

“God Has a Plan”

Matthew 26:57-68

Throughout our Lenten journey, we have turned our attention to God’s plan. From the beginning, God had a plan to save you. Adam sinned – God told him the plan. A Savior would come, born of a woman, and crush the head of Satan (Genesis 3).

Abraham was told the plan – one of his offspring would be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12). David was told the plan – a band of evil men would surround him and they would pierce His hands and his feet (Psalm 22). Isaiah was told the plan – the suffering servant will be “pierced for our transgressions and wounded for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53).

Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that the Son of Man would be betrayed, mocked, beaten, and lifted up on the cross. Why? Because that was the plan. God’s beloved children on earth had rebelled. The Law had been broken. The sin must be punished.

Our human nature continually questions this and says, “If God is merciful, why doesn’t He just call a do-over?” Or why doesn’t He just annihilate the souls of the unfaithful when they die

and let the faithful go to heaven? There are many who teach that to be the reality, and there are many more who desperately desire for that to be true.

But think of the consequences. If you say there is no hell, which is an increasingly popular belief in our world today; if you say this, think of all the passages of God's Word that you have say are irrelevant, inaccurate, false, misleading. How many times does Christ Himself warn of hell where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched?

Therefore with great urgency, we seek to save the lost – wherever in the world they are.

Our world, and even our human nature tells us, "That is not the right kind of God. My God is a God of love. If He truly loved us, He would have called a do-over for Adam and Eve and for all of their children. Why doesn't God just get rid of the Law? After all, He made it."

It is true, the Law comes from God. But God's adherence to the Law does not show a lack of love. It is the clearest demonstration of how much He loves us. He did call a do-over in promising a Savior. And not just any Savior, He offered up His own Son to be encircled by evil men and pierced in His hands and his feet.

Our world, and our human nature says, “that is the wrong kind of God” just like the people in Jesus’ day said, “You are the wrong kind of Messiah.”

And much like the world today, the people of old picked and choosed which parts of Scripture they liked and which parts they treated as irrelevant. Much like people today, they would never admit they treat God’s Word in this way, and claimed to be defenders of it, but you cannot separate theology and practice. What you do speaks volumes about what you really believe. The high priest Caiaphas and those with him claimed to be the shepherds of the flock of Israel tending the sheep until the Messiah would come, but God’s plan was clearly not their plan.

They knew God’s plan. They knew who the Christ, the Messiah was supposed to be. Listen to Caiaphas’ question, “tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” They knew the Christ was the Son of God. They knew that only God could raise the dead. They knew that Jesus had raised Lazarus. And after hearing that particular bit of news, that was when Caiaphas gathered the Council and said, “If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation” [Jn. 11:48].

They were not pleased with God’s plan. They liked the status quo. They liked things how they were, and they were not

going to let some prophet from Galilee change their plans, even if He was the Son of God.

Even the Jews who liked Jesus had a different plan for who He should be. They wanted Him to be the “bread king” who fed them 5000 at a time. They wanted Him to be the Messiah foretold in the folklore of the people and the writings of the Rabbi’s – the son of David who would announce His messianic ministry on the Passover Sabbath, rally the troops, and throw the Romans, or any other Gentiles, out of the land. The people said, “that is the kind of Savior He should be.”

But that was not God’s plan. God sent His Son who is humble, gentle, silent before His accusers, and willing to suffer the punishment that you and I deserve. The Law had been broken. Sin must be punished. The Son of God would be betrayed, mocked, beaten, and lifted up on the cross. Why? Because that was the plan. God’s beloved children on earth had rebelled. There was only one way to save us. We deserve death. We deserve an eternity in hell. But God has a plan. Amen.