

In the Beginning, God

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[0 : 00] All right, this will be the easiest passage of Scripture for you to find.

I promise you. Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, the first four words.

What did they say, everyone? In the beginning God. You all didn't do that well. You mean you didn't? Come on, let's try it again.

In the beginning God. So you're saying the and I'm saying the. What's the difference between the and the? There is a difference, though. But I just, I'm not an English major.

I don't remember. In the beginning God. Those first four words let us know what we really need to know to really understand God's purpose and plan and involvement in the earth.

[1 : 17] It lets us know that we have a heavenly father that takes the initiative. That takes the initiative.

We have a heavenly father that does what? Takes the initiative. In the beginning God. He was, it was God's idea.

He took the initiative to create the earth. It was. He took the initiative to create mankind. He took the initiative to give Adam and Eve a wonderful place to live.

They didn't, after they came here, they didn't say, now, now where are we going to live? They didn't have to say that because God took the initiative. He took the initiative to give them food that they could eat.

And in fact, he took the initiative to make it so the food would replenish itself so that they will always have. God takes the initiative.

[2 : 28] And I've come to tell you today, in your life, God is taking the initiative. God is taking the initiative.

In your life. Have you ever heard of comfort food? Heard of comfort food? This is a comfort sermon. Because you're going to understand that God takes the initiative.

I'm looking for a clock. No, you don't want me to do that. First principle is God is taking the initiative in every facet of your life.

God is taking the initiative in every facet of your life. Not just the spiritual stuff. But in every facet of your life.

In fact, God is always ahead of you. You can't surprise him. Because he's always taking the initiative.

[3 : 45] I went to a banquet the other Sunday.

And at the church I went to, the banquet, I've been there many times. And there's been many occasions, funerals, just many, many things.

Always a lot of preachers that come to these events. And they've never asked me to have remarks. Never asked me to have remarks. And so as I was getting out of the car to go into the banquet for the pastor's wife, Spirit of the Lord said, prepare some remarks.

And I said, they're not going to ask me to have remarks. They've never asked me to have remarks. I'm not going to worry about that. So I sat down. I was eating my meal. Spirit of the Lord said,

prepare some remarks.

I said, I'm arguing with God. I said, they're not going to ask me. I looked at the program. There's no place on there for remarks. There's just no place. Finally, after I finished my meal, God said to me, what did I tell you to do?

[4 : 52] By the way, you all don't know that my father talks to me like that. You think he speaks in these heavenly voices. Thou art to do this. No, he's a father. He just talked. He said, what did I tell you to do?

And so I sat there. I said, well, let me prepare some remarks. So I prepared about three or four things I could say. And so toward the end of the banquet, I said, just before we close out, we have some ministers here and we want to have them make remarks.

Who's the first name they call? Who's the first name they call? Who's the first name they call? Yes. And I had remarks prepared because God does what?

He takes the initiative. Yes, he does. He is always ahead of you. You can never catch him off guard. He always takes the initiative. Our friend invited us, invited my family and I to spend a week at his lake house down in Lake Anna, Virginia.

[6 : 10] We were there all last week. Just a wonderful, wonderful week. And as we were, it was 16 of us that went, all the children and the grandchildren.

And Mabel started preparing for us to go to the lake by filling up our suburban with all of the stuff we were going to need.

Everything. We had to put our luggage in another vehicle because she had filled up the suburban with meat, with just food and drinks and just everything.

Everything imaginable. And in fact, she anticipated what some of us would want. She knew that I loved chicken salad.

So she had made some chicken salad. She knew that the boys were going to want tacos. So she had tacos. She knew there was two or three babies be there.

[7 : 18] She had baby wipes. She had everything. Everything. And in fact, all during the week, if we needed something, this is what they would say. Mimi, do we have any?

And she said, yeah, yeah, I've got it. And she goes, Mimi, do we have any? Yeah, do we have any? It's because she took the initiative. And she didn't wait until we needed it to try to get it.

We didn't catch her off guard because she took the initiative. That's the way your heavenly father is. He knows the things you need.

Even before you ask, he knows what you need. He's ahead of you. Somebody say, he's ahead of me. He's ahead of me.

I can't surprise him. Nothing you can do can surprise him. There's no need that arises that he's not prepared for.

[8 : 27] This is what he said in Philippians 4 and 19. He says, And my God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory.

God is always ahead of you. Can I get one witness? He's always ahead. There's some things that are going on in your life and you can't believe what's going on.

You don't understand it. You can't figure out what is going on. This is the problem. We live life forward, but we understand life backwards.

I said something worth tweeting there. We live life forward, but we understand life backwards. When you know that there's some things when you look back and see what happened, you say, wow, that was God working that out for me.

