 “Letting Go of Control: The Event Planner”

a script from

by

Paul Neil

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| **What** | In this monologue, a confident mission trip coordinator tells how she learned to let go of control.  Themes: Control, Surrender, Adoption, Love, Lent, Missions | | |
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| **Who** | Shannon- female, 40-60 |  |  |
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| **When** | 1993 | | |
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| **Wear** (Props) | The event planner should be dressed in middle-aged 1990s attire—think big shoulders, big hair, bright colors, yet professional looking.  Can carry a binder with a cover that says “Mission Trip”  A stool. | | |
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| **Why** | Proverbs 16:9 | | |
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| **How** | Think through the events that happened as you’re preparing to play this role. Give her some history, thinking through her life up until this point. How did she become an event planner? What’s her temperament like? What’s her relationship with God like? With her community? With her family?  Giving her a life beyond what we see here will help you tell this story. You’ll know better how to carry yourself, how to sit, how to speak. You create the character based on the information you’re given in this monologue, and the more you understand her, the more depth you’ll give to this story. | | |
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| **Time** | Approximately 7 minutes | | |

Lights up. **Shannon** is sitting on a stool and addresses the audience.

**Shannon:** Spaghetti dinners. Car washes. Candy bar sales. You name it, we’d done it. Raising money for a mission trip is no easy task. But we’re living in 1995, people. Women like me can get things done. I’m an event planner. Details are my business. When the pastor put me in charge of our mission trip to Haiti, I took it seriously. Every detail accounted for. Coordinating payment schedules. Fundraiser shifts. Ordering project supplies. Faxes back and forth with the travel agent about airline tickets. On-site housing. Medical waivers. Ground transportation. When you’re taking parents and their teenagers overseas you gotta plan for every contingency. And that’s what I’m good at. I know how to keep things under control.

So fast forward. It’s the morning of day four in Haiti. Our team has finished out three walls of a missionary home and built benches for the church’s school building. One minor injury—let me tell you, don’t trust a middle school boy with a hammer—one case of stomach trouble, and that’s it. That morning, one of the missionaries, Sarah, asks if my daughter Katie and I will help with a special project delivering supplies to a government-run home for girls. She explains that the girls in this particular home are known to have no living parents. Now… orphanages are a problem in Haiti. Something like 80% of the children in them have at least one living parent…they just can’t support them. Going to an orphanage hadn’t been on my plan, and I…politely…say so. Sarah assures me that this one was legit. I look at Katie, and I can tell she wants to do it. Against my better judgment, I allow for a deviation from my plan.

So now we’ve driven an hour on bumpy roads to this ramshackle facility, and we’ve unloaded the carts in the kitchen. The missionary says, come on, come meet the kids. We walk down a rickety hallway and into the main room…and it’s like a scene from a movie—dozens of little girls press in around me, speaking French so quickly I have no hope of keeping up. I look over at Katie and see that she’s almost being pulled down by kids trying to reach up and touch her blonde hair. I can feel panic rising, and I don’t feel in control anymore.

I’m trying to be polite to the girls…but this is way outside my comfort zone. I’m smiling through gritted teeth but desperately trying to get back through the door. But then I see…Katie is laughing. Somehow… she’s engaging with these girls. She’s only a junior, but those two years of French are still fresh in her mind, and she’s talking to the girls, responding to their questions, joking with them. I’m in awe of her…and I’m ashamed of my fear, my panic.

And in that moment, I still don’t feel in control…but I suddenly feel the assurance that God STILL IS.

The last three days of the trip some of us went to the girls’ home every day, my husband and I and Katie included. That’s how we got to know Esther…five years old…a tiny stealer of hearts. That first morning when I met her, I heard God telling me…this one is yours. That terrified me. I told myself it wasn’t true. The next morning, same word from God, same reaction from stubborn ol’ me. Third morning…same thing…same denial on my part…

Of course, at the time, I didn’t consider it denying Him. I was being practical, wise, careful. We already have our family established. But then …the missionary gives the kids a Bible lesson. About Peter…and his denial…and that moment on the beach. I know what I have to do. It isn’t in my control. I talked to my husband and Katie…and together we said “yes”. One year and two more trips to Haiti later, Esther became our daughter. It was a process that used a lot of my detail-oriented skills…but it wasn’t in my control. It was a lot of prayer from a lot of people, and a lot of reliance on Him.

This will be Esther’s first Easter with us. You’d better believe she’s going to have a big basket. But we’re also making sure to tell the stories about how Jesus came in a way no one anticipating him expected. They thought they had figured out what kind of Messiah would come. Just like I thought I knew why God had me in Haiti. But they got a Messiah that said, “Feed my lambs.” Not build an army. Not overthrow the government. Not defend me to the death. Feed my lambs.

You know what? That same Jesus that Peter talked to on the beach…that’s the same Jesus who I follow. And if that means giving up my comfort, my control? Who am I to say no?

For me, for my husband and my daughters, Jesus is the same now as He was then. And wow. Am I glad He’s in control.

Lights out.