

Introduction

As a teaching elder or pastor, I love catching up with people over coffee to talk life and what not. I enjoy the company of people. I love answering questions like, Like Brian, should I date Sally? Brian, should I break up with Tristan? Or Brian, what do you reckon I should do with this job? I feel overworked, underpaid, under-appreciated, what should I do? See these sorts of real life questions is the stuff of life. But I think they reveal something about us all. It reveals that we long for direction in life. We long to know God's divine will for our lives. If I only I know his plan for me, then I know what to do with my life. I'll get it right. And so its uncomfortable sitting in the tension of not knowing exactly what to do.

Now this morning, God lifts our eyes to see what he is doing in this world. In [Ephesians 3](#), we find out that before the beginning of time, God had an eternal plan. And so the big question this morning is this; are you on board with God's eternal plan for your life?

Now in Ephesians chapter 2, it talks about God has torn down the dividing wall of hostility between the Gentiles and the Jews. We, the Gentiles and in fact the Jews as well, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Once we were out, but now we are in. Once we were without hope and without God in the world. But now we are in God's kingdom because of Jesus. And we're not just saved to just hang around until heaven. No, God shows us his eternal plan. He wants us to get on board and live it out as believers. Now this plan was hidden for ages but not anymore. It has been revealed to you.

1. God's eternal plan revealed: (3:1-6)

Come to verse 1

Ephesians 3:1-2 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you,

See what Paul says? Paul is a prisoner on behalf of who? You. He suffered for You gentiles. God created you not only in his image, not just male or female, but God created you as a gentile. You may be Chinese or Singaporean. You may be Irish. Or Aussie. Or Greek. He writes to you and me, Gentiles. That's important. How do you know you're important? See what God did. God sent Paul to be the steward of God's grace for you. Note that word stewardship. It means administration or oversight. God's eternal plan was given to Paul to administer to you.

And again note, this plan hasn't always been known. It was a mystery. Verse 3. That word mystery comes 3 times in verses 3 to 6.

Ephesians 3:3-6 how the **mystery** was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the **mystery** of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This **mystery** is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Come back with me to the first time its used in in verse 3. It's a mystery that has now been revealed. Don't think of it like a murder mystery where you're trying to find out who killed Berta but you never really know in the end. It's a mystery. It's uncertain. No. Mystery here means that it's an open secret. It's a mystery that God needs to reveal. And he has. See it in Verse 5

Ephesians 3:5 **which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.**

This mystery has been made known to the Apostle Paul, to the Ephesians, and now to you and me. So God wants Paul to share this plan with every single gentile.

And so what is it? What is this plan? the mystery of Christ? Here it is; it is to include you as one of his own people verse 6

Ephesians 3:6 **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**

Friends don't miss how big this is. We, the Gentiles - were on the outside. We were outsiders looking in. We were no hopers. We had no God. That was our status. And we should not think that's unfair. We all deserved to be on the outside because we have all rejected God. we wanted nothing to do with God the creator. But God in his grace chose ethnic Israel to be his people. He chose Abraham in [Genesis 12](#). He blesses him with land offspring and blessings. Not because he was great or worthy, but just because of his kindness and grace. They, the Israelites were to be his people and he was to be their God. They were to be a blessing to the nations. And we get a glimpse of God blessing the nations. God did bring in others. Think of Ruth the Moabite or Rahab the Canaanite spy. Some from the outside came in.

And so the question is not, will God bring in the Gentiles. But how? How will he do it? come back to verse 6.

Ephesians 3:6 **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**

Did you pick it? It's through the Gospel. What's that? That's the good news of Jesus. We're in because of the blood of Jesus. His death paid for our sins. We can now confidently have full access to God.

Friends, its now out in the open.

Through the Gospel - We are now fellow heirs – we have equal status as the Jews

Through the Gospel - We are members of the same body – in the same family, one family in Christ by the same Spirit.

Through the Gospel - We are partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. – the promises to the Jews are the same promises to you, Gentile.

We are one with the Jews through the Gospel. We get everything God promised to the Jews. We get every spiritual blessing in Christ. We were outsiders who have been brought in. Let me remind you on what you have in Christ.

And Paul talks about this in chapter 1.

In Christ we are holy. we are set apart for God

In Christ we are adopted. we are part of God's family

In Christ we are redeemed. we have been bought back from slavery of sin

In Christ we are forgiven. we have sins forgiven.

In Christ we have the Holy Spirit. his Spirit dwells in us.

In Christ we have an eternal hope. It's the hope of eternity that can never be taken away.

In Christ we get the glory of heaven.

