

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord (Quality: Very Good)

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[0 : 00] look into the Lord for his most needed help I would ask your attention to the book of Psalms Psalm 37 and verse 23 Psalm 37 verse 23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way The psalm has in it a dividing line The whole of the Bible has a dividing line going through it from Genesis to Revelation

But this psalm particularly reveals that when the line is drawn between the righteous and the wicked between the sheep and the goats However you may describe the Church of Christ that line differs between the two And this word has in my exercise a thus saith the Lord connected with it It's not that and it is I suppose very common today that men can do as they will but believers in Jesus cannot And there is an order about the pathway of all those who fear God

As you see in the margin it says for ordered established The steps of a good man are ordered or established by the Lord And that's a great mercy And it's a great mercy because none can change it None can alter it None can in any way find reason to and disannul it Because even the best of examples or reasons or purposes in the in the mind and heart of men will never alter this word It comes very close Of course these things must do so But nevertheless the pathways of those who fear the Lord are established

We'll come a little deeper to this in a moment But we feel that there is it is an important matter to put right That whatever approach you may have and I may have to the pathway of life the purposes of God will indeed be certain and can never be overruled If the Lord Jesus Christ is described by the Apostle as the same yesterday and today and forever and if I may reverently say so that the same rule and control over the people of God in their dwellings in their worship in their life in their pathway are established and ordered by divine decree and nothing else nothing can change that and any attempt to change it or any going away from the truth of this word will only bring distress and trouble upon you and I believe some of us have had to prove it for the best you might say for the best arguments or the best reasons that they can invent or bring to bring before others if the Lord's hand is not in the pathway at the commencement it will never come in in the way as that way goes on the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord

I want to especially particularly direct my meditation and your thoughts also to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and when you consider his pathway ordained before the world when you go back to Genesis chapter 3 and find those words that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head the first knowledge made to mankind of the coming days of the Saviour and the purpose of the Saviour and when you think of the mercy of his pathway of the establishing of his pathway the order of his pathway and indeed the purposes of his pathway we would leave aside for a moment or two the good man as I believe that obviously means a gracious man but would turn our attention and mind to that only good man there ever was and Jesus

[5 : 57] Christ is that good man and I think of some of the words of Holy Scripture you see in the purposes of God the Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world to save sinners the first chapter of Matthew tells you that thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin and from the moment that he was brought into this world every attempt was made by the powers of evil to bring to nothing this word that is in this 37th Psalm Herod went about and slew children of two years old and under in a vain attempt to destroy the Lord of life and glory Satan after his baptism took him to cast himself down because the promise was that his angels were given charge over him to keep him in all his ways and then we find of course from time to time where they took up stones to stone him and they in one of the chapters they took him to the pinnacle of the hill and would have cast him down headlong the steps of a good man are ordered by the

Lord and we might say and it's simple enough to say and I trust that you will receive the word as it is simply declared in the purposes of God there was salvation for his church and the order the decree and purpose of God was in that salvation and even his sufferings of his death on Calvary's cross was established that was a means of salvation a sacrifice for sin and many and if you I think it's Matthew's gospel that speaks about that they put a seal on the tomb and they put guards on the tomb so that none could take his body away and say that he had risen from the dead but he didn't need those he didn't need such words on the first day of the week he rose triumphant over death and hell and the grave and the church's enemies is you see the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and death could not hold the saviour what a wonderful mercy you know these truths are left on record of the comfort of

God's people the steps and they were certain steps not uncertain and you know there's another thing too there's no uncertainty in the steps of the people of God if they are divinely led and divinely taught there isn't anything uncertain about them and the purposes of God will be worked out by God not by them it matters not what comes up against it what views you and I may have about the possibility of this coming to pass or something else coming to pass the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and even to the truth that we read in the book of Ruth chapter 2 Ruth the Moabitess you know there's a lot of things spoken about Ruth and Naomi lots of things written about

Naomi and Elimelech and their two sons oh they shouldn't go down they shouldn't go down to Moab they turned away from Bethlehem in a time of famine and the Lord's frown was upon them and all such things as that and when you look at scripture and you can read scripture the wrong way in the purposes of God there was a link you know there to the saviour of sinners when you pass on to the closing chapter of the book of Ruth you'll find it well dear friends these these trials and troubles will come if the Lord's people haven't got divine direction to do something they shouldn't go but if they've got divine direction to do something it will fall out for their good and for their profit as they go and the honour and glory of God you know in the purposes of the handmaiden of the Lord

