

Youth Sunday, April 14, 2024
Gavin Elias Lizard, Guest Preacher
Ezekiel 34:11-15 and Jeremiah 29:11-13
“The Plans God Has for You”

Hello everyone, I am Gavin Elias-Lizardo. I am a freshman in high school. I have been with First Pres church since 2nd grade. I have been involved in this church in so many ways like being a deacon, helping out with VBS, helping out with Easter egg hunts, reading scripture for church. I have also been on mission trips. On those mission trips, I have seen God in so many ways. Whether it was West Virginia or Florida I always seemed to see god. No matter what we did in those places God had a plan for us. God’s plans were for good. So we could do good in places where they may have not seen God’s work.

In the scripture, we see Jeremiah and the Israelites amid exile. They were ripped from their homes and sent to Babylon. Jeremiah is reminding the Israelites that God is with them. But none of them believe him. These are God's people not believe in God’s prophet. To be fair to the Israelites they are going through the worst time imaginable. They got kicked out of their own homes and now are being enslaved, waiting for some sign of God. Little did they know the answer was right in front of them. Jeremiah is trying to assure the Israelites that God has plans for them to prosper and not to harm them.

We can see this in our own life. Last year I went to West Virginia on a mission trip. Oh boy, we did not know what we got ourselves into. Some of the projects we worked on were on questionable sites. But God's plan for us was to go to those sites where we might not be the safest or it might not smell or look the greatest to pursue his will. But sometimes we might have to go out of our comfort zones to pursue God's will. Maybe even putting ourselves in danger. During the West Virginia mission trip, I met a very special person. I believe that God planned for me to meet that person. His name is Mose. He is an 80 year old or so man. He also has a very deep southern accent. I remember the first day Kristin said that I'd get along very well with someone. As everyone who was on that trip knows I talked to Mose for hours. I don’t think I got any work done but maybe God’s plan was for me to be present in Moses’ life. I also think I was the only one who could understand his very thick accent. But the thing that I don't think anyone else expected is that God had a plan for him to serve us too. He would do stuff like pray for us and give us refreshment. He gave me a few gifts. That was my

favorite interaction that I had ever had on a mission trip. During the Florida mission trip, we got invited to a fitness challenge in the city. They just wanted the community to get some exercise in. When I told you we stuck out like a sore thumb I mean it. We started doing warm-ups before we walked. Then suddenly a song called Beast Mode started playing. Just ask anyone who was there if you would like to listen to it. That song has now forever stuck with us. Other than that I think the most important thing was how we got to converse with the locals. God planned for us to go there because ultimately we came out with an amazing interaction with the community that we were serving. I feel like God planned for us to have that invitation.

In the Ezekiel scripture, God himself looks for us. He brings us together. He then shepherds us like we are his sheep. As sheep do to a shepherd we listen to god and do his will. God makes plans for us and we fulfill those plans. God's plan for us on that mission trip was to help out even if it was stuff that we did not want to do. God planned every interaction we had on that trip.

God has plans for us. God's plan never harmed us in any way. But how do you know what God's plan is for you? Well, I personally don't know. God's plans work in mysterious ways. God's plans for you can be anything like helping out with our food bank. But hey, who knows about our future? Maybe someday Trent will be a mechanic or Landon will be a racecar driver or maybe Rex will be a welder or Jackson will become an baseball or maybe cam will be a drummer. But whatever you do just know that God has a plan for you. As we read in Romans 8 28,"All things work together for good for those who love god." His plans for us are good and are for good. You just have to choose to take it. Amen.