

The Big Plan

By Rob Neves



A long, long time ago God came up with a plan. He had a BIG plan to show us how much he loved us. So, He worked really hard for almost a whole week and built a whole universe just so He could show us His love. He made stars and the sun, the earth and the sea, plants and the animals all so each of us can see how much He loves us. Some of the things He created were beautiful and inspiring like rainbows and horses, sunsets and roses. Some of the things He made were well, not so inspiring like fevers and colds, dandelions and mud. But he made each one of these creations with love, and He made each one of these creations with a very important part to play in His BIG plan. This is the story of one of those not-so-impressive creations. It was a rock. Now, God created lots of rocks. He made really big rocks called mountains. This rock wasn't one of those. He made really small rocks called diamonds. This rock wasn't one of those either. It was just a plain, old, grey rock. It was about the size of a hill and nothing was all that special about it except for a big hole in its side. This rock remembered God and heard about his plan so he called on his Creator and asked him,

"Lord, I want to do your will, but I am just a plain old rock. Wouldn't I be better able to help you with your plan if I was as big as a mountain? When people see me, they will see how big your love is or, if I can't be big, could I be as beautiful as a diamond so that when people see me they will see how beautiful your love is?"

To this God Answered,

"If you believe that I love you, if you believe that I care. Have faith in my word and I will always be there.

My plan is forever, your plan is right here. Be steadfast and patient, for your time is near."

So the rock trusted God and waited. Decades passed and centuries flickered by like stars in the night. The rain pounded and wore grooves in the rock's face. The wind howled and swept it away, grain by grain. The rock thought to itself, "I am not as big or as beautiful as I used to be but, there is a plan for me so I will remain steadfast and patient just like God asked. One day the rock noticed a town being built. Some of the rocks nearby were being used to build houses and towers. Some of them were being used to carve awesome sculptures. The Rock thought,

"Lord, I want to be part of your BIG plan, but I am just a plain old rock. Wouldn't I be better able to help you with your plan if I was a big tower? When people see me they will see how big your love is or, if I can't be big, could I be as beautiful as a sculpture? Then when people see me they will see how beautiful your love is."

To this God Answered,

"If you believe that I love you, if you believe that I care. Have faith in my word and I will always be there.

My plan is forever, your plan is right here. Be steadfast and patient, for your time is near."

So the rock trusted God and waited. Decades passed and centuries flickered by like stars in the night. Soon the hole in its side grew so big that people started to keep sheep inside the rock. The rock smelled really bad and no one wanted to go near it. The rain still pounded and wore more grooves in its face. The wind kept howling and swept more of the rock away, grain by grain. The rock thought to itself, "I am not as big or as beautiful as I used to be but there is a plan for me I will remain steadfast and patient just like God asked."

One night as the rock looked up at a very bright star it began to wonder: "What can a plain old rock like me do? The hole in my side is so big now that everyone uses me to keep sheep, cattle and donkeys in. I am only half as big as I used to be and my face is so tattered by the weather you can hardly tell I am grey. From the beginning of time I have just wanted to help God with his Big Plan and all I have done is sat here and waited. Lord, how can something as small, ugly and stinky as me be part of the Big Plan?"

To this God answered, "You believed that I love you, you believed that I cared. You had faith in my word and I was always there. My plan is forever, your plan is right here. You were steadfast and patient now your time is here."

Just then a man and woman approached and tied their little donkey to a tree. The woman laid fresh straw in the manger and soon she gave birth to a very special child. 'She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.' The rock watched all of this happen, unsure of what it all meant but humbled by the love of God.

"You see," explained God, "Tonight I needed somewhere for simple peace and love to be born. If you had been a diamond tonight you would be hanging from the ear of a queen. If you had been a mountain Mary and Joseph could not have climbed you. If you had been a tower tonight you would have been filled with wealthy travelers. If you had been a statue you would be locked in a castle. If you hadn't been a smelly stable you would not have been available to my desperate servants.

My love is everywhere, not just in the castles. My love is for all, not just the rich. My love is accessible, not like a mountain and if you long to live my love, all you have to do is be humble, be patient and have faith. Since the beginning of time I have been preparing you and all creation for your part in the Big Plan... For all time people will come to know the great love I have for them in the example you set."

To this day you can see that rock. Just outside of the town of Bethlehem, there is a mount with a cave. And according to ancient business ledgers, 2000 years ago that cave was owned by one of the local innkeepers. It was in that cave that the innkeeper sheltered his small flock, tethered patrons' donkeys, and on the odd occasion harbored poor or desperate travelers. Although thousands of people have used it for many purposes, today it is honored as the birthplace of Christ. Since that night so long ago, decades still pass and centuries have flickered by like stars in the night. The rain still pounds and wears grooves in its face. The wind still howls and sweeps it away grain by grain. It isn't as big or as beautiful as it used to be but it remains steadfast and patient. Just like God planned.

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