Ruth there was begun in her soul a work of grace the work of regeneration the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and established and every child of grace every one whose name is recorded in God's book of life will be the subjects of grace and the subjects of mercy and they'll never die without it thus to mercy and the coming down of the of Naomi and her husband and sons into Moab only revealed it only as it were and these things come to pass and these things came into place so that she should be joined to Naomi and joined not by not only by natural love and that was evident but by spiritual love and when when God's grace is in the soul it it binds the people of God together by a spiritual love and nothing can separate them there's a word in chapter one you know that says something quite clearly and we read this on the time of separation we read that all power kissed her mother-in-law but Ruth clave unto her what does it speak about speaks about a work of grace but it speaks about one that hasn't got a work of grace she could willingly go back to her family and the idolatry of Moab but not so

[12 : 35] Ruth entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee or whether thou goest I will go where thou lodgest I will lodge thy people shall be my people and thy God my God where thou diest will I die and there will I be buried the Lord do so to me and more so halt but death part thee and me but there's something else too you see that makes the or gives the evidence of this establishing or ordering and we read chapter two purposely because it says it and if you and I don't know whether you do whether you look at the case of the book of Ruth and be able to distinguish the characters and I was going to say their description Ruth is no doubt an evidence of a seeking soul Naomi is it could be described as the church of Christ and of course

Moaz is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ now every grace taught soul will be found where Ruth was and we read such words as this don't we and her hap was that she should glean in the field of Boaz her hap or as we would say happened but there was an order in it there was a divine order the Lord's dear people you know there are people who say churches and chapels are redundant you can worship God in the fields what do you do with the text then when it says a way that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard what do you say about those who are recorded in Hebrews as forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of summies God has ordained by his mercy the means of grace and the means of grace bring the children of

God together and just as much as Ruth was to be found in the field of Boaz what was she doing there she was gleaning and all true believers come into that exercise of gleaning and the field of Boaz or the church of Christ the house of prayer is the place where the children of God often glean it isn't the only place there are some places where you and I have gleaned profitably to our soul and it wasn't in four walls with a roof over it it was in a path of tribulation or it was in a path of affliction or it was in a path of sorrow but they were the means God used to the blessing of our soul and it was ordered and it was established and it's a part of the sweet experience of the children of God that they can point to these spots of ground where Jesus did we meet but they're ordered they're established go not from house to house

Boaz said to Ruth go not to glean in another field and what a profitable field that was she was not purposes handfuls of purpose you know you come to God's house Sundays and week nights handfuls of purpose do you know anything as they've been known as special seasons when you could say it was like a it was as Jacob described it when he was found at Bethel this is no other none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven handfuls of purpose purposely left behind the Lord Moses you know established gleaners as they should glean around the edges of the field oh yes there was to be some left for them but it was to be around the edges of the field this the word of God in the book of Ruth in chapter 2 says that she gleaned even among the reapers and these are spiritual descriptions and to those who fear the

Lord the sanctuaries of God replaces for gleaning and the only the only thing which must indeed be impressed upon you at this time is this it's not are you a gleaner but are you dependent on gleaning in the lot of Nehemiah and Ruth of course they depended on gleaning their livelihood their very life their existence upon this world was to be maintained by gleaning and how about your soul and how about your spiritual life it's not maintained by reading the Bible and I take it and do not take that as something contrary that you should do but it's maintained by spiritual food if you read the attitudes in the gospel of Matthew blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness they shall be filled now that's the blessings of the means of grace and that's the mercy of the means of grace it's a place where sinners grace taught sinners truth loving sinners come to glean from the gospel field and time to time there are handfuls of purpose handfuls of purpose but then there's something else you know that's to be seen in

[18:16] Ruth chapter 2 it's all a part of this order and if we could as it were describe it as one of those sacred seasons that a child of God dispossess and come into and enjoy what is it that the book of Ruth chapter 2 has to say about gleaners when it was mealtime she was to come and take of the parched corn but is that enough no it's not we find in the book of Ruth these words and he handed her parched corn you see the union you see the communion between Christ and his church where did you get your blessings from where are those comfortable times those seasons when your very soul is in enjoyment is it not dear friends when Christ is precious and Christ is close and that communion between Christ and your soul is established the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way that to my mind is a very wonderful blessing and it's a place it's not bound to four walls it's not bound a bed a hospital bed will be a place can be a place where the

