

Not Our Plans.... His Plan

Matthew 26:1-16

Every journey begins with a plan. Some plans need to be very specific – like a military campaign. Sometimes the “plan” is just to “go with the flow”. As we begin our Lenten journey, we turn our attention to God’s plan for salvation. As you know, God’s plan was not a “go with the flow” concept. From the moment of Adam’s sin, the battle against sin and death began. The plan for final victory was put into motion.

The plan to send His Son to “crush the head” of Satan was told to Adam and Eve. He also told them that the Savior would suffer injury in accomplishing this – God says to Satan, “you shall bruise His heel.”

The plan was for the suffering servant to be “pierced for our transgressions and wounded for our iniquity” as the prophet Isaiah foretold. The plan was for a company of evildoer to encircle Him and pierce His hands and feet, as David foretold in Psalm 22.

On the Tuesday of Holy Week, Jesus spoke to His disciples and told them the plan, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.” This plan will be accomplished because God’s will is to save His children.

Interwoven throughout God's plan are many other "plans" of men. The Old Testament is littered with man's plans to save himself, to change God, to find a different road to salvation other than one God had planned.

Through these weeks of Lent, we will see how God's plan plays out as it is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Already this evening, we see other plans at work. Ironically, the enemies of Jesus plotting to kill Him fits into God's plan. It is curious how God allows hardness of heart, wickedness, and outright contempt for Him to play a helpful role in saving His people. It is like what happened with Pharaoh in Egypt when Moses came to free the Israelites.

When God withdraws His Holy Spirit from someone and that person is cut off from the Holy Spirit's motivation to do good, there is nothing but evil and contempt for God left in their heart. Being cut off from the Holy Spirit is the worst temporal punishment, that is, it is the worst punishment we can have here on earth (read Romans 1. That is exactly what Paul is talking about).

When the light of the Gospel is taken away and only darkness remains, there is no desire to do good, and the utmost evil will be accomplished. This is why we repeat the words of King David "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me", as he repents of his sin following the Bathsheeba/Uriah the Hittite incident.

The religious leaders who gathered to plot the death Jesus Christ – from the testimony of the miracles, they know that Jesus is from God, but they hate Him anyway. Like with Pharaoh, they play an important role in God’s plan of salvation – even though they themselves are not looking for salvation; Christ still dies for them. And while hanging on the cross, He prays, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Christ dying for all, even those who plotted against Him – from the beginning, that was the plan.

The disciples had a different plan. The disciples are repeatedly told about the coming days – that Jesus would be handed over to evil men, mocked, beaten, delivered up to be crucified. At every point, they either ignored or outright rejected this plan – to the point that Jesus even compared Peter’s desire to prevent this as the work of Satan. “Get behind me Satan. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

The disciples were even upset when the woman anointed Jesus with the expensive perfume. They did not understand that this was part of God’s plan. He was being prepared for burial. There was nothing which could prevent God from carrying out His plan. Amen.