When Jesus died on the cross he died to include you to be part of his people. you have it all.

Here's the thing;

We know what it's like to be on the outside.

Oh I'm single with no kids and all my friends are marrying now and moving on in life. We feel it. believe it or not, i felt that going to family dinners back in the day. we have a big chinese family. Oh I can't get a job, but my mates are all getting interviews left right and centre. Oh I'm retired and my children don't care about me, after all those years I spent raising them. We know that feeling of being on the outside.

And we think if we can find God's plan then that will get us in. We can be in with the in crowd. But Paul says, none of that really matters in the end. It's the wrong thinking. It does not matter in eternity. God's eternal plan is to include you and bring you in as one of his people. it's not to do anything. It's to receive Jesus. It's not to work, study, get a great job. But it's to realise your need for a Saviour the Lord Jesus and so trust in him. And if you are included in Christ, you have it all. You have every spiritual blessing. If you have Christ, you have everything you need. you are right with the eternal God. And so friends, set your mind on this eternal reality. Here is what God is doing. this is the key verse to unlocking Ephesians. [Ephesians 1:10](#)

Ephesians 1:10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.

In other words, in the fullness of time, all things – all people, the whole spiritual beings will one day bow to Jesus and call him Lord – believer or unbeliever. He's uniting all things.

So friends, do you know that? Maybe the better question is, do you believe that? the big thing God is doing is that he will unite all things – when he returns to judge the world. And so the Gospel makes everything else small. So small and insignificant. I'm sitting down and thinking of our future financially. I guess when you have 5 kids it forces you think about these things right. It is important. And my wife Joy and I we can angst over it. it can bring some tension in our discussions. And yet when we step back a bit we know it's not that important compared to God's eternal plan. What's important? God wants me, wants us to believe in the Gospel. to trust in the Lord Jesus. to be brought in as part

of his people. and if he is uniting all things in Christ – that’s his plan – then surely we need to let the Gospel inform our decisions. Our life is surely all about Jesus and the Gospel. Is that what’s most important to you?

Friends there’s more. See God’s plan is not just about you, I like to think I’m the centre of the world right, but God has an eternal plan for us, the Church. He takes our eyes off ourselves and puts them onto something so brilliant – the church.

2. God’s eternal plan displayed (3:7-13)

Come to verse 8-9

Ephesians 3:8–9 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,

First, God gives Paul a mission to proclaim to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. He wants us to experience the riches of being included in Christ. Eternal life, full forgiveness, complete joy being with Jesus forever.

And not only that, second Paul is to shed light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things. God is the creator of all things. And He wants Paul to tell all people about God’s eternal plan. Jesus is the Lord and Saviour who has brought Jew and Gentile together as one body with Jesus as the head. Why? So that verse 10 listen to this - I love these verses

Ephesians 3:10–11 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Did you hear that? When God includes you to be part of his people, he brings you into this. His Church. The body of Christ. That’s the church the people. The church shows the manifold or multifaceted wisdom of God. I love that word multifaceted.

When I bought my wife Joy’s engagement ring from the jeweller in Dulwich Hill in Sydney, this jeweller showed me this perfectly cut diamond (**SLIDE**) in the light. that was the first time i had heard about the 4 C’s. Cut, clarity color and carat for those who are interested in diamonds. I remember the Jeweller. He was so excited about the diamond. Look at this Brian. And I see the single beam of white light breaks into a dazzling spectrum – reds, blues, golds, greens flashing in every direction. It’s multifaceted. So as the diamond turns, new colours appear. It’s brilliant. It’s beautiful. You can’t help but go that is just incredible.

When we think of the Church, we see God’s multifaceted wisdom like a diamond. The church is where we find unity – Jew and gentile united together. they were enemies for the longest time. in fact people of all sorts of backgrounds are united together by the Gospel. Only the Gospel can do that. We see love. redemption. forgiveness, grace, joy, peace. It’s brilliant. It’s so brilliant that when we gather as a church prayerfully under Gods word, it shows Gods multifaceted wisdom to who? The beings of heaven – to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Do you hear what God is saying? The heavenly beings watch what God is doing with his Church and go wow. God is a god of

grace, wisdom, power, and mercy and justice and forgiveness. Jesus is victorious of sin and death and the evil one.