And I didn't even realize he was working it out. Amen? Come on, amen. Including blocking some things you really thought you wanted to do.

[9 : 44] There's some things you're convinced you want. There's some things you're convinced you want to do.

You're just sure about it. You've figured it out and all of that. And all the time, God has his thumb on the door because there's another door you don't even know about that God's planning to open for you.

Because God is always ahead of you. Can I get a witness? Amen. At the lake house there is, when we got there, they left a notebook lying on the kitchen table in full view for everyone to see.

It was a notebook. And in that notebook was written all of the things we needed to know in order to have a wonderful stay. And I'll tell you, you know, where everything was, how everything works, down at the dock where the kayaks were and where the on and on and on everything was.

And the owner of the house took the initiative to write this notebook. And in it was everything we needed.

[11 : 00] Now, the things that were in there, instructions that we were giving, he left for us. Some of them didn't have any relevance for us.

We really didn't understand why he even put them in there. But they were just in there. Because in the boat, in the book rather, not only were there things we can do, but there were also some

restrictions about some things we shouldn't do.

He said that you can use the kayaks. You can use the paddle boats.

There were other, some rafters that we could use. But he said you cannot use the jet skis or the pontoon because you don't have a license, a boat license.

And because you don't have a boat license, you're restricted from using. But there are certain things you can. There were some other restrictions that didn't make much sense to us, too.

[12:12] He said you can use 600 gallons of water every day. 600 gallons of water every day.

If you go over that, the septic tank alarm will sound. And so, you know, we had no concept about, you know, how much water 600 gallons was, you know.

You know, it didn't make much difference to us. Except there were 16 of us. 16 of us. There were 16 of us. And one day, in one day, two of the people decided to do a full load of wash clothes.

Wash clothes. I wonder why they bring dirty clothes on vacation. They decided to wash clothes.

Two of them. Full load. And it was the same day I decided to take a leisurely shower.

I mean, I showered and washed my hair and worked on my feet with my puma stone. I was just enjoying. And all of a sudden, we heard beep, beep, beep, beep, beep.

[13:26] And we heard it. We said, is that the septic tank alarm? And we all ran. Where's that book? Where's that book? Where's that book? Where's the book? And we got the book out.

And we began to read. And because he had anticipated and taken the initiative about what to do in case we didn't do what we were supposed to do, it was in the book.

And we were able to read it. This is God's notebook for God's lake house called Mother Earth.

This is the book. This is the Bible. The Bible. The Bible is his notebook that he decided, I'm going to write and leave them instructions how to have a wonderful time, just absolutely wonderful time, at my lake house.

At my lake house. He wrote down instructions, but he also wrote some restrictions. He said, there's certain things you shouldn't do.

[14:46] There's certain things that you should not eat. There's certain things that I'm restricting.

You can eat all of, you can eat all those treats, all those treats, except that one, that one right over there.

Don't bother with that one. But you can eat all the rest of them. You can eat all, but that one right there, that one right there. Don't eat, don't eat off of that one. And God still has left his book around for us.

Do you have in your possession, on a regular basis, God's notebook?

Maybe you have, isn't it wonderful? You can have it on your phone. You can have it on your iPad. But don't leave home without it.

Because this is the book. I know you read a lot of books. I know you read a lot. I love Malcolm Gladwell. Yeah, I love Mark Batterson. There are a lot of great, I know you're reading books.

[15:49] I know you're, but let me let you know, this is the book. Somebody, somebody suggested that, that there's some books that shed light on this book. No, I'll let you know that this book sheds light on your book.

This is the book. Somebody say, this is the book. You need to read this book every day. There are some things when you read it, it's not going to make sense until you finally have a panic attack.

There's, until you finally do something you had no business doing. And you're in a mess and you're going to run to the book. My suggestion is, keep the book close to you.

Keep the book close to you. So first of all, oh, oh, okay. All right, that's all right. Don't leave, don't leave. You're good. You're good. All right, so, he's always ahead of you.

Second principle, second principle, you ready for this? Third principle, first principle, he's always ahead of you. Second principle, he's always ahead of your mistakes.

[17:02] He's always ahead of your mistakes. What is he always ahead of what? Your mistakes. He's always ahead of your mistakes.

When I'm on Waze and I'm driving, anybody like Waze beside me? You know, you have Waze? You don't have Waze? How do you get anywhere without Waze? It's the navigation app on your phone, Waze.

The motto is we outsmart traffic together. Waze is wonderful. And so whenever I'm on Waze and I put directions in and I want to go somewhere, and like where I was going down to the lake house, I was talking.

