

The GPS of Grace

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Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0 : 00] How many of you love following the GPS exactly to the letter? Michael Scott did that. We wound up in a lake. If you know anything about the office, how many times was Dwight the actual voice of reason over, I don't know.

! That was a rare occasion. I wanted to just show you that little clip, number one, just to get your attention and wake you up after a lot going on this morning. This was a lot of fun having the graduates come forward. Big congratulations to y'all.

I got to have breakfast with them this morning. We broke breakfast burritos together, and it was great. But we had a good time. I'm really preaching to them this morning, so the rest of y'all, I hope you get something from it.

But the message is kind of geared toward them, and we're talking about the GPS of grace. So let's see what we mean by that. Take your Bibles, if you would, and go to Paul's letter to the churches in Rome.

We call it the book of Romans. Let's go to chapter 8. This is one of the more well-known verses in the Bible because of what it promises, and we love it. Romans chapter 8.

[1 : 08] We're going to talk about the GPS of grace. While you're turning, we're in the middle of a series on Romans, and this one is kind of a one-off to the side.

We kicked off our series in Romans last Sunday with Mother's Day. We're starting in the back of the letter and going to the front. So we were in chapter 16 last week, and we talked about kind of the kingdom matriarchs that God used mightily in the lives of Paul and the early church.

This Sunday, we're jumping ahead, so to speak, to chapter 8, and we're going to look at these principles that could apply to not only our graduates, but all of us.

So let's see what Paul writes in verse 28 of Romans 8. We know that God causes, what's that word? All things.

What do we have on the screen? Everything. Come on, y'all can do better than that. Let's say it together. Ready? One, two, three. Everything. God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

[2 : 23] Can I throw this little caveat, set this precedent, just get this in there so we're all on the same page here? This is all of us who have faith in Jesus Christ.

All of us who have faith in Jesus Christ are called according to his great purpose for us. So this applies to all of us who would say, yes, I'm a follower of Jesus.

I may not always follow him as well as I should or could by his spirit's power, but I do try to follow Jesus. I have faith that he is God, that he came to this earth, that he walked among us, that he died a death on the cross.

That was God's plan for all of us to be saved, to be reconciled, have a relationship restored with God. And then God raised him from the dead in power and he lives today and offers forgiveness of our sins, offers us a place in his family as the children of God.

So if you believe that and you have faith in Jesus, then this applies to you. So we collectively, as God's church, God's what he calls body of believers, we know that God uses everything, all the things in our lives to work together.

[3 : 42] Say, but yeah, there's no way this thing's going to fit in, right? This is an outlier. This is going to mess it all up. It throws a wrench into it. God says, no, no, no. I use that. I use that thing, that big thing that keeps you up at night, that big thing that seems to ruin it.

I use all of that to work together for the good of you who love God and who he has called according to his purpose.

So this is what Paul's talking about in Romans 8, 28. Now, this is probably the last time we're going to go to this verse. But I wanted to start with it because this provides the precedent for what we're going to talk about today.

And we're going to be in a couple of passages in the Old Testament. But think about a GPS right now. Think about this verse through the context of a global positioning system, in case you're wondering what GPS stood for.

Remember those early days of GPS, when they had the one like Michael had in his car there, or maybe you had it mounted on your dashboard. Before everybody got them on their phones, the GPSs were rudimentary.

[4 : 53] They were a little rough. They had a hard time sometimes. And sometimes you would find yourself lost from following the GPS. I can promise you that as you try to follow the GPS which God put inside you, apart from his spirit, just all of us have our brains.

All of us are born with a conscience. And we all have this guidance system within us that oftentimes gets us lost. Because it's imperfect.

When we try to live this life according to our best understanding, we find ourselves going off track. In ending up in places we didn't intend to end up.

Now that might be physical places. Or that might be relationships. Might be a career. Might be a mental health place that you never planned to be in.

But life has a way of getting us off track. And our internal GPS or guidance system doesn't always help out as well as we thought it would.

[6 : 03] So Jesus said to his disciples, when he was down here on this earth, he said, it's better if I go away. And they're thinking, wait, what?

No, it's not. It's not better if you go away. Jesus, what are you talking about? Don't go anywhere. We're just getting started with you. We're following you around this world.

