

God's Eternal Plan

Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus

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Introduction

1. God's eternal plan for humanity is the heart and soul of this letter to the Ephesus church. Paul wrote to define and explain the scope of God's eternal plan for humanity – that in Jesus Christ God bring redemption to all men and unite all men – Jew and Gentile – in the church. He unfolded this great mystery of God and then unfolded the implications that mystery for all who believe Christ. If I am a faithful and devoted member of the Lord's church, of what am I a part?

2. Church In Ephesus

- Paul takes the gospel to Ephesus (Acts 19)
- Timothy stays in Ephesus (1 and 2 Timothy)
- God's plan intended (Ephesians 1-3) God's plan at work (Ephesians 4-6)
- Christ warns the Ephesus church: Revelation 2:1-8 Hebrews 10:35-39

The Redeemed Church

Ephesians 1:1-23

1. Who was the church in Ephesus? (1-2)

- The saints in Ephesus who are faithful in Christ Jesus!
- Those who are put into that relationship with God by Christ (in Christ)
- Those people in this pagan and carnal city of Ephesus who have been separated from its wickedness to belong to God
- All of this is about one thing – the redeemed! The church, the body of believers, is the body of the redeemed.

2. Why did God redeem us in Christ?

- grace to forgive us of our sins
- reveal the mystery of his will, of his purposes
- unite all humanity in Christ in the church by preaching the gospel

3. What did God do for us with this redemption, what spiritual blessings were given us? (3-14).

- We have been given *every spiritual blessing found in and from heaven* (3)
- We have been *chosen by God* before the creation of everything to be his holy and blameless people (4).
- We have been *adopted by God as his children* (5)
- We have been *accepted by God* (6)
- We have been *forgiven of our sins by God* (7-8)
- We have been given *"the mystery of God's will"* (9-10)

4. Why did God do all this? Why did he sacrifice his son for that work? (11-14)
 - We have been *given the inheritance of God* (11)
 - We have been chosen *to become his glory and praise* (12)
 - We have been *sealed by God* (13-14)
5. Prayer and thanksgiving (15-23)
 - Thankful for their faith in Christ and their love toward the saints
 - Prays for their faith and love to continue and grow in the environment they lived in; Paul prayed for God to give them wisdom and knowledge and great power. Paul wants them to know God
 - Paul want them to know from this Spirit of knowledge and revelation from God the hope of their calling , the rich treasure of their glorious inheritance , the immeasurably great power God gives to and set to work in them, the throne of our almighty Lord Jesus Christ
 - God’s want us all to better understand and know who we are – to have a strong sense of our identity (19-22) – the power of our identity and the power, influence, and confidence of knowing and understanding who we are.

Saved By Grace Through Faith to be Reconciled In Christ
Ephesians 2:1-22

1. Who were they before Christ? (2:1-3)
 - Walking dead men (1)
 - Walking in sin and trespasses (2)
 - Walked in the path of the world (3)
2. What did God do for us? What did God do about it? (2:4-10)
 - God saved us from all that evil!!! The church is the saved from that kind of life and existence!!!!
 - Why did God do this? (4)
 - By his great power, God rescues us (5-7)
 - We are saved by grace through faith (8-9)
 - So he will make us his workmanship (10)
3. The condition of the Gentiles who obeyed the gospel before they were saved and are now the church of Christ in Ephesus (11-13)
 - Why was the spirit of fellowship, the work of God, at work in the church such a significant concern and issue for Paul? Jewish/Gentile conflict in the apostolic church.
 - Explain the labels – the “Circumcised” and the “Uncircumcised”
 - Explain the circumcision of the heart
 - Before the gospel, the state of the Gentiles.
 - At Calvary!!!!!! That is the place of our redemption from sin and our reconciliation from sinful evil world.

- *This is the state and condition of everyone who has not responded to God's grace in faith and obeyed the gospel.*
4. God made this peace (reconciliation) through what Christ did at Calvary (14-18)
 - At Calvary, with the Cross, Christ destroyed the wall of hostility between God and between men.
 - The temple veil ripped at the time of Christ's death: veil of sin between God and man, the veil of the sinful heart between men.
 - He ripped that veil when he made peace to remove all the barriers and hostilities between God and man and between men to create a "new humanity" – the church, a new and spiritual kingdom of holiness and peace among men.
 - The heart and spirit of the church
 5. As a result, they were no longer two peoples but one. The church is the creation of God by his work of reconciliation in Christ to make one people, the people of God. The gospel does not divide us from each other; it separates us from the world (19-23)
 - How?
 - What? So then we both, we all are built together.
 - Why? God is building his dwelling place on earth.

