

“I love it when a plan comes together!” John “Hannibal” Smith from the A-Team is known for that phrase. Being the brains of the team, he was always able to get the A-Team out of a crazy situation and use their varied talents to make a picture-perfect finish all wrapped up in the course of an hour long television show.

Do you remember group projects from high school? “I love it when a plan comes together!” often didn’t describe those. I’m sure many of us have our horror stories. Maybe the perfectionist never left good enough alone. Maybe the slacker put in the bare minimum only after poking and prodding. Besides, it’s not fair when your teammate gets the same grade as you when you did all the work. Once you graduate into the real world, the group projects often continue in the workplace.

“I love it when a plan comes together!” Yet that isn’t often what life looks like in the real world. Families bicker. Coworkers don’t hold up their end of the bargain. Police officers and citizens, both of whom are supposed to be on the same team of promoting the common good in some places are at odds with abuse of authority, riots, and skirmishes in the streets.

Yet on this Holy Trinity Sunday, despite all the discord and strife all around us, we know that at least somebody lives in harmony. “One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.” The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are unified in every way. They love it when a plan comes together. **THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE PLAN OF SALVATION.**

Our text for today is a continuation of last week’s reading. Peter preached a sermon at Pentecost, back when the Holy Spirit entered onto the scene, the disciples had tongues of fire over their heads, and they could speak in different languages. The Holy Spirit worked powerfully through the word to transform many that day, with over 3,000 being added to their numbers after the festival of Pentecost.

One thing that sticks out from Peter’s sermon is that I. The Father makes the plan of salvation. The Father “loves it when a plan comes together!” And our Heavenly Father is all over this text. I count sixteen times in fifteen verses—sometimes called God, other times “the Father” and yet other times “he” or “you.”

Peter tells us that the Father was the one doing the miracles through Jesus. The Father was the one who raised Jesus from the dead. The Father exalted Jesus to His right hand and crowned Jesus as king. If the plan of salvation were a musical at a local high school, the Father is the one writing the checks, setting the deadlines, and coordinating the rehearsal schedules. He’s the producer.

Now, before I get too ahead of myself, I’m going to keep on referencing this “plan of salvation” as if you all know exactly what I’m talking about. Simply put, the plan of salvation is our Triune God’s course of action to rescue humanity from evil.

To rescue us from evil means to be saved from racism. It means perfect justice will be enacted. It means there will be peace, love, and harmony. To rescue us from evil means to be delivered out of violence. To save us from evil means no more sickness or pandemic. Deliver us from evil means deliver us from the evil one, namely the devil, who works to sow destruction, discord, and distrust. To be freed from evil means to be freed from ourselves and our sinful nature. Our sinful actions separate us from God and cause many of the problems we experience on a daily basis—not the mainstream media, not the police, and not the protestors in the streets or at the capital.

On this Holy Trinity Sunday when we talk about God’s plan of salvation, Peter didn’t have in mind a revolution, a military coup, or a vaccine. But rather, **“this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”** You crucified and killed Jesus by the hands of lawless men. Our evil and the evil of the world around us sent Jesus to the cross, yet it all went according to the Father’s plan.

Not that the Father wished this to happen. Evil was never his intention. Yet His plan is bigger than our ability to mess it up. His plan can take the wickedness all around us and work it for good. He has a plan and He knows the future. He created this universe, and He will see it through to its end.

“I love it when a plan comes together!” Circling back to group projects, it’s one thing to receive the assignment, to team up into groups, and have your first meeting where every team member promises to work on one aspect of the project. It’s another thing entirely for those things to actually be accomplished. It’s one thing to say you’ll do something, it’s another thing to fulfill your promises.

II. The Son enacts the plan of salvation. Jesus loves it when a plan comes together. He would know because He is the central actor in seeing that the plan was accomplished. The Son is true God, and He Himself came down to earth being born in a manger. Jesus of Nazareth lived a perfect life free from sinning, free from committing acts of evil. He stood head and shoulders above all the other so-called prophets, saviors, and holy people as His ministry was peppered with **“mighty works and wonders and signs.”**

Jesus was the main actor in the plan of salvation. Everyone who’s done a musical knows you can have the best producer and the best instrumentalists and set crew, but you’re nothing without a star-studded cast. Jesus never flubbed a line. Jesus did everything perfectly. Jesus is God and is the producer Himself stepping onto the stage to move the story forward.

Peter describes God’s plan of salvation as it came its high point, literally. You crucified and killed Jesus Christ. We did. The world filled with its sorrow, anger, and evil crucified Jesus Christ. The Triune God’s solution to evil was to heap all of it on Jesus’ back there on Mount Calvary.

All the evil. All the hatred and racism in the Internet and airwaves, in the towns and cities, and in my heart and in the hearts of humanity. All the injustices and violence that humanity has ever committed, and not only the stuff you've seen in the news. All the selfishness and greed, even our own. All the idolatry and faithlessness. All the evil. All the sin. All the death. Jesus carried all of this as He was crucified, and when Jesus said it is finished, God the Father said, "Enough!"

You crucified Jesus, but God forgave you. And so too, because of Jesus, God looks upon us with love. Jesus rose again, demonstrating that evil died with Him. Death couldn't hold Him down because God loves it when a plan comes together, and the plan of salvation never has death as the end. Without Jesus, the plan of salvation could not have been accomplished.

"I love it when a plan comes together." THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE PLAN OF SALVATION. III. The Holy Spirit incorporates you into the plan of salvation. In our text from Acts, the Holy Spirit only occurs once in this text. Verse 33, "**[Jesus] Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.**" The Holy Spirit is hardly mentioned, but He's always in the background.

After all, this sermon is from Pentecost. The Holy Spirit acted in a marvelous way on that day coming in as a mighty rushing wind and resting on the heads of the apostles as tongues of fire. But the Holy Spirit is never about the Holy Spirit. Like a set crew in a musical, the Holy Spirit works in the background to shine the spotlight on Jesus. When Jesus looks good, the Holy Spirit looks good.

And the Holy Spirit doesn't just sit in the shadows, He's constantly inviting you in. He is calling you to faith, and He is sustaining your faith. He's enabling you to take part in the plan of salvation. That's what He did as He worked through the apostles throughout their ministry, and that's what He does even today in the hearts of Christians.

In a world of bad news, the Holy Spirit puts on our mouth the best news. The good news that the Son has already defeated evil. The good news that the Son has forgiven your sins and loves you. The good news that the Father has a plan for you. The good news that not only does the Father have a plan for you, there's room for you in His musical. You can be part of the family.

"I love it when a plan comes together." On this Trinity Sunday, cast your cares and anxieties aside and come be a part of the life of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The God who has a plan for you, who has defeated evil and forgiven you, and who is calling you to take part in His perfect plan. Amen!