have Had! Its Probably Too Late For Me Now To Fulfill My Childhood Dream Of Playing For The Denver Broncos! Though, They Could Probably Use My Help This Year!
 - But - When You Have Dreams & Desires To Live For The Lord:
 - That Come From The Lord:
 - Don't Ever Give Them Up!
 - You See - God Gave To The Apostle Paul:
 - A Special Desire To Visit Rome!
 - Not For Sight-Seeing:
 - But For Christian Service!
 - After All - He Had Heard:
 - So Much About The Church In Rome!
 - Back In 1:8 - He Wrote:
 - "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world!"
 - And - He Even Had Made Some Great Friends:
 - From Among Them!
 - Like Priscilla & Aquila!
 - And So - He Said To Them:
 - Back In 1:11:
 - "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established!"
 - And So - In 15:23-24a - He Confirms:

- The Great Reality:
 - Of His Desire:
 - To Visit With Them!
 - “But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; / Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you!”
 - In These Verses:
 - We See That Paul’s Desire:
 - Was Both A Longing Desire & A Lasting Desire!
 - It Was Something He Wanted To Do For Years!
 - And So - At This Point In Paul’s Ministry:
 - He Believed He Had Accomplished:
 - All The Plans He Had Made:
 - To - 15:20 - “Preach The Gospel, Not Where Christ Was Named!”
 - And Now - He Was Making New Plans:
 - To Find New Frontiers:
 - To Explore & Evangelize:
 - Like Spain!
 - And He Believed:
 - He Could Finally Fulfill:
 - His Great Desire:
 - To Visit Rome!
 - But Why?
 - In The Rest Of 15:24 - We Find:
- The Great Reasons:
 - For His Desire!
 - 15:24b - “For I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your [company]!”
 - Wherever Paul Went:
 - He Went With A Purpose!
 - And So - Any Visit To Rome Would Be For These Reasons!
 - First - To Share In:
 - His Vision!
 - For Paul - Rome Wasn’t To Be The End Of His Journey!
 - It Would Be Just A Layover!
 - So That:
 - The Roman Church:
 - Could Catch The Vision & Share The Burden:
 - To Get The Gospel To Spain!
 - And - A Second Reason - Was To Share In:
 - His Vitalization!
 - For Mutual Encouragement & Edification In The Lord!
 - Now - Paul’s Dreams & Desires To Visit Rome & Spain:
 - Had Been With Him For Years!
 - It Could Have Been Very Easy For Him:
 - To Just Give Up On These Desires!
 - But - His Desires Were Good Desires - Given To Him By The Lord!
 - And So - For Years:
 - He Prayed About It & Pursued It:
 - Even Though They May Have Seemed To Him Just A Pipe-Dream Or A Fantasy!
 - But - We Need To Learn:
 - To Leave Room In Our Plans:
 - For Good, Spiritual Desires:
 - That God Brings Into Our Hearts And Minds!
 - So Many Of Our Plans And Desires:
 - Relate To Matters Of *This* Life:
 - And Are Earth-Bound!
 - Just Think About Your Plans:
 - For This Week!
 - Are There Any Plans & Desires:

- That Are Heaven-Bound - And:
 - Relate To The Things Of The Lord?
- When God Gives You A Desire:
 - With Spiritual Vision & Vitalization:
 - Don't Neglect It!
 - Even Though It May Seem Like That Desire:
 - May Never Be Fulfilled:
 - Keep Praying About It:
 - As Paul Did!
 - Keep Pursuing It:
 - As Paul Did!
 - And Yet:
 - Be Patient:
 - As Paul Was!
 - Because God's Timing:
 - Is Best!
 - So - Keep Fanning The Flame:
 - Of Those God-Given Desires:
 - And Leave Room In Your Heart For More!

* But Then - You Also Need To Be Open To & Leave Room:

3. ***For Providential Doors!***

- Sometimes - When You Pursue After:
 - Your God-Given Desires:
 - The Path That God Uses:
 - To Get You To That Destination:
 - Meanders & Winds:
 - Instead Of Going Straight To The Goal!
 - **IE:** Its Kind Of Like The Meme You Might Have Seen - That Illustrates The Typical Shopping Habits Of A Husband & A Wife! The Husband Usually Makes A Beeline For The Item He Needs & Heads For The Exit! The Path The Wife Takes Hits Every Aisle - To Make Sure She Doesn't Miss Anything She Might Need Along The Way!
 - But - I Think For Both Men & Women - When It Comes To Certain Desires & Goals - It Is Hard For Us To Be Patient & Wait For The Way The Lord Often Likes To Work!
 - And So - Sometimes God Will Take You Through The *Entire* Store:
 - Before He Leads You *Out* Of The Store!
 - But - Those Different Aisles:
 - Are Really Different Doors:
 - That God Puts In Your Path & Plans:
 - To Accomplish His Will!
 - And So - In 15:25-27a:
 - The Apostle Paul Describes:
 - Some:
- Doors Of Opportunity:
 - That The Lord Gave Him!
 - Good Opportunities:
 - That Further Delayed His Good Desire:
 - To Visit The Church Of Rome!
 - Paul Writes:
 - "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. / For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. / It hath pleased them verily!"
 - Even Though Paul Felt The Time Was Right:
 - For Him To Finally Make His Way To Rome:
 - Yet - God Gave Him Other Opportunities! Like:
 - The Opportunity To Serve!
 - To "Minister Unto The Saints!" (15:25)
 - And - Not Just Those In Jerusalem:
 - But Those Christians Who Sent Him There With Their Special Offering -

Which He Mentions Next!

- When God Opens A Door For You:
 - To Serve - Even If It Doesn't Seem Like:
 - It Fits With Your Gift - Or:
 - It Doesn't Fit With Your Current Plans!
 - Go Through The Door & Serve!
 - God Often Uses These Doors:
 - Not Only To Reveal **His Plans**:
 - But Also To:
 - Reveal **Your Gifts**!
 - God Also Gave Him:
- The Opportunity To Share!
 - With The "Certain Contribution" That Was Given For "The Poor Saints Which Were At Jerusalem!"
 - You Should Always Be Ready:
 - To "Bear Ye One Another's Burdens, And So Fulfill The Law Of Christ!" (Galatians 6:2)
 - Those Burdens Could Be:
 - Physical Burdens!
 - Financial Burdens!
 - Material Burdens!
 - Emotional Burdens!
 - Spiritual Burdens!
 - But - Whenever God Opens A Door For You:
 - To Share Another Person's Burden:
 - Go Through The Door & Share!
 - Even If It Seems Like It Takes You So Far Off The Pathway Of Your Own Plans!
 - These Doors Are Nothing Less:
 - Than Divine Appointments!
 - But - Not All Doors:
 - Are Doors Of Opportunity!
 - Some Of Those Doors Are Simply:
 - Doors Of Obligation - And Duty!
 - But - Even Those Obligations:
 - Are Good - And Further:
 - The Work & Plans & Purposes Of The Lord!
 - And We See This In:
 - 15:27b - "And their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things!"
 - Paul Wanted The Christian Churches:
 - That He Had Founded:
 - In The Regions Of Macedonia & Achaia -To Know That:
 - They Had Certain Obligations:
 - Toward Those Who Sacrificed So Much:
 - To Bring Them The Gospel!
 - And Paul Believed:
 - It Was His Duty & Obligation:
 - To Help Them:
 - Fulfill Theirs!
 - But - These Obligations:
 - Sprang From:
 - The Fountain Of:
 - Christ's Own Love!
 - So They Had:
 - An Obligation To Repay:
 - The Spiritual Treasure:
 - They Were Given!
 - "Their Debtors They Are!"

- Paul Wrote!
- Even Though They Knew That:
 - It Could Never Be Repaid!
 - And - They Had:
- An Obligation To Relieve:
 - The Material Poverty:
 - Of Their Brothers & Sisters In Christ:
 - Whom They Had Never Met!
 - To “Minister Unto Them In Carnal / Material Things!”
- Along The Pathway Of The Christian Life:
 - There Are Many Obligations:
 - That We Need To Attend To As Well!
 - But - What Is A Duty:
 - Can Also Be A Delight!
 - Because - As We Find In 2 Corinthians 5:14:
 - It Is “The Love Of Christ That Constraineth Us!”
- And So - Whatever Door:
 - God Puts Before You:
 - As You Are Pursuing Your Plans:
 - Remember - Those Doors:
 - Are Never *In* The Way!
 - Those Doors:
 - *Are* The Way!
 - After All - It Is God:
 - Who Puts Them There!
 - So - Don’t Get Flustered Or Frustrated With Them!
 - Rather - Go Through Them & Use Them!
 - And - Leave Room In Your Plans:
 - For The Doors Of Opportunities & Obligations:
 - That God Places Along The Way!
 - Because - He Often Uses Those Doors:
 - To Reveal & Accomplish:
 - His Own Plans & Work!

