

The perfect plan. As I reflect on the perfect plan, I note that we adapted this Christmas program back in 2019. The Christmas story is still the same and the kids are still amazing, so it's certainly not a problem to do this.

But think back three years ago. Back in December 2019, I remember a conversation with a member sharing concerns about coronavirus spreading in China and I wrote it off as paranoia. Little did we know the tidal wave that would hit our country later in 2020. Since then, we've had entrances and exits at the church. Members being called to glory, members joining the congregation, members being born into the congregation. Our country has had ups and downs: riots and civil unrest, pandemics and masks, elections and Supreme Court Decisions.

The perfect plan. It's easy to see the perfect plan when your baby is born with a healthy diagnosis, when your favorite politician is elected, when you get a raise at work. But the perfect plan? With thousands dead from COVID, riots in the streets and state buildings, saying goodbye to loved ones, especially loved ones we know from our congregation. How could *that* be the perfect plan?

As we reflect on the sorrows of the past three years and the challenges of our life, we always have to tie it back into *the* perfect plan, the perfect plan just outlined for you by the children of our congregation. The plan of Jesus coming to this world was not always what you would expect: born of a poor virgin, born in a stable, spending formative years in a backwater town, dying at the hands of sinful people through a gruesome crucifixion. How could *that* be the perfect plan?

Yet that was *the* perfect plan. God working through humble means and working good even in spite of evil. If it weren't for the death of Jesus, where would we be? If it weren't for Jesus suffering, how else could we know God understands *our* suffering? If it weren't for the resurrection of Jesus, what hope would we have in the face of death?

It's that perfect plan that fits into our lives to make our imperfect plans perfect. As we find our place in this Christmas story of Jesus, we find that God has a plan for our lives. Our Heavenly Father has a plan even when there is a death in the congregation. Our Heavenly Father has a plan even when there is a global pandemic, even after a shooting, even after civil unrest and riots—not that He wants those things, but the story of Jesus shows us that our God can work a perfect plan even with imperfect people.

The perfect plan. Think back on the three years and count the blessings the Lord has showered upon you and this congregation even despite the hardships! As the Lord weaves us into His perfect plan, we can look forward to the next three years and await with eagerness the blessings He will shower upon us in the next three years!