This is God's eternal plan realised in Christ verse 11. To bring you in as one of his family - into this the church. Friends, we might feel like Church is just ordinary. The Bible talk is not that dynamic or things could be done better. See people have all sorts of views about Church. it's out of date. it's boring. not worth a Sunday morning. I've been watching Mr Bean (**SLIDE**) with the kids. we'd have a long day at church and then to have some family time i turn on Mr Bean. He's one funny bloke. Doesn't even have to talk and I'm in stitches laughing. Now there was one episode of him at church. it's very typical. Even 30 years ago, people thought Church was just so boring. His falling asleep during the sermon. And in another scene, he's got no idea what they are singing except for the chorus 'hallelujah'. he's not encouraging his neighbor, he's falling asleep on him. It makes a mockery of church. But what does Paul say about the church? It's a picture of God's eternal plans for the world. it's the centre of God's purposes for heaven and earth. It's a picture of heaven so people of all nations come to worship this great God and see all that Christ has done as the Bible is opened up. It's God's multifaceted wisdom on display.

And so this is where you belong. The idea that you can be saved and don't go to church makes absolutely no sense. So, is this how you see the church? Yes, we are a group of ordinary looking people. We're not flashy. We're not that polished. And you know, we're sinners saved by grace. But the heavenly beings look at this and go wow. Christ is victorious. God is so wise. this is God's multifaceted wisdom.

Friends, I want you to have a bigger vision of Church. It's a slice of heaven. It's where we see God's wisdom displayed. It's where Christ is proclaimed. It's where we want our friends and family who don't know Christ to be. and maybe you are here exploring the faith, we love that you are here. absolutely love it. and our desire is for you be brought in and come to trust in Jesus. That's what's important. So is that how you see Church? I'm committed and I'm here every week. I'm here to learn from God's Word. I'm here to serve my brothers and sisters in Christ. I'm here to pray. I want to show and teach my children why the Gospel is so important and what church is all about. that it's not boring at all. I'm hear to hear the precious word of God as we wait for his return. I'm thankful for all Christ has done for me and my family, I'm here. I wouldn't miss it for sport or that birthday. It just won't even enter into my thinking. Are you on board with God's eternal plan?

Friend's what have we seen? God's plan has been revealed to you – you are part of God's family. And God's eternal plan is for all of us displayed in the church. Love the church. And Paul finishes the rest of chapter 3 by praying. He stops talking about the plan. He prays for people in it. And it's serious. He's on his knees praying to the Father because at the end of the day, it's God who works by his spirit to bring about that change in us.

3. God's eternal plan is experienced: (3:14-21)

So what does he ask God for? It's actually not simple. Paul says a lot that we won't have time to unpack. But in a nutshell, it's this; he prays God's eternal plan will grow bigger in our everyday experience. Look at v16

Ephesians 3:16–17 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Ephesians 3:18–19 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul wants us to realise how big Christ's love is. he prays that we would grow in that understanding.

he wants us to grow in understanding it's breadth and length and height and depth. It's cross shaped.

Look at the how broad it is – he includes all people of all nations. Whatever you feel you are or have done, the cross can cover your sins.

Look at the length God went to. He sent Jesus his own beloved Son - the Son of God - to die in our place

Look at how deep God's love is – Jesus came from heaven to earth as a man to die in the most horrible way for your sins, for our sins.

Look at how high his love is. It takes us all the way to heaven to enjoy eternity with God.

Friends, Paul prays we would know the Gospel deeply. Don't doubt, don't lose heart, but believe and grow in your understanding and love for Jesus. Look at the cross and look at what Jesus has already done for you. Paul prays we will get Christ's love, it will sink deep into our hearts.

So what have we seen? Gods eternal plan has been revealed. He wants to bring us in as part of his family. And he shows us his magnificent plan through the church. And he prays that would understand the depths of God's great love for us in Christ.

4. Conclusion

So to conclude, back to the original question, your plan in life? Retire with a healthy pot of super? Leave enough money for the kids when you go? Buy a beautiful house? Enjoy family life? Enjoy more trips overseas? Stay fit and healthy? All these things I would like you know. that's what i immediately think about. See I want my kids to grow up, have the best experiences and do well at school. I want to take my kids to Germany to see their cousins and meet their aunties and uncles. There are just too many of them now, don't think I'll ever be able to afford it. I brought that on myself. But you know as i wrestle with this passage, it's okay if none of that happens. In fact, it's okay if you're life doesn't amount to much in the world's eyes. that's totally okay. don't worry about what aunty number 3 says at your lack of worldly ambition at Christmas dinner. dont' worry about it. Because God's has shown us his eternal plan. It's that we are part of his family. we're in christ. That's what's important. And he shows this great plan through the church – which he is building as people come to know Christ and find life in him. So let's get on board with God's eternal plans, trust Jesus, love his church and get on with sharing Christ so others might final eternal life in Christ. And if we suffer then so be it. It's worth it for God's glory. Let's pray.