

## A Part of the Plan

“No one panics when things go according to plan.” It was actually a made up supervillain that said that line – the Joker. But I think it’s pretty accurate. If, in the surgery, they have to stop the heart and restart it on a machine – well, any other time a heart stops, that’s reason for some panic and distress. But if that’s what is supposed to happen for a time, well, it may not be carefree, but OK, calm down, it’s expected, it’s a part of the plan, it’s what needs to be done.

And I think today we have seen a plan being laid out and carried out throughout history. And it’s from no super villain, hardly, there is nothing fictional or villainous about it. We heard from our first reading in Genesis when God promised a Savior to crush the serpent’s head – that there was a plan to bring life to the broken world.

But even before that promise God had a plan. Of course he did, he’s God, he knows all things. He knew before he created this universe that we would fall. He didn’t make us fall, didn’t ask for us to choose evil, no, he made a world that was good, very good. We broke it, we pushed him away, slapped his kindness in the face and said, “We don’t need you God, we can take it from here.” And he gave us what we wanted, we wanted to know good (we already did) and evil – so he withdrew and in his absence evil fills the void. And we know it, it’s a part of this

world and us and let me tell you, with the heartache, the loneliness, the depression, the regret, the pain, the arguments, the addiction, the wars, the tornadoes, and the sickness and death... well, it's not all it's cracked up to be. But he knew we would fall.

And because he knew we would, and so of course that means, if he wanted us to be with him forever, he knew he would have to solve that problem of evil in us and the world. And he knew what that would take. Him coming into the broken and dark world and taking the evil in you and in the world upon himself.

And we read those promises today. How God worked through History until at just the right time He came. And the people rejoiced all along the way. We heard about God's promise to Abraham where the lineage of the Savior begins. Again in Isaiah, so many years later, he tells good news that the Plan was still on – The Savior, the eternal Son of God, would leave his throne and come down – it was going to happen. And at each of these reminders, at each of these steps in the plan the people rejoiced. They rejoiced because in a world that seems so chaotic, so dark, so out-of-control, they could see that God was still in charge, God still had a plan – so, why should they panic?

And this season we celebrate how one huge step in the plan comes to light. Jesus, the Savior, long promised, comes at Christmas – the plan is happening! The plan to

bring hope, to bring forgiveness, to bring light, to bring life! God hasn't called it off, God hasn't changed his mind, but it is happening just as he said. He has come and, as we know the next part of that plan, he dies and rises to win for us, and all who believe, eternal life.

And lets not miss that point. It's easy to think, "Ya Jesus died and rose to save the whole world." It's another thing to carry that implication out a little further, if he came for the whole world, well that means he came for you! You are a part of the world, right?

And so we can say, in a very real way, YOU are a part of God's plan. Now that is not to say that you are going to agree with every part of his plan. "What kind of operation are you running, God?" Cancer, bills, sin, depression, you name it. "Are you sure you are in charge? There still seems to be a lot of darkness and chaos in the world and in my life."

But no. We know he can overcome the darkness, because he came into this dark world and brought light to the sick, the oppressed, the frightened, even to the dead. Even more he came into this broken world and it did not overcome him. No temptation won, and nothing else won either – not even death. He rose again. Our King is strong.

And, again, he did that for you – even with your sins and doubts and fears. And we know this because he has promised: “Those he predestines (plans to save), he calls” (Romans 8:30). And are you not hearing the word of the Lord now, was the water washed on your head in baptism? You have been called. You are not forgotten in his plan. In fact, his love is so great we can say if it was *just you* and not the world, he still wants you with him in eternity, and he would still go through the pain and suffering of the cross for you. Such is his great love. He would pay that price, he knew he would have to, but he paid it gladly for you. What love!

So I guess I am saying. Now that we have heard the plan of God to save, well, don't panic. It is a dark and scary world, and there will be some heart wrenching and heart stopping parts of the plan in this broken world, but we know who commands all things, the stars, and ways of the world, each breath, each day. And that One has promised that you are his, you are forgiven, and you will share in the victory he has already won. Don't panic, rejoice! We are a part of the plan of salvation, even though we don't deserve it, but God has promised the fulfillment of this plan will come, when we are with him and all the faithful at his celebration feast. And on that day, when we see the fullness and the genius of his plan – we will rejoice, and perhaps this season, as we see the plan unfolding in Jesus' birth, death and resurrection – well maybe we can rejoice a little bit now too. Thanks to Jesus. Amen.