

Ephesians 1:7-14

I am in the Plan

How many of you enjoy being in the Know?

A) Something is going on – something is happening – and you want to know the details

B) I think we all like being in the know - - Why Sports junkies listen to sports radio to be in the Know – Laker trades

C) News junkies – Keep up on world events and politics

D) There are even those in the church who love to be in the Know!

1) Always interested in the latest – what is happening – where are we going – who's doing what sort of thing

You know what is even more cool than being in the Know – it is finding out that you are in the plan.

A) Let's say your work is putting together a new exciting division that is going to be really cool. –

B) You find out – that you are one of the select few who has been chosen to be a part of the team!

C) How Awesome is that! – Stoked – feel special

D) Or there is some new ministry starting here at the Church and you are being considered to be a part of it!

1) We all like that right?

Well Check this out – God wants you to be in the Know – and He wants you to know that you are in THE PLAN!

A) That is what is laid out for us in the next set of In Christ statements that we are considering here in Ephesians 1

B) Let's for context sake – begin reading in V.3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons

by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

We have noted that Ephesians a book about WHO the Christian is —

A) HOW the Christian lives and HOW the Christian stands.

Aa) It has been called the Mt. Everest of theology.

B) The first 14 verses are the peak of it!

1) In the original language those verses consist of one long sentence.

C) There are 202 words in that one sentence. We need that massive sentence broken into sub-sentences for us to understand.

1) If we want to figure out the point of a sentence we need to find the subject and verb —

2) who the doer is, and what the doer is doing.

D) Our sub-sentences let us know that GOD is the doer — and He's DONE a lot for us in, through with, and by Jesus.

E) Noted thus far that He's blessed us, chosen us, loved us, adopted us, accepted us.

1) Our identity is wrapped up in every one of those divine actions —

2)and the love of God is what drives each of those actions!

What God did, defines who we are!

A)Last week we looked at how He has redeemed us and forgave us in Jesus.

V.7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

B)Notice the end of V.7 Paul tells us that God did all of that according to the riches of His grace,

C)God's blessing to us are according to the Riches of His grace – not from the riches of His grace!

1)What is the difference

When he was alive John D. Rockefeller was the richest man in the world,

A)There are several famous Photographs like the one on the screen of Rockefeller – giving a dime to a little child.

B)In doing so Mr. Rockefeller was giving from his riches but not according to his riches –

1)even if a dime seemed Generous back then

C)Bring it into today -

1)Jeff Bezos the founder and CEO of Amazon is the richest man in the world today – \$112 Billion dollars

D)Lets say Mr. Bezos went around handing out checks for \$5K – awesome yes – but still giving from his riches – not according

A dime to Rockefeller and \$5K to Bezos – is literally pocket change –

A)doesn't make a dent – they don't even feel it

B)To give according to their riches – it would have to be a much more substantial gift

1)One that would set up the recipient for life!

C)That is what Paul is getting at here – the gifts that God gives to us are according to his riches –

1)Life changing gifts – life altering gifts

D)Notice how Paul continues in V.8 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

E)ESV - V.8 which he made to be lavished upon us.

“God didn't provide that grace like a prescription dose of medicine — that we can only have in an exact amount per day. No! Paul says He redeemed us and forgave us according to an overdose quantity of His grace. He poured out on us more grace than we could ever need or ever hope for. An overdose of grace that is so great that it will amaze us for all of eternity!” – R Cimino

Ephesians 2:7 Paul calls it the immeasurable riches of His grace!

So Paul has been building this case – that in Christ we are richly blessed!

A)Today we are going to see that this long sentence where God is telling us everything God has done for us in, through, with, and by Jesus has a trajectory;

B) it is moving towards a glorious conclusion! God HAS A PLAN

1)and everyone who has believed with their heart on the Lord Jesus is IN His plan.

C)This is important for us to see because the World likes to say that there is no plan – we are just here –

1)Life is what you make of it – this is all you get so get all you can!

Listen to these words from Bertrand Russell – An intellectual giant of the 20th century

“That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms ... that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins ... Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.”

He might have been a intellectual giant in his day but he had such a despairing outlook on life!

A) Paul declares – no there is a plan and God has revealed that the Plan is wrapped up in His Son Jesus

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

The Mystery of His will

A) I enjoy watching Mysteries or suspenseful shows

B) But watching them with my wife can be a real experience – because if she is into it she has a 1,000 questions!