My nephew's grandson was in the back, and he said something to me, and I wasn't paying attention, and I went by where I was supposed to turn left. And when I did that, I heard, did it? And I knew, I said, uh-oh, I missed my turn. I missed my turn. And when I missed my turn, Waze is able to catch my mistake.

[18:10] And Waze told me, in a thousand feet, turn left. Because Waze was able to catch my mistake.

God is able. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. This is comfort for you. When you make a mistake, God is ahead of your mistake.

Your mistake, glory, hallelujah, did not catch God by surprise. Somebody say hallelujah. Hallelujah. I would love to ask anybody here to make a mistake this week, just in case you did.

It may have surprised your friends. It may have surprised your spouse. Whoever it surprised, it did not surprise God.

Because he's ahead of your mistakes. But the next verse says, As an advocate with a father.

[19:43] Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the lawyer for you. And he stands in and argues the case before God for you.

It's interesting that 1 John 2 and 1 comes after 1 John 1 and 9. Wouldn't that be interesting? Isn't that interesting? It actually comes after.

Because 1 John 1 and 9, it takes the initiative for what might happen in 1 John 2 and 2. 1 John 1 and 9 says, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So the second principle is, God is always ahead of our mistakes. Third principle, and I'll be through. Like any good parent, the third principle is, your heavenly father takes the initiative in maintaining the relationship.

Hallelujah. Like any good parent, your heavenly father takes the initiative in correcting a relationship that's been messed up.

[21:18] He takes the initiative. I really preached the whole sermon for this point. How many fathers do I have in here? How many fathers?

Fathers, raise your hand. Any wannabe fathers? Kennedy, who's sitting down here, a month ago, I was taking her out in Maryland.

She lives in Tacoma Park, and she has something done to her hair that white folks won't understand. It's called, She Locks Her Hair.

And that's literally when they braid her hair. And make it into little pieces. It's called locking. And so, I was taking her out there, which has become my lot to do about every six weeks.

And so, as we were driving, and it's 22 miles from her house to the locktician. So, as we were driving, she was on her phone, and she had earphones in, and she was listening to her music.

[22:25] And I looked over and started to say something, and I saw she was on her phone. And the third time, I said, Kennedy? No answer.

I said, Kennedy. And she took her earphone and said, yes, yes, poppy, yes, poppy. she was preparing to go on a mission trip to Haiti the next Sunday. So, I asked, I said, Kennedy, what do you plan to do?

How do you plan to minister on the Haiti mission trip? How do you plan to minister? And she said, you know, poppy, you know, I'm planning to be with the children.

I'm planning on playing with the children. I'm planning on doing it. She said, in fact, the other Sunday, we went to a commissioning service, and while they, the person that was praying for me, while they were praying for me, I saw the eyes of a lion while they were praying for me.

I said, you saw the eyes of a lion? She said, poppy, I saw the eyes of a lion. She said, what would that mean? I said, I really don't know what that means.

[23:32] I said, why don't we Google that and see what it means? And so she Googled the eyes of a lion, and she read, she said, oh, this means this and this and this.

Oh, wow. And then she said, it took her to something else, and she, and she looked, oh, my gracious, poppy, listen to what it's saying. And then, and then she said, and it just went on for the next 30 minutes.

The things, she said, I need to save this. I need to keep this. And when I dropped her off, she texted me. She said, poppy, I found something else. And when I picked her up, she was still talking. We were having this wonderful conversation about what was going on, all because I took the initiative to

start the conversation.

Did you get that? Fathers, fathers, fathers, fathers, you have to take the initiative to have conversations with your children.

You have to take the initiative when it's a little tight around the house to have a conversation with your child.

[24 : 49] fathers, fathers, it's important that you take the initiative. Fathers, are you hearing me?

Because that's what your heavenly father did and does. We had messed up real bad in the Old Testament times.

We had messed up real, real bad. We messed up so bad until for 400 years, God stopped talking to us. For 400 years, he stopped speaking to us because we had messed up so bad.

But then finally, John 3, 16 says, For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

This is the way I want to say that verse. For God so loved the world until he took the initiative for us to get back to him.

[26 : 06] In fact, 2 Corinthians 5 and around verse 19 says that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Wow. We're the ones that have messed up but God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

So first of all, God is always ahead of you. You can't catch him by surprise. Secondly, he's ahead of your mistakes.

And third, he's working on that relationship. and I'm so glad that God sent his son when I had messed up.

When none of the prophets could fix the situation. When none of the apostles could fix the situation. God said to Jesus, you got to go down there.

[27 : 20] And I'm so glad Jesus came to earth. Anybody beside me is glad that Jesus came to earth. God bless you.