Lord has met with his people the night times and seasons of being perhaps unable to sleep are times when the Lord has blessed your soul or can bless your soul these times are established wonderful when they are to be seen as ordered and established whether it's in God's house or whether it's in your own house whether it's on a bed of affliction in the middle of a trial when it's travelling along the road even the Lord meets with his people where he will and he does them good when he does do so oh it's not all blessing and comfort it's divine teaching if you look at the Acts of the Apostles chapter 16 I think it is the Lord met with Lydia Lydia whose heart the Lord opened but he also met with a jailer and it was a great earthquake and it had a profound effect upon that poor man sirs what must I do to be saved the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way and they're wonderful spots and places are they not you know when you when you consider it and I trust you can consider it that you can go back in your mind and thoughts to those places and times when the Lord's met with you and he's not short of means you know he's not short of ways it's not only in

God's house it's something that we pray for that it may be known in God's house but you know the Lord is a sovereign in all his dealings with us and it's wonderful to behold but there's another side of this the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his ways and that it cuts across the purposes of man and I was going to say it cuts across the best intentions of man even to those who with right intentions have been taught this truth I want to tell you a little experience it come to my thoughts yesterday evening 19 years ago I went to preach in a chapel I'm not going to tell you where but unbeknown to me there was a letter on the way asking me to go and call and I went there with this text actually the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord now the church consisted of a very few people but the chairman of the church the servant of God was there on that

Sunday afternoon listening and when it was finished when the service was over he went to the members and he said did that minister know what we're going to write to him about and they could truly say no they've not sent the letter the communication of the letter has not arrived yet but you see on looking back on those times which I did not so long afterwards you see no letter of requests no persuasion of man however right it no eyes to do so could change the will of God the word stands doesn't it the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord not ordered by man and as good as it was and as humble as I was in receiving the letter and in considering the letter I had to lay before the Lord and the Lord was completely silent he never spoke a word neither no or yes and I came into the experience of the

Syrophoenician woman and he answered her not a word you see the mind of God and I say it with all humility the mind of God differed from the mind of those good people there and though I respect them and the church that it was established in those days all those members have gone to glory now I believe servant of God is still preaching the word but you see the purposes of God must be worked out not the purposes of man as good as it was and one looks back on it and can see the Lord's hand now you see there was two things that you don't know it was their exercise and it was my exercise the exercise of my soul was to know what the will of the Lord was the exercise of their soul was that they hoped that the will of the Lord would bring me down to where they were but it never came to pass and as

[24 : 44] I was under a sense of a solemn sense really of not knowing what the will of the Lord was so it came to nothing good desires right desires and it's wonderful too because the afterwards of these things bring it all to pass it was in the year that our pastor died at Zor he died Christmas Eve and I knew the will of God then and I knew then that it was not for me to take up these invitations and they were good invitations it wasn't the only one but it only proved that there was an overrule in providence that marshals every circumstance and I say these things not for my glory or honour God forbid but to bring before you the truth of these words in an experimental way and why we should have this text the Lord only knows but I can only say that as the Lord only knows so his purposes will be worked out and nothing man can do or say can ever interfere or alter it or change it by any matter of degree we come back a bit close to this where the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and one salvation the church of Christ are saved in the

Lord with an eternal salvation and I'm sure you believe that's quite reasonable to believe such a word as this isn't it that the Lord knew the day of your birth when you came into the world each of us are creatures of time and there was in the designs of an eternal God and the day that we should be born as there is the day which you should die I want to speak about the steps of regeneration the steps of regeneration because that's vital you know when people talk about and it's spiritual things that they speak about and they speak about the necessity of the new birth and it may be that you hear some people say well you know you can trace the day of your spiritual birth well I don't go on with that not as far as the date and the time it may be that you can the apostle

Paul could he could pass over that road that went into Damascus and say there the Lord met with me but it may be that you can't say that but I do tell you this the day of regeneration the steps of regeneration will make a change and that change will be will commence within the soul it's not a change of a walk or a change of a religious building it's a change a spiritual change a life giving evidence within the soul that's what it is at one time Saul of Tarsus was heading for Damascus with instructions in his possession to hail men and women to prison into death take them back under guard under chains back to Jerusalem and try them before the priests high priest and consign them to the grave and you know a word went from the eternal glory thus far and no further can you trace the step of regeneration when in effect the Lord in his mercy said to you thus far and no further it may be about your business it may be about the house of

God that you were in the Lord's house it may be on the bed of affliction wherever it may be that there's a divine order on the steps of regeneration and nobody there's no power in hell can prevent it and there's no power in heaven that can prevent it and the work of grace will begin where the Lord will have it begin in the soul and where it will begin is according to the omnipotence of God a work of regeneration a step of regeneration to change the heart renew the will and turn the feet to Zion's hill have a love for that hymn which says such words as this and if I can get it right in my mind it's about regeneration and it speaks of the mercy of regeneration I can't get it right it'll come in a moment or two it's all about the sheep of