C) Why is he doing that – Where is he going – what is going to happen?

1) Half way through she will say – I can't handle this

Now I don't get worked up at all

A) Part of the reason is – I know the star is not going to die! – Especially 10 minutes into the movie

B) Or if it is a TV show – they have a whole season to get through – they are not going to kill off the main Character

C) So I don't get stressed at all – especially because – (don't tell Denise- this is Fiction) it is not real

D) But I am not stressed – I am relaxed – And more interested in the how

1) How are they going to get out of this jam. They always do right – so how is it going to happen

LIVING IN our world today is like watching a movie

A) We don't know all the details but we know the end – JESUS WINS

B) We can sit back and relax – Jesus I know you got this – I am just interested in the how?

1) Watching for the how – how are you going to do what you are going to do

C) And what is the part that I am supposed to play in YOUR PLAN!

When one stops to look at the world it is easy to ponder such questions like where is it all headed? when will it hit rock bottom? Then what?

A) Although prognosticators give their views & opinions there is wide spread feeling of uncertainty growing throughout the world!

B) World leaders hold breath wondering when / where the next uprising WILL BE

C) What is going to happen in Middle East -/ Israel / ARE WE HEADED toward - WW 3?

D) We know that the Answer will not be found in a Political Agenda, a new Bill; military Campaign; Philosophical Ideology or Social strategy

The Answer is in a Person! Jesus It all comes together in Him!

A) That is what Paul tells us here/ Eph. 1 The world stays in the dark as it tries to move its way through history

B) But we in the Church have an advantage / to us the Mystery has been revealed /

C) We Know that history is really His Story

Now the word Mystery = *Mysterion* / once hiddennow revealed

A) What is the Mystery that has been revealed? *That God determined in the Dispensation of the fullness of times to gather together in one all things in Christ*

B) Now a dispensation is a period of time in which God works in a particular manner.

1) Some people have looked at history from a theological standpoint.

C) And they've divided history into dispensations. they're known theologically as dispensationalists.

A) And so they look back to the beginning of creation.

B) Genesis 1-2 Make up the dispensation of innocence.

C) **After the Fall in Genesis 3** – the dispensation of Conscience from Adam to Noah

D) When Abraham comes on the scene – God makes a Covenant with Him and a promise **start of a new Dispensation**

E) Moses and the law – another dispensation –
1) A new way that God was interacting with mankind

Then when Jesus comes and dies for the sins of the world –

A) pays the price for the law being repeatedly broken

B) Man enters into the Dispensation of Grace –
1) We receive from God what we don't deserve – when we are connected to JESUS

C) That is the dispensation that we are now in -

And there's some validity to that thinking process.

A) But there is a dispensation yet in the future. There are actually two more dispensations.

B) There is a dispensation of wrath, which will come in what we commonly call the Tribulation Period.

1) God pours out his wrath on a world that has rejected Jesus –

C) after the church – his bride is removed in the Rapture

D) But then there is the dispensation of the fullness of times. And this is where everything is HEADED.

1) And the dispensation of the fullness of the times is when *He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him.*

E) That is the plan – and we are in the Know! –
1) Jesus is coming back – set up his kingdom

But we are not just in the KNOW - more than that we are in the plan!

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His

will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Now this phrase having obtained an inheritance is important!

A) This takes us back to the whole concept we talked about a few weeks ago – our adoption

B) In Biblical times people tended to be adopted not as Children but as adults

C) They were brought into a family with an adult status

D) That meant two things – 1st it meant that all the resources of the family were suddenly available to them

E) But it also meant that they were immediately a part of the family business –

1) that was part of their inheritance

When Paul says we have obtained an inheritance that is at the forefront of his mind –

A) We have not just received something from God that we get to use in any way that we want.

B) But we have been made a part of something!

C) There are resources that we can use right now in walking with God – living for God

And there is a lot that we have to look forward to!

1 Peter 1:3-4 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

Incorruptible - won't perish - can't be destroyed nothing ruin it!

A) Things today - break – tarnish

B) **Undefiled** - It cannot be stained or cheapened in any way. Eternal

1) Not like a New car - depreciates \$1,000 drive off lot

C) **Doesn't fade away** - spoon in a coke glass world is fading like spoon in glass –

1)but our inheritance is forever

D.) **Reserved in heaven for you!**

1)Reservation: How know? Name in Lamb's Book of Life

E)All of that is a part of our glorious inheritance in Christ!

But I am always