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God has a plan for us

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For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

I suspect many, if not most of us have, at one time or another, heard someone declare: “God has a plan for your life.” I think that’s true, but not the way many people think about it.

God’s plan for our lives is not a “blueprint” for our lives. It is not a roadmap that we have to follow so we end up where God wants us to be, doing what God wants us to do. God’s plan for our lives is much simpler: wherever we are, whatever we are doing, whoever we are with, God’s plan is that we be people who love. That’s God’s plan for us—love.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, God gives the Hebrew people a straightforward command. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD” (19:18). And when someone asked Jesus what the most important commandments were, he first quoted Deuteronomy 6:5: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might,” and then he quoted Leviticus 19:18, after which he declared: “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:40). That’s God’s plan for us—love God who made you and love your neighbor.

Paul understood exactly what Jesus meant. In Romans 13:8-10, he wrote: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another *has fulfilled the law*. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and *any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”* Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.”

But love is not only God’s plan for us individually. It is also God’s plan for us collectively as the people of God, as the community of faith, as the church. Both individuals and communities of faith who follow God’s plan of love most assuredly have a “future with hope.”

Prayer: Holy God, thank you that your plans for us—that we love you and love our neighbor—are for our welfare and to give us a future with hope. Amen.