We're walking with you. We're living with you. You're kind of who our whole world revolves around right now. What are you talking about going away? He says, yeah, it's actually better if I leave you. If I go away, I'm going to leave something better for you, which is my, what is it? Spirit. It's my spirit. My spirit will remain with you.

And you know what the funny thing is? He said the next thing he said was, my spirit will show you or reveal to you all things.

[7 : 00] He said, my spirit will help you understand. You know what the disciples often had a hard time doing with Jesus? Understanding what he was talking about.

Go open up Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. First four books of the New Testament. They're called the gospel records. It was these men who walked with Jesus or talked to those who directly walked with Jesus. And they wrote down all these historical records of the life of Jesus on this earth.

And we get to read in there that his disciples were constantly asking him, Lord, what does this mean? You're telling these parables. You're telling these stories. We don't understand where you're going with this.

What are you talking about? They had a hard time understanding. Jesus says, I'm going to go away. And I'm going to leave my spirit here. And he's going to reveal all these things.

And he's going to help you understand. This is the literal spirit of God himself. It is God in spirit form.

[8 : 04] And for those of you, how many of you would say, I have faith in Jesus. I'm a child of God. Would you testify that by lifting your hand up in the air? Yeah. I think that's just about, if not everybody in this room.

And if you couldn't raise your hand a moment ago, that's all right. Don't feel singled out. We would love to talk to you and reveal more from the scriptures about Jesus to you. And at the proper time, I believe that God would reveal himself to you and draw you to himself.

But for those of us who said, yes, I'm a child of God, then you have access to all of God in spirit form. And God's GPS is a GPS of grace.

So much more effective than the internal GPS that you carry around with you everywhere as you try to make decisions in this life. What should I go?

What job should I work? Who should I marry? When should I have kids? What should I do with these kids now that I have them? And then before you know it, they're grown up and they're walking down here on senior Sunday and sending them off to the next stage.

[9 : 11] And that's going to get here for me a whole lot faster than I realize. My oldest one's starting junior high in the fall and I cannot even begin to wrap my head around that. Jared, he's joining your youth group.

This poor child. Anyway, just kidding. So we know when you put it in context of thinking through God helping me through this life as my guidance system that replaces the one that's inside of me. I'm now guided by a greater power, a voice full of grace. How many of you have heard of the jokes? And I really hope someday they come out with this of the sarcastic GPS. Has anybody heard of that? I've heard little like, I don't know if they're AI recordings or something where it's like somebody's, I told you to take that right. No, not this one, that one. You missed it. You know, the GPS is just giving you sass every time you mess up. Most people who give you advice in life expect you to follow it.

[10 : 16] And when you don't, they'll hold it over your head. God's GPS is a GPS of grace.

He knows you're going to follow him very imperfectly. He knows you're not always going to listen to his voice and obey his instructions in the context of what we know about him from the scriptures. Michael was missing the context there, wasn't he? It said, turn right. And he immediately turned right. He was missing the context that the little map on the screen could have provided him. And his co-passenger was trying to provide for him. No, it means go up there and turn right. The context is so important. But God's GPS is a GPS of grace.

One mistake does not break God's plan. God's not a fragile or imperfect GPS. He is the sovereign navigator for our lives.

[11 : 18] So let's look at a couple of examples in the Bible and find a couple of truths that we know about God. In just the next couple of minutes, I want to share some things with you. And I hope it impacts and maybe even changes the way you look at the Holy Spirit of God and God himself.

So number one, God is the master of misfortune. He's the master of misfortune. We know what we mean by misfortune, right? Bad things happening to you. Outside forces causing trouble in your life. There's hardly a greater example than this in the scriptures than Joseph, the life of Joseph. So Genesis chapter 50, if you'd like to read along, Genesis 50 and verse 20.

Joseph says, you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good. Do we remember who he was saying that to? It's Bible trivia time. Who was Joseph quoting that to when he said in Genesis 50 and verse 20?

Ray, do you remember? His brothers. Good job, man. Somebody's doing a good job in Sunday school. Probably comes from his parents at least because I know how they teach the Bible to their kids. But listen, Genesis 50 and verse 20.