* And Then - Last - You Also Need To Leave Room:

4. ***For Providential Determination:***

- To Be A “Good Steward” Of:
 - Whatever Desires & Goals God Gives You To Accomplish!
 - **IE:** The Question Often Comes Up - Did Paul Ever Make It To Spain? If He Did - Then Why Is It Not Recorded For Us In The Bible? But - If He Didn’t - Then Why Did God Give Him The Desire?
 - Whether Paul Finally Made It To Spain Or Not - At The End Of His Life & Ministry:
 - He Could Confidently Tell Timothy - “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!” (2 Timothy 4:7)
 - And - He Had No Regrets!
 - He Had No Regrets:
 - Because God Gave Him:
 - The Grace & The Strength:
 - To Be Determined To Be A Good Steward:
 - No Matter What!
 - Even As He Wrote In:
 - 15:28-29 - “When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. / And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ!”
 - We Need This Same Kind Of Determination!
 - To Be Good Stewards!
 - Stewards:
- With Our Gifts!
 - Even As Paul Was:
 - In 15:28! His Goal Was To Both:

- “Perform” & “Seal” The “Fruit” Of Their Gift!
- In Other Words:
 - He Was Going To Do What God Called Him To Do:
 - In A Complete Way - And:
 - In The Correct Way!
 - When God Gave Him A Door Of Opportunity:
 - Paul Was Never Going To Go Through It:
 - Only Half-Way!
 - He Sought To See It Through:
 - And Finish The Job!
 - He Was Going To “Perform” It!
 - But Also:
 - When God Gave Him A Door Of Opportunity:
 - Paul Was Going To Give It:
 - His Best!
 - The Word “Seal” Has The Idea Of Ensuring The Integrity Of The Offering!
 - And - We Need To Have The Same Determination:
 - With Our Own Gifts!
 - Because - They Are God’s Own “Fruit!”
 - That He Is Cultivating:
 - In Us & Through Us!
 - We Need To Be:
 - “Good Stewards Of The Manifold Grace Of God!” (1 Peter 4:10)
 - Not Only With Our Gifts:
 - But Also:
- With Our Goals!
 - Paul Still Made Plans & Goals!
 - To Go To Spain And To Go To Rome!
 - But - How Many Of Us:
 - Have Plans & Goals:
 - In Our Lives & Service For The Lord?
 - Of Course - God Can Redirect:
 - Those Plans - As We’ve Seen:
 - Throughout This Message!
 - But - Why Don’t We Today:
 - “Attempt Great Things For God!”
 - Even As We - “Expect Great Things From God!”
 - As William Carey Once Put It!
 - Aspire To Do Something For The Lord!
 - Knowing That:
 - Your Determination, Your Doors, Your Desires, And Even Your Delays:
 - Are All Part Of God’s Way:
 - To Direct **Your** Plans To Accomplish **His!**
 - But - Your Determination:
 - Should Always Be In Light Of:
 - The Gospel!
 - At The End Of 15:29 - Paul Wrote:
 - “I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ!”
 - Paul Believed That:
 - Because Of All That God Had Been Doing:
 - Not Only In His Life:
 - But Also In The Lives:
 - Of The Romans:
 - That - When He Finally Came:
 - His Heart Would Be Full:
 - Because Of The “Blessing Of The Gospel Of Christ!”
 - Without The Gospel:
 - All Of Our Plans:
 - Will Be For Naught!

- But - Through The Gospel:
 - Whatever God Accomplishes Through Us:
 - Will Be To His Praise & Glory:
 - Into Eternity!
- But - The Gospel:
 - Is Where All Of Your Plans:
 - Must Begin!
 - As One Hymn-Writer Asks:
 - “Have You Any Room For Jesus?”
 - After All - Jesus Is:
 - The One Who Came:
 - To Save You From Your Sin!
 - Through His Life & Death & Resurrection!
 - There May Be - In Your Own Plans:
 - “Room For Pleasure, Room For Business!”
 - But - Where Is The Room:
 - For Christ - In All Of Your Life & Plans?
- Only When You Turn To & Trust In Jesus Christ:
 - As Your Savior & As Your Lord:
 - Will He Be Able To:
 - Direct Your Path & Plans:
 - For His Glory & For Your Good!
 - So - Be Determined:
 - To Be A Good Steward:
 - Of All That God Has Given You:
 - To Accomplish His Work!
 - And - Even If It Seems Like:
 - Your Spiritual Goals & Desires:
 - May Be Forever Out Of Reach!
 - Remember What The Lord Tells Us To Do:
 - With Those Things That:
 - *Are* Within Your Reach & Grasp:
 - “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might!” (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Conclusion:

1. So - Is There Room Today:
 - In *Your* Plans:
 - For *God's* Plans?
 - To Be Worked Out:
 - In You & Through You?
2. Remember:
 - God Uses:
 - Your Determination!
 - Your Doors!
 - Your Desires! And:
 - Even Your Delays:
 - To Reveal His Plans:
 - To You & For You!

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com