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This advent season, I have been stunned by the reality that the Lord’s plan for salvation only unfolds out of hearts that embrace submission, service and love. When I consider our human nature – to protect ourselves, to leverage our gifts and talents for our own reputation – it is pretty astonishing how the supernatural power and grace of God moves through human hearts to see through His salvation plan.

Consider: what if Mary, the mother of Jesus, had refused to believe, accept or submit to the Lord’s will for her life? She chooses to give up her reputation and life for the sake of God’s plans. Had Joseph walked away from his betrothed, who was pregnant with the son of God, the Christmas story would look different. Had John the Baptist not prepared the way, accepted that his role was simply, but powerfully, to point to the coming Savior, fewer would know the one to whom we now look for life.

More astounding is this: that God himself submitted his “Holy, Holy, Holy” nature to this world. Had Jesus not submitted to his Father’s plan for Him to come and be God, literally with us, we would be without hope. Instead, He stoops down, giving up His heavenly seat. What if Jesus had not submitted to the Father’s plan to be the atoning sacrifice for us? He gives up His comfort and takes on our due suffering. Throughout the New Testament, we see picture after picture of Jesus lovingly submitting to the will of His Father and delighting in glorifying not His own name, but that of His Father.

When we consider that Jesus asks his Father prior to suffering on the cross if there is any way this cup could pass from Him, we’re naturally overwhelmed with empathy – wouldn’t we, too, be fearful of the coming suffering? But Jesus surrenders—His eyes on the ultimate outcome of everlasting life for His children. And so He literally dies to His fear, rather than being controlled by it. Through this surrender, we’re lead to our eternal freedom, hope, rescue—an invitation to abundant life.

I’ve been struggling a great deal with surrendering to God’s plans lately. I’m not sure why I’m surprised at the pain that often comes with letting go of my way since Christ suffered a far greater deal in His own submission. This is where we are offered a choice—instead of our hearts yelling, “Why aren’t you doing what I think should be done? Why aren’t you doing anything, Lord?!” we can choose to approach Him with praise for His goodness to us entrusting to Him our needs, knowing that when we do, it is to a sovereign, all knowing, all seeing, all understanding, good, capable God. There’s such freedom in surrendering to the Lord’s capability—the pressure is off of us now. And In the process, He is glorified for all that He is able to do on behalf of his beloved.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



What happens when we surrender our plans?

Can you think of a time when you did surrender and you were in awe of God's greater plans? Hold onto this memory as a way to help you in the future.

What is the purpose in us relenting to the Lord's plans?

When we allow the Lord to do in us or with us what he wills, He is the one who receives the glory. Take some time to glorify Him for his greatness today.



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