[12 : 23] Joseph is saying to his brothers, you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good. What's he talking about? Well, number one, his brothers sold him into slavery. How many of you had a complicated relationship with your siblings growing up?

There's some kids raising their hands right now. Yes, I have a complicated relationship. All three of the child's boys are like, it's very complicated. We love each other most days.

All right. I bet none of your brothers have actively tried to sell you into slavery. Joseph, y'all quit. We're not giving you ideas. Okay, stop. Joseph had all y'all beat. Now, maybe the only one who had it worse was Abel because Cain literally killed him.

Okay. I think Joseph's brothers had a plan for that and one of them was able to put a stop to it. So listen, it was bad. It started off bad. Joseph had a bad relationship with his family.

[13 : 24] They literally sold him into slavery. Then what happened? He was betrayed by them, right? Then we get into slander was told about him. He landed on his feet. Well, God allowed that to happen.

God put him in as a servant slash slave in the house of Potiphar, high-ranking Egyptian. And then Potiphar's wife spreads this false rumor that he was trying to get with her and steal her away from her husband and all this.

And really, it was the other way around. So he was betrayed. He was slandered against. And then he was forgotten in prison. He gets thrown into prison. God gives him these amazing dreams. And he interprets these dreams for these guys that worked for Pharaoh.

And then they get out of prison and they forget about him. He said, yeah, when you go before Pharaoh and everything works out how you want it to, don't forget about me back here in prison and what happened.

They forgot about him. He was abandoned. But God didn't abandon him. God didn't slander him. God never betrayed him. He stayed with him. And not only was he present, he was working.
[14:26] Well, we went through the life of Joseph probably a year or two ago. And we talked about all these things and broke it down in detail. You can find any of the old sermons that we've been through here on our YouTube channel at FBC Henrietta.

But what we realized was God is always working behind the scenes. So that's why Joseph was able to say when eventually he did get out of prison and Pharaoh himself made him second in command of the entire dominion of Egypt.

Egypt was the world power at the time. And Pharaoh made him second in command only behind Pharaoh himself.

Sure enough, his brothers and his family comes asking him for food because the famine was spreading across the region and they needed to come beg for food from Pharaoh's household. And Joseph is in the position to say, ha, you hurt me. Ain't no way I'm helping you. But his response instead was, I see that what you did was to harm me, but God would not allow that.

[15:39] God used the misfortune that you caused in my life for his glory and for my good. And now it's going to be for your good too. And he went ahead and helped them in far more ways than they ever would have dreamed.

So Joseph is the perfect picture of how God is still the master. God is still in control when misfortune comes upon you. When trouble comes into your life.

Young people, I promise you, as much as we all want the best for you, problems are going to come. Heartbreak is going to come. And I'm not trying to paint a gloomy picture, but life does that on its own enough.

And I think probably in today's world, you even see a little bit of that as a teenager or even before. You start to see the harsh realities of life sometimes. This world is not a perfect place.

It's full of sin. It's full of trouble. And you're living among sinners. And that's why you fit in so well, because you're a sinner too. And so am I. We all hurt each other.

[16:45] Sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. But misfortune comes upon all of us. So as you're trying to navigate this life, full of misfortune, full of trouble, full of people either intentionally or unintentionally trying to trip you up, what do you do?

You stick with God's GPS. If you're taking notes in your bulletin, the next blank is map. God's map has no dead ends.

You could have argued that Joseph hit a dead end many, many times. But God always had a way of escape. We even read in the scriptures, there is no temptation that comes on you, but such as is common to all of us.

And with the temptation, God always makes a way of escape. That's true for any trouble. God might have you endure a season of trouble, but it's only going to be for a season.

There's always going to be an end. There's always going to be a way that God eventually brings deliverance. It may not be right when you want it. I can almost guarantee you it's not going to be right when you want it.

[18:02] It's not always going to be exactly what you want or would have thought was best, but God will always deliver. God will always bring salvation. He does so every time.

Ultimately, He's going to deliver us from this life. He's going to deliver us from this body of death. Paul felt that when he wrote much of the New Testament, and he felt this body of death letting him down over and over again.

And he said, who will deliver me from this body of death? My physical body's failing me. My sin nature is causing me to do things I know I don't even want to do. Who's going to deliver me from this?

