

“Part of the Plan”

Matthew 28:16-20

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All Scripture quoted from ESV unless otherwise noted

Casting decisions are a critical part of the movie making process. The right actor or actress can truly make or break a role. Can you imagine anyone other than Harrison Ford playing the role of Han Solo? What would the role of George Bailey look like if Cary Grant had been cast instead of Jimmy Stewart? Now imagine your life was going to be made into a movie. Who would be the perfect actor or actress to portray you? Who you would pick to share your story with the world reveals much about how you see yourself?

When God chose to reveal His story to the world, He didn't have to go through casting calls and auditions; He didn't have to alter or rewrite a script; He didn't have to pitch His idea to studio executives or secure a stage in Hollywood. The world is His stage (Psalm 24) and His idea is to bring as many as are willing to repentance and eternal life (John 1:12, 3:16.) God didn't have to search through time and space to find the perfect person to take on the role of a lifetime; He chose His only Son to do what no one else could do; live a sinless life, die in the place of the guilty, and rise again under His own power and authority, in order to make salvation accessible to all.

When you open the Bible, it reveals God's story, written to us and for us. It is the grand narrative surrounding all of human history – the 'movie' that shows us God's activity throughout human history. It is the story of creation and deliverance; of rebellion and rescue; of plans made and plans changed. It is the story of prophets and miracles; of grace and mercy; of God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It does more than entertain or inspire us; it invites us into relationship with Him – and nothing is ever the same after that.

But God's Word is not only the movie that shows us God's story; it is also the mirror that shows you who you are, and how you fit into that story. A key to understanding what this mirror reveals about you and about your place in God's story is found in Matthew 28:16-20. In these verses, commonly referred to as “The Great Commission,” God shows us that His plan is for us to take the name of Jesus to all the peoples of the world

God has a plan and you have a part. God's Word shows you a great deal about who God is and how He works. It also tells me that He has created me exactly as I am, and that there are things in this world that He has custom tailored to my specific makeup (Eph. 2:10). Each of us is custom tailored to serve a role in God's plan to bring the name of Jesus to all peoples all around the world. Of the 7.1 billion people on this planet, more than 3.4 billion have little or no access to the gospel message of Jesus Christ. No access

means they have no Bible in their language, no church in their region, and no Christian who can share faith with them in their own language. Someone has to come from the outside, from another culture, and bring the love of Jesus with them, sharing it with them, so they can have access to salvation through Jesus Christ. The question is, "What is your part in the story?"

Let God's plans have the greatest priority in your life. There is coming a day that is so big that in the New Testament, it is called simply, "The Day." This is the day that Romans 14:10-2 speaks of, when we will all stand before God's judgment seat and give account of our lives; when you will give account of what you did with what He gave you; of how you participated in His story and mission in the world.

You participate in this grand narrative by fulfilling the great calling that God has placed on your life; this is how you see the kingdom of heaven expand and increase; this is how you see lives grow and blossom and flourish; this is how you invest in the emerging church – those who are learning to carry the torch and share the love and message of Jesus Christ to their peers and to the world in which they live... and will live.

Ministering to others is no more the exclusive right of the spiritually mature than God's Word is the exclusive property of the religiously elite. May we each invest in the lives of those who believe in the impact of prayer, who believe in the value of serving others, who believe that the gospel message of Jesus Christ has power to break spiritual chains, to bring physical healing, to address emotional needs, and to change lives in the here and now, and in the hereafter and forevermore.

Submit your plans to the plans of our Father in heaven, who desires that all believers will fully participate in the grand narrative that He is authoring; helping others to discover freedom in Christ and bringing light to the darkened places of their community and their world. See yourself as God has designed them...as the mirror of God's Word shows them to be. Help others begin to understand what it means to serve the part that God has perfectly designed into His plan, just for them.

Invest in the spiritual growth and development of the next spiritual generation in order that you would impact the world around you for the sake of the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, who is Jesus Christ. Submit your plans to His plans, and may His kingdom come and His will be done in our lives, now and always.

DIG IN!

Here are some farm-fresh questions that will help you to personalize and apply this morning's message.

1. *What was most surprising, unexpected, or helpful from today's passage/message? Why?*
2. **What have you discovered about God's great plan for your life? Where do you go and to whom would you speak if you desired to learn more about this plan?**
3. **If cats were dogs and dogs were cats, how would anyone ever know?**
4. **What other passages in God's Word have helped you discover and step into your part in God's plan? How would you find passages to help you in that journey?**
5. **How have you invested in the spiritual growth and development of the next spiritual generation? How will you continue to do that, and learn to do so more effectively?**
6. **When have you allowed God's plans to change your own plans? How did things turn out then? Is it always better to follow God's plan? How so?**
7. *What have you learned through your personal time of Bible reading this week?*