The Revelation and Power of the Gospel

Ephesians 3:1-21

1. What mystery was revealed to Paul that he preached to them?
 - The mystery is the gospel of Christ – the revelation of the gospel of Christ
 - the work of Christ – Jesus was God incarnate so that God himself would complete his eternal plan
2. How does Paul describe this great mystery?
 - That God has always intended his chosen people to be the church
 - That the Gentiles are *fellow heirs* with the Jews – they belong together equally
 - That the Gentiles are *members of the same body* with the Jews –
 - That the Gentiles are *partakers of the promise of Jesus Christ through the gospel* with the Jews
 - Again, Paul is saying that God did this great work of his grace.
3. Who was Paul?
 - When Christ came to him on the road to Damascus, he had devoted his life to persecuting the Christians (the saints) trying to destroy the church because he believed that was what God wanted.
 - Yet, God saw things differently in him; he chose Paul and moved to convert him:
4. What, then, was Paul able to do so that he would reveal the gospel to the Gentiles?
 - Preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ –

- Bring to light for everyone the once hidden plan for them of God who created them
 - Result – that all who claim any authority on earth or in the heavenly places would now know what God was doing in Christ from the beginning in the church; that in both the realm of man and in the spiritual realm all could now see what God was doing with the church in this world to reveal God’s infinite wisdom.
5. We pray for the spiritual strength to serve (14-15)
 - We pray to the one who is the origin of all life and every human family – we are his offspring because he created us (Acts 17:21-33).
 - How does this relationship relate to the church and its mission as stated in verses 1-13?
 6. We pray that we will be strengthened with power in our inner being so that Christ will dwell in our hearts (16-19).
 - According to the riches of his grace he may grant
 - To strengthened with power in our inner being through his Spirit
 - So that we are rooted and grounded in love by Christ dwelling in our hearts -- That Christ would dwell in our hearts in faith.
 - That we would be filled to the measure of all of the fullness of God
 7. We pray that the church will glorify God by his power (20-21).
 - What can God do with the power He has placed within us?
 - The power of the church is not what we do that defines us. The power of the church is what God will do as he works in us that defines us.

That Power at Work Through Christ’s Teaching

Ephesians 4:1-32

1. Be a church worthy of its name – the name of Christ (1)
 - We invest our lives in God's work when we bring our walk under His control.
 - Unity is how we walk in a manner that is worthy of the discipleship and fellowship of the Lord’s Church (1)
2. The spirit of the path of unity (2-3)
 - If we break the spirit of our walk we will break the unity.
 - Humility, lowliness, responsively recognizing who we are in the sight of God.
 - How do we walk worthy of the call of the gospel? The spirit of the walk of unity (2)
 - Why do walk worthy of the call of the gospel? – For “the unity of the Spirit” (verse 3)
 - We invest our lives in God's work when we serve as agents of reconciliation
3. The only path of this unity ; the foundation of this unity (4-6)
 - We invest our lives in God's work by dedicating our gifts for His purposes.
 - The only source of this unity – there is only one! This is why there is unity!
 - Of the same mind – the same purpose, direction, and spirit.
 - The ONE source is complete