And then he said, I thank Jesus Christ my Lord. He's the one who delivers me. So God's map, God's GPS has no dead ends.

What does a GPS say when you take a wrong turn? Rerouting. Recalculating. Recalculating. And then sometimes it doesn't recalculate fast enough, and you're like, where do I go?

[19:02] Tell me where to go. Recalculating. It's great. God's right there. Every time you turn to him, he is there. It's been said over and over again, God's only a prayer away.

And it's true. Truth is, he was never away in the first place. He's always present. He's always with his children. It's when we finally turn to him in faith and say, God, what do I do?

My brothers have betrayed me. What do I do? It's all right. I got you. My master's wife lied about me. What do I do? It's all right. I got you. I'm in prison, wasting away.

The guys I helped forgot about me. What do I do? It's all right. I got you. God, whatever happens in college, in the Air Force, wherever this life and the Lord is leading you in this life, God's got you through any kind of misfortune that will come along.

You may have to endure it. You may have to get through it. It may take a while, but God's map has no dead ends. And then number two, God is the master of mistakes.

[20 : 15] I thank God for this one. The things you can't control, that's the misfortune, right? The outside forces that cause trouble in your life. What about when you're the cause of it?

What about when I'm the one who made my own mistakes and I brought the trouble on myself? That's probably the case more often than not, isn't it? If we're being honest, if we're real, if we're truthful, sometimes we are the cause of our own misfortune.

God is the master even of our mistakes. So let's move on. Let's look at Peter, the life of Peter. Boy, this was a guy who made some mistakes.

I'm looking back at Matthew 14 and we see that Peter was walking on water to Jesus. They're in the fishing boat. Jesus appears walking on the water. Got to be one of just the pure coolest miracles that Jesus ever did, right?

How amazing would it be just to be able to stroll across the waves and not sink? And then Peter, by faith, his powerful, great faith, he jumps out of the boat and he's like, Hey man, Jesus can do it.

[21 : 26] He can make me do it. And he gets out there and starts walking across the waves to Jesus. And Jesus is like, Come on, buddy, let's go. And then what happened? Peter lost a little bit of faith.

And he's like, Oh shoot, man, what am I doing? I'm not Jesus. I'm not God. What was I thinking? And he looks down and boom, he starts to go under.

He lost the faith that was helping him do supernatural things. God can do whatever he wants to do through you. He says, if you've got faith, the tiniest little bit of a grain of a mustard seed, all right?

Tiny little bit of faith. He said, you can move that mountain over there by faith. Peter's experiencing this. And then he loses his faith and he starts to sink.

And Jesus goes over and mercifully grabs him. He was master even in Peter's mistake. He didn't say, Oh, God shouldn't have lost his faith. See you, Peter.

[22 : 30] You've been real, been fun. Moving ahead, John chapter 18. We see Peter at the garden after Jesus had prayed and the disciples had fallen asleep.

And Jesus is about to get arrested and then taken. And the events that lead to his crucifixion started happening real fast. The betrayer, Judas, leads the soldiers to Jesus.

And Peter draws his sword. And what does he do? Cut off the ear of a man named Malchus. And he took matters into his own hands.

Once again, he lost faith. He lost faith that here I am trying to protect the God of the universe with my sword. He could speak them all dead if he wanted to.

But I'm going to get it there and fight his battle with his sword for him. With my sword for him. And what happened? Jesus stepped in, corrected him, and put the guy's ear back.

[23 : 32] He fixed the mistake that Peter made. He was master over that situation too. And then you see later, Luke 22. Peter is by a fire.

Jesus has been taken away to be crucified. And those who walked with him, I'm sure there were, so to speak, people out watching for his disciples to see if they could be arrested as well.

And there's a servant girl standing by the fire. And she says, Aren't you one of the ones who was with Jesus? Aren't you one of those Jesus followers?

And he said, Me? No. Please no. He curses. And he denies Jesus. And he does it again. And then he does it again. Three times.

He denies his Savior. His Master. His Rabbi. He lost his faith. And he failed. Then we go to John 21.

[24 : 43] And what happened in John 21? Jesus meets Peter at maybe his lowest point. He doesn't lecture him.

