In keeping with the spirit of Lent and following last week’s message regarding prayer, today I want to share with you a prayer that years ago I discerned to pray: **God, may all your plans for me be successful.**

The rationale behind this prayer is that I want to position myself and do everything that is in my power to let God fulfill God’s plans in my life.

Notice that I did not say “my plans” but God’s. This is a risky prayer by all standards. Basically, I am putting myself at the mercy of God! And you know what, that is the best place I could ever imagine being at.

However, sometimes I make it hard for God to do this.

Can you relate? We delay God’s success in our life. Don’t we? And because of that, we end up losing opportunities to fulfill God’s plans for us. We don’t want that. What we do want is to find fulfillment and know that despite the challenges and hardships in life, we are accomplishing our purpose in life.

Let’s begin with the question we all have asked in this regard: What’s God’s plan for us? Let’s look into this.

Our Scripture reading today is Matthew 4:1-17. Here, Matthew narrates the story of how Jesus -after being baptized and recognized by God as the beloved Son- is taken by the Spirit of God to the desert, to the wilderness to be put to the test.

In this story, Jesus faced three tests or temptations. Of the temptations, one dealt with hunger, another with trust in God’s provision, and the third with love or faithfulness to God.

The first one is the one on which I am focusing today because I believe this one is particularly relevant to understanding how God accomplishes God’s purposes in us.

This first temptation went like this:

[Jesus] fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’

After 30 years of preparation, Jesus was almost ready to begin his ministry. Only one more thing was needed: Jesus needed to be tested. And, in this first test, we have the devil basically telling Jesus: **It has been 40 days since you tasted any food; why are you starving when you can easily feed yourself?**

Of course, **the devil couldn’t care less about Jesus’ needs; he wanted to talk Jesus out of his purpose**, out of God’s plans, into trouble, and even worse, into sin.

**What we see here, then, is that the purpose of Jesus’ temptation or test was about challenging his trust in God’s plan and his complete dependence on God.**

Would Jesus take a shortcut? Would he stay faithful to the Father’s will? Would he fall into doing things the devil’s way instead of God’s way?

It would have been so easy for Jesus -the Son of God- to turn stones into bread. But in doing so, in choosing the bread, he would have had compromised God’s plans for him.

**My friends, how many times does “bread” get in the way of God’s plans for us?**

Let me explain this.

I believe that in this particular story, bread represents a compromise of God’s plans. It is choosing something else before what we know God has said about us or has asked about us. It is yielding or given up too soon because we can’t wait or endure any longer God’s processes in our lives. The “bread,” in other words, is the temptation to ignore or reject the process of God in our lives by taking matters into our own hands.

Let me ask you a direct question now: **What’s your bread?** Is it comforts, wealth, fame, recognition, or any other? **What has interrupted God’s plans in your life?**

Think about it for a moment (deep in your heart, you knew what God wanted for you, but you couldn’t wait or follow through and ended up sabotaging yourself).

Here is our challenge and the reason why so often we find ourselves in places, situations, and seasons of life **that were not meant for us** but we brought ourselves right into them: we fed on the stuff we shouldn’t had and caused a disruption to God’s plans in our lives. In other words, we messed up and we ended up delaying, interrupting, or missing the plans of God for us altogether.

What I am saying to all of us today is: **stick to the plan, do what God has already spoken into your heart, stay faithful and obedient to the goodness and wisdom of God and God’s Word.**

This is what Jesus did and is what he is teaching us to do too. The bread did not get in the way of Jesus for he said, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Here we see Jesus keeping himself aligned to God’s plans. This is what I want for me, my family, and I pray you may have it too: **I don’t care if I am tempted with bread, crackers, or tortillas, the Word of God comes first, and I won’t compromise my relationship, witness, faith, and character for what is a mere temporary comfort. This is not an easy practice, but my aspiration.**

Sometimes is not about how much faith we have or how knowledgeable we are but simply how committed we are to God. Perhaps our challenge or struggle to see God’s plans for us fulfilled is not a lack of faith or knowledge but a lack of alignment with God’s will.

Now, this alignment with God is not always easy because it requires surrender and submission to God. This is the part that scares people away! (It has scared me!) But don’t be. **Don’t be afraid to surrender your heart or your most wanted dreams and desires.** I know some people believe that if they give to God, what is there going to be left for them. What they don’t understand is that when you do surrender to God and confess, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God…” **God is going to multiply the blessings in your life!**

Are you having a hard time believing this? Here is the proof: Jesus was tempted with bread. How ironic is that because later we see that Jesus’ ministry was heavily centered around bread, feeding it to people, and multiplying it miraculously.

My point here is this: **What you are surrendering to God today may be the very thing that God will give you in abundance to bless many.**

My friends, this are good news. God wants to accomplish good plans in and through you.

Let’s not make the mistake of believing that if we submit ourselves to God in all that we are and all that we have, we will lose. **When we unleash the Word of God in our lives, pray to God, “May all your plans for me be successful,” and follow him as our shepherd, we will lack nothing.**

Jesus said best when he said in John 4:34, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.”

This is the invitation today: stop eating the bread that is getting in the way between you and God. Get back to the path. Get yourself together and realign with God’s plans for you.

Has it been a day, a year, maybe five or 20 years since you gave up on what you knew in your heart God wants to accomplish for you, in you, and through you? Well, you can start making it right today. Yield to God.

My prayer for all of us: May all God’s plans for your life be successful. Amen.