4. The gift to live this unity, the gift to live this walk (7-10).
 - Each one of us who answers the gospel's call to follow Christ answers the gospel's call to be united in Christ (John 17) has been given the gift of God's grace to walk in this unity.
 - Given according "to the measure of Christ" – God determined the spiritual gift, the spiritual work for us each one of us to do
 - Christ "descended to the lower parts of the earth than ascended far above all the heavens so he could fill all things"
5. The work that produces this unity; how does each one of us use the gift given us (11-16)
 - We invest ourselves in the work of unity in Christ.
 - The gifts for this work of God in Christ (11)
 - The purpose is to prepare and establish God servants in this work (12-13)
 - The results of this work (14-16)
6. They are futile thinkers who reject Christ teaching (4:17-19).
 - They want no part of God and so they are cut off from God
 - They are darkened in their understanding
 - They are alienated from the life of God
 - They become callous
 - They have given themselves to kind of life that this thinking produces
7. We are Christian thinkers (4:20-24).
 - We are one with God because
 - We develop a righteous mind
 - We do not learn to think their way
 - We learn the mind of Christ
 - We learn to put off the old self and put on new creation in Christ
8. We become like Christ in how we live (4:25-32).
 - The result of turning from the world's thinking and taking on (filling our mind with) this kind of thinking
 - We live a righteous life
 - We speak the truth (25)
 - We become peacemakers (26-27)
 - We work and not steal (28)
 - We watch the way you talk (29)
 - We do not grieve the Holy Spirit (30)
 - We get rid of the evil spirit of the world (31)
 - We are filled with kind and forgiving spirit of Christ (32)

Walk In Love

Ephesians 5:1-33

1. "Therefore..." (5:1-2)
 - To be one in Christ we imitate God who created us
 - Christ is the demonstration of that love we walk in
2. So, these do not belong in our lives (5:3-14)
 - No sexual immorality, all impurity, all covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, crude joking
 - This not what holy people of God do! People whose lives are dedicated to God become and live life God, not be and do these things that are in rebellion to him.
 - This is not godly love – Christ does not lead or teach us to live this way, this does not imitate God because this does not do anyone any good
 - So, there is no inheritance for this life in the kingdom of God
 - Then let there be thanksgiving
 - Do not be deceived by empty words
 - Then, walk as children of light to live this new life of godly love
 - So wake up and shine the light
3. Be deliberate about how you live (5:15-21)
 - Wise – how you use your time because the days are evil; we do not play games with life and holiness and evil
 - Understand the will of God – that you won't be foolish or fooled by the evil that is everywhere we turn in this world
 - Be filled with the Spirit of God – that you are not the evil spirit of the world; there is no room for evil in your heart when it is filled with godly love, no room for both; when we walk by the Spirit we are filled with the Spirit and its fruit
 - sharing with one another the music of praise and worship of God from the sounds of your heart and voice
 - Giving thanks to God for his every blessing and will
 - Be humble with one another out of reverence to Christ – about this relationship of oneness in our fellowship and not about surrender to the control of another; be willing to serve and respect each other
4. Marriage is a demonstration of this walk in love in the pagan world (5:22-33)
 - Wives submit to your husbands as you submit to the Lord
 - Husbands love your wives as Christ has loved the church
 - What then is the spiritual purpose of the marriage relationship?

Family and Work and the World

Ephesians 6:1-24

1. Children and parents (6:1-4)
 - Children are to learn to respect their parents as they are to...
 - Fathers are to train their children, not provoke them:
2. Slaves and masters (6:5-9)
 - Slaves respect their masters
 - Masters reward your slaves for their good service
3. Soldiers of Christ Arise! A call to stand up and stand in the power of the Lord in the midst of the wicked and sinful unbelieving world (6:10-13)
 - The strength to overcome the wicked and evil one is in the might of the Lord
 - The schemes of the evil one we fight
 - How do we fight against the evil one in the might of the Lord?
4. The Armor we wear (6:14-17)
 - Fasten the armor with the belt of truth – it keeps the armor on you and holds it all together
 - Cover with the breastplate of righteousness – as to wear the clothes that are right actions
 - Shod our feet with peace – move yourself with the gospel of peace
 - Take up the shield of faith to protect yourself – only it will extinguish the fiery weapons of the devil
 - Cover your head with the helmet of salvation – think like the Savior who is our Lord!
 - Take up the sword of the Spirit – our weapon is the Word of God not our own way and thinking
5. How do we wear the armor (6:18-20)
 - Pray for victory; for wisdom and strength and boldness; to know the way of the Lord; to know the way of the enemy
 - Vigilant to take nothing for grant; mind all of your surroundings; seek for the opportunity to obey and serve God; always be ready to fight; redeem the time
 - Boldly declare the gospel – our greatest weapon
6. Final request and closing prayer (6:21-24)
 - Encourage one another
 - Pursue peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ
 - Love with faith from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ
 - Grace to love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that is incorruptible