He doesn't say, I told you so. Fairly fresh off denying Jesus three times. Peter meets him on the beach after he got done fishing.

Remember a few weeks ago we talked about Jesus cooking breakfast for his disciples. And he wants to have breakfast with you in the morning. He wants to meet with you. And it was just after

that in John 21.

Jesus corners Peter. Gets him alone and he says, Do you love me? Peter said, Yes, Lord, I love you. And he says, Peter, Do you love me?

I said, Yes. I already told you. Yes, I love you. Peter, Do you love me? Yes, Lord. And he's getting emotional now.

[25 : 41] Yes, Lord. You know I love you. You realize how many times Jesus asked Peter if he loved him? Three. How many times had Peter denied Jesus in public?

Three. Match up, right? It's to reaffirm. Jesus knew Peter's heart. He knew he loved him. He knew he was prone to weak faith.

But he needed Peter to be able to reaffirm in his own mind out loud with his master. Yes, Lord, I love you. I denied you. I love you.

I denied you. I love you. I denied you. I love you. God was master even over the denial. God was master even over when you lose your faith in God.

He is still master over that. He can bring you back. I'm sure Peter was feeling at his lowest after he denied his faith in Jesus.

[26 : 40] Then Jesus effectively wiped his slate clean, reset his GPS, said, all right, Peter, let's go now.

Because the next word out of his mouth were, feed my sheep. I got great plans for you. I've got big plans for you. You can do powerful things through me.

And then it takes off. The next time we see Peter is in Acts chapter 2. And he's not hiding in the shadows anymore. He's not denying Jesus anymore. He's not losing his faith anymore.

He's standing in the center of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, preaching with so much power that 3,000 people were converted to the way of Jesus in a single sermon.

I've never preached a sermon like that. That's like the standard. And none of us are ever going to live up to that standard, man. Psalm 103 and verse 14.

[27 : 36] He knows how we are formed and he remembers that we are but dust. All the expectations you put on yourself, you put those on you.

God has expectations for himself. God knows what he can do with just a little bit of faith. He remembers that you're dust.

He remembers that I'm a mess. And he knows that. And he says, get up anyway. I got a job for you, man. Let's get back on the path. Let's get back on the road.

So graduates, young people, when you make mistakes, not if, but when, when you make mistakes, remember God is still master of those mistakes.

God can redeem them. He's in the redeeming business. He can take them and he can work them together for your good and for his glory.

[28 : 32] God makes a way where we made a mess. Can we say that together? God makes a way where we made a mess. I've lived that.

I guarantee you, you've lived that. If you've been walking with Jesus for any amount of time, he has made a way where you have made a mess. And you know what's really cool?

God can turn a weakness into a strength. God can turn a mess into a miracle. He can do something powerful.

He stood Peter up before thousands of people. And instead of hiding in the shadows in public like he did before, God turned him into somebody who could get up in front of people who were not Jesus followers.

And he could speak with such power, so much faith in God that he would convince them by his spirit to turn to the way of Jesus and join them. And he used Peter mightily in the early days of the church.

[29 : 33] The church that we came from, the early churches that got their start before this thing spread all around the world and we get to be a part of it today. God used Peter powerfully.

You can thank Peter largely that First Baptist Henrietta is in existence today. Because God used Peter powerfully in getting the church off the ground.

Now we're a small part of that. So, I want to close with this. Graduation speakers, people around this season, you might hear this, graduates.

You might hear, go be great. Go do great things. I'm not saying that you're not going to be great. I'm not saying that you're not going to do great things.

But rather than telling you that, this is what I would tell you. I hope and I pray and I will be here to help you get to this point.

[30 : 35] As will many people in this room. But I hope and pray that this is where you reach in your life. That you would look back on your high school career.

That you would look back on your college career. Your military service career. Your employment career. Your general work career. Your family history. That you would look back at every point along the way.

And this would be your testimony. Not, I did great things. Not, I was great. They asked me to be great. They told me to be great. And I was great. That's not the testimony that I hope you have. I hope it's this. Joining King David as he wrote in Psalm 126. The Lord has done great things for us. And we are filled with joy.

I want your life to be filled with joy. I want God to take the things that happen to you. The misfortune. The mishaps. The mistakes. The mess.