Christ's fold we will leave it it'll come sometime but you see regeneration may not come it's prayed for I'm sure prayed for by the families of God prayed for by believers ministers deacons about regeneration and you see the walking pathway of those that you love and you would to God that the Lord would his hand upon them and stop them in that broad ways of destruction but you see God is not it may be the Lord's trying the faith of the people of God I'm sure he does when you've got children and grandchildren you watch over them prayerfully don't you and you long to see a work of grace and you long to see the evidence of the work of grace there was a minister who long gone to glory when he was young he evidently worked on a farm and his father sent this young man down to get a horse and after a while his father thought well he's a long time

[31 : 04] I wonder what's gone wrong so he went down and opened the stable door there was his son on his knees he shut the stable door went away and left him left him to his God the steps of a good man the evidences were there there was something going on and God's work was going on the work of regeneration doesn't come with this is another thing it's a sovereign work it isn't only sovereign with the time but it's sovereign in the purposes of God they're not all sort of tarsuses you know they're not all persecutors turn preachers it's wonderful when you see it because it shows the power and the strength and the eternal choice of God I don't suppose one of us would choose a persecutor to come before us in the church but God's purpose is was and is still to die and where he puts his hand to the work nothing can alter it just come to my mind what's written in the

Acts of the Apostles we quoted the chapter just now the Apostle Paul and Silas was prevented from going to places to preach the gospel prevented by God and you read it the hand of the Lord was to be seen in it remarkably so we read this and when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia after they were come to Mycenae they were saved to go into Bithynia but the spirit suffered them not and they passing by Mycenae came down to Troas and a vision appeared to Paul in the night there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him saying come over into Macedonia and help us and after he had seen the vision of Italy we endeavoured to go into Macedonia assuredly gathering the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them the purposes of God nothing can change them unalterable established for the people of

God I remember one day a son of God who has gone to glory used to say to me I wonder how many ministers in June July take the letters and say Lord what wilt thou have me to do and I'm not a monster I suppose we tend to reply to letters and go on Lord what wilt thou have me to do I don't suppose the apostle said Lord what wilt thou have me to do in that instance but the Lord showed him by a vision where he was to go and all he found was a few women by the riverside but it was where prayer was wont to be made the two come together you know the minister and the people and it was a door of mercy opened and it was ordered decreed prayer meetings I remember when I was young they used to say oh it's only a prayer meeting and if it was inferior to preaching services but it's not and all the blessings that came we spoke about the blessings just now but it was accompanied with tribulation it was accompanied with persecution but it still was the right way if the apostle

Paul and Silas had not been in the prison you wouldn't have had that account of them being in the prison and of the time that was spent in praise and thanksgiving to God and the work of God was to be seen in a remarkable way the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord who gets the honour and who gets the glory a gracious God gets the glory and the honour and the praise not Paul or Silas not any minister can take the glory to himself God forbid the work of the spirit that is because that work of the spirit is ordered was it not so in you that fear God could you not say was it because I was brought up to go to chapel was it because my parents were godly or my grandparents were godly it was because God had mercy from everlasting you read don't you sometimes that psalm it's called the psalm of thanksgiving what does it say like as a father pitieth his children so the

Lord pitieth them that fear him as far as the east is from the west so far as he removed our transgressions from us that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children the day of regeneration what a birthday that is what a day to praise God from whom all blessings flow if you've got the evidence of regeneration in your soul what's the evidence what differs it from religion religion without regeneration is religion without life and without power without feeling religion with regeneration is sent of God it's a spiritual work I'll tell you what it won't do it won't alter your old nature but it will overrule your old nature you know the old nature sets out what it's going to do the grace of God will indeed direct you in a way that the

[37 : 06] Lord will have you to go I thought those words then we quoted them already the ninth of the acts that remarkable conversion why is it remarkable because he was such a sinner so was your conversion remarkable if you were and so was mine if I was because we were all sinners going contrary to God and godliness happy and content in a broad way to destruction but you see when the Lord Jesus appeared in that way which lead us to Damascus he appeared in a way which lead us to life and the effect on the sword of Tarsus was that he became immediately a servant of God I don't mean that he became immediately a minister of God but you see he came into the place where he asked the Lord what would he have him to do I don't suppose Saul ever asked anybody that question in his unregenerate state and condition he was in charge of his own things as we put it but you see when

God puts his hand to a work and that work is the redemption of your soul and that work is the grace of God that's the life of God in that soul the steps of a good man are ordered or established but what a change this regeneration make what change does it make gives you a concern over things that you never were concerned about brought you into concern over your state of your soul or rather the state of your sin I do remember this you know God was a God of providence to me in my younger days when I look at my grandchildren I can truly say humbly before God when I was their age I was praying because I had to pray such was the needs that we came into providentially I had to beg of the Lord to provide this and provide that and to maintain this and to maintain that but you see God begins as he will begin sometimes in a way of providence and sometimes not but he'll bring a need tell you this this is my experience we left home last

Monday morning in the early world past five in the morning but that Sunday night and Monday morning as it went on towards as it was about dawn somewhere about four before then perhaps the Lord gave me a word and that word abode with me till yesterday the word that he gave me was this that my God should supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus and I said to myself I've got my text for Jireh and I thought and you know I hope you'll forgive this but we live in dreadful days and we live in days we haven't seen the worst of the days yet I believe sometimes there's going to be hardships coming which will affect many people but you see if you're given a word from God and that word to my mind covers everything of my walk and pathway that my

God shall supply all your need whatever will come dear friends that's sufficient for me that this gracious God can't change man can change does change but this gracious God can't change if we read this chapter or this psalm you'll find these words I have been young and now I'm old and have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread is that not so that's the God of all grace that's the father of all mercies the steps of a good man regeneration the day that he brought you into concern with your soul why the cause your sins were brought before you it's like a veil taken away you didn't know you had such sins you didn't know you had such propensity to sin you didn't know how vile your old nature was fallen and you began to fall before the Lord in need of mercy what a blessed day that was to the public went to the temple to pray and one thing he prayed for mercy you know if you and I don't want to belittle prayer

God forbid the Lord teach you and me how to pray but if you follow the truth you know what underlines every request you may make before God in private or public it's because you're needy or it should be and it's because it's mercy that you need you look at all your prayers and all your supplications you make you know if you're in your right place it's a praying so in a house of God or in your own house the underlying truth is this that you will need mercy oh you say we need this to provide the Lord must need to provide this if you say look at these empty seats you know you come to this sanctuary and you pray about these empty seats the Lord fill these empty seats well isn't that mercy isn't that mercy he doesn't do it on any other ground it's not because he's got that you've done something worthy of it if the Lord revives

[42 : 46] Jireh by adding people to Jireh and the word of God is made a blessing is that not a mercy I sometimes think you know pray in that prayer the public of God be merciful to me a sinner covers everything the Lord doesn't need to know what you need or what you supply if you ask the Lord to take care of you you go off on your holidays and so on the psalm says even there in 139th psalm even there and that's that's mercy isn't it I believe that little word and that little prayer covers all the dealings of God with you and me the steps of a good man regeneration oh didn't he did he not afflict your very soul with sin and the need of salvation did he afflict you night and day with it brought you sorrowful into God's house and you come to God's house you know in a different spirit and a different purpose upon your very soul as you come to

God's house will there be a word for me for me will will something be said will something be sung will something be sent of God and it will relieve my burden and give me some hope in his mercy the appointed time rolls on a pace not to propose but call by grace to change the heart renew the will and turn the feet to Zion's hill people don't believe in appointments say more or less give you the permission as it were to make your own appointments not in the ways of God not in the ways of grace there is an order and there is a divine order and it's not one the same as another all the depths that some people come into before they ever are delivered from the powers of sin the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and you can't command the end of these things no more than you command the commencement of them it's God's hand and it never mind what people write and tell you today

God's hand is in the purposes of his grace to redeem his people and prepare them for glory now the redemption comes through Christ Jesus at a place called Calvary when he offers himself a sacrifice for many but the work of the spirit is in time and it is determined when and how and by what means he will use but the time's gone this morning the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way amen let us close this morning by singing hymn number 631 the tune is eventide 140 hymn number 631 the Lord himself be with you all who teach you all who teach you his own will and guide you safe from every thrall to

Zion's heavenly hell hymn number 631 won euchele hool ■■■ o'er in h'Sen 30th baa ■ 30th baa ■ 30th baa ha 30th baa 30th baa 31th baa 31th baa 33th baa 33th baa Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[49 : 08] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. O Lord, own and bless thine own word. Forgive and pardon what has been amiss in thine eyes.

Be with us, Lord, in the interval. Interval prepare us and be with us in the afternoon, Lord. May thy spirit abide with us.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, remain with us now and always.

[51 : 30] Amen.