

Exodus 34:29–35; Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2; Luke 9:28–36

"I love it when a plan comes together." Growing up, one of the stars of my favorite TV programs used this phrase. "I love it when a plan comes together." The character's name was Hannibal. He was the plan maker on the television show **The A-Team**. Hannibal was in charge of leading a group of misfits, each having particular gifts, but needing each other in order to accomplish goals. He led the group of misfits, and he had to juggle the risks of being captured, for crimes the group did not commit, and successfully apprehend the real crooks. Hannibal always had a plan and the group looked to him and he would have that smile. But you know what? The plan virtually never happened the way he thought it would. Something would always occur that threw a monkey wrench in the process. An unexpected challenge would rise up, sometimes more than one challenge, and the entire plan would be in jeopardy and in risk of failing.

It makes me wonder if God experiences such an emotion. What does God do when the plans that God makes begin to fall apart? Does God have a prepared plan in mind for you, your family, and this church? What about the United States, and the world? If so, and we hope that God is in control of this wayward world, then God must have to deal with a lot of "monkey wrenches" thrown into the plan.

Paul writes about this kind of hope in the text from 2nd Corinthians. "Since then we have such a hope, we act with great boldness." To have a plan means to act with great boldness, but sometimes it is necessary to step away from a plan that you have made, in order to follow God's plan. To have a plan means that you are assertive and goal oriented. You are a winner if you have a plan.

"I love it when a plan comes together," was the line George Peppard would say after his initial plan had gone terribly awry, and then somehow complete itself in fullness and success. The A-Team in this case is like the three disciples that walked the mountain with Jesus in our text this morning.

Peter, John, and James probably had thoughts that the plan for their lives were finally coming together. Jesus has performed amazing healings and challenging teachings already. The three have already been asked to accompany Jesus to witness the raising from death of Jairus' daughter. In that account, it was the temple leader, Jairus who changes his plans and seeks Jesus to heal his daughter.

Jairus would know what this walk up the mountain would mean. The underlying implication about going up a mountain with a holy man recalls accounts from Exodus. Going up a mountain would get one closer to God. Moses was allowed to do this while the rest of the people waited for him at the base. Think of what the three must have been thinking. Are they asking themselves, "Is this Jesus as great a man as Moses? He must be for we have seen him with our own eyes, performing power

that can only come from God." And now we are going up the mountain with him. We are his most trusted three. I can almost hear them saying, "The plan is coming together!"

But the plans of men are often not the plans of God. Have you ever heard someone say "God laughs at the plans of humans"?

The saying is a Yiddish proverb, but in Psalm 33:10 we read that "the Lord frustrates the plans of the peoples." Why would someone say "God laughs at, or frustrates, our plans?" The picture in my mind about God "laughing at human plans" is not a nice one. It is certainly not very compassionate. Because isn't it wise for people to make plans and shouldn't we not glide through life without purpose? Real people struggle everyday to keep the plan of their life together. You are struggling and so am I. Why would God frustrate those plans? Well...could those plans be unhealthy for you? Sometime the plans we have committed ourselves to, are keeping us from knowing God's eternal love. Sometimes our plans keep us from the full potential of a good life, and sometimes our plans keep God's eternal love from other people.

We even see that Peter struggles with what he sees on this mountain top experience. He is faced with a miraculous event and the Bible says that he and the others were drowsy. I don't know about you but I would be on the edge of my seat at this time. Here we have two major prophets. Moses is the law giver. He is the leader who followed God's message to deliver the people from Egypt's slavery.

Elijah is the prophet who followed God's direction as Israel and Judah began to crumble from internal conflict, sin, outside armies and false prophets. These two great men are talking with Jesus. The plan is coming together and Peter likes the position he is in! After all Jesus called him and here he is a part of the dream team.

And this is a critical moment for Peter. Peter is ready to put down roots and stay right there in this presence of Moses and Elijah. Peter, John and James did well by staying awake. But their plan was not the same as God's plan. He proposes the idea to build three dwellings, which means that this would be a place of remembrance. Kind of a retreat, so to speak, where they can go to re-live this experience as often as they wanted. And this is about the time where God laughs at his plans. Only it is not the kind of belly laugh that adds five minutes to your life. It is a much more ominous experience.

Moses and Elijah have gone and a cloud moves in to surround them. The Bible says, the cloud "overshadowed them." This cloud experience would also not be a surprise for them because God is often referred to as coming in a cloud in the Old Testament. And the people were terrified to be in the presence of God. No one looks into the face of God and lives.

Suddenly Peter's plan is not coming together. And that is hard, crippling in fact to have devoted so much of your life to a plan that begins to fall apart or promise to not be as fulfilling as you hoped.

Your life or plans may be falling apart from what you had hoped. Despair may have brought you to church today, or it may be that you have questions, a tinge that there is something more to life than what you are experiencing. This would be the point where I can really relate to Peter. I might not be falling asleep literally, but maybe I am falling asleep in my own comforts and sanctuaries. Maybe you are like me, comfortable and safe, and falling asleep to the cries of the poor, the lonely, and the outcast. Maybe you have fallen asleep gliding along through you own plan for life.

Listen to the voice in cloud. What does it say? "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" Peter took everything in with his eyes and made the decision what to do. Build three booths for remembrance, ahhh... good plan! After all, Moses brought down Ten Commandments and Elijah defeated a multitude of false prophets and he was later swept up by God never even having to face death.

They were good men and worthy of being followed. But if we are going to call ourselves Christians, today's text is pretty important for us to listen to. In fact it is very important to listen to, because God reveals exactly what you and I are to do. "Listen to God's Son, Listen to Jesus." We will make mistakes, our plans will fall apart but they will never separate us from God's eternal love.

God gives the men on that mountain one commandment! "Listen to Jesus." God's words are similar to the words God proclaimed at Jesus' baptism. The words are very similar to the baptismal words we heard given to Dylan Scott this morning.

Listen...you can sometimes hear God saying...

"I love it when a plan comes together!"

Amen.