[31 : 32] I hope he takes all that. And works it together. Through your faith. For his good. And his glory. He says he'll do it.

He'll be glorified in it. And you'll feel the good. You'll live the good. You'll experience the good. Because he's a good God. He's a good father. He's a great father.

So go out. To the Air Force. To UNT. To Texas Tech. Go out knowing. That whether life derails you. Or you derail yourself.

Or both. The great navigator. Is already recalculating the path. To get you back to him. And to get you to where he wants you.

The great things. That he has in store. For you. Would you bow your heads with me? Some of us are a little further down the road. Than these young people are.

[32 : 34] Some of us are a lot further down the road. Than these young people are. But whatever stage of life you're on. God has not yet seen fit.

To bring you home. To his presence. For eternity. So this applies to you. Maybe you've experienced a lot of misfortune.

Maybe you've made a lot of mistakes. Maybe you've forgotten. That this GPS. That you're following. Is one of grace. And the sovereign God.

Rules over it all. He's master over it all. I pray. By God's spirit. That he would warm your heart. That he would comfort your heart. That he would remind you.

How good he is. How full of grace he is. How full of mercy. He keeps the trouble. From being such. That would overwhelm you.

[33 : 33] He keeps the sin. From compounding. To where it would break. The relationship. He pulls you back in. Paul said it this way. Where sin abounded. Grace much more abounded.

You're never too far. I pray that you would run home. To the father today. Let me ask two questions. And we'll close. If there's anyone in the room today. Who says. I want to turn to that father. I need to turn to Jesus. I want to be God's child.

I want to experience that grace. I need to be saved today. I need to turn to Jesus today. Would you slip your hand up. And I'll pray for you. If you're in the room. And you want to accept God's invitation.

To become his child today. I want to extend that to you. Thank you. Let me ask you this question. Is there anyone in the room today. Who would say. Who would say. I've lived some of that misfortune.

[34 : 31] I've made some of those mistakes. But either way. I need to turn back to God. I want him to increase my faith. And like we saw with Peter. And Joseph.

And others. I want to experience. God's goodness. And grace. And blessings in my life. And remember. He's working through all that. Maybe you say. I'm going through something. And I need prayer.

And I need the reminder. Of God's grace. For me today. Would you slip your head up. And I'd love to pray for you as well. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. God. You see these hands. And better than that. You know exactly what they're going through.

You know what all of us have been through. You know what's around the corner. You know what lies ahead. And we can trust your goodness. So I pray for these specific situations.

Whatever they are God. That you would show them exactly what to learn from it. How you want to grow them from it. And that you would deliver them. And that they would give you the glory.

[35 : 33] Give you the praise. And say look what God has done. He has done great things for me. And I'm filled with joy. God I pray this for our graduates. I pray for Jordan. I pray for Caden.

I pray for Chaden. I pray for joy to fill their lives. The joy that comes from having faith in you. Through the mistakes. Through the misfortune. That you would bring them out.

The other side. As living testimonies to the goodness of God. And the faithfulness of God. Help us as a church to support them. And have their back in prayer.

And support wherever they go in this world. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. Thank you so much for joining us today. For Senior Sunday.

For celebrating these graduates with us. We look forward to celebrating all of our Henrietta graduates. And surrounding school graduates. Very soon. I think this week is graduation.

[36 : 26] So that's exciting. So we look forward to seeing many of you there. But until then we're going to close in prayer. Who's closing us today? Okay. I'll close this today. Steve.

Thank you. Come on Steve. I almost stole your prayer from you man. Steve Ross. Our deacon chairman is going to come close us in prayer. But thank you all for joining us in worship. If you're a guest. And I haven't gotten to meet you. I'll be in the back.

I'd love to talk to you. And get to know you a little bit. But we want to thank you for joining us in worship. I'll see some of you tonight at business meeting. Let's pray please. Lord we thank you for this day.

Thank you for this service this morning. We just thank you Lord for this church and our members. We thank you for our pastor.

Thank you for our ministers. We lift them up and as their families also. And ask for your blessings. Lord we thank you for these seniors.

[37 : 26] That you brought them to this point. We pray your blessings on them. As they go forth. In your faith.

In your love. Lord we ask that you. Be with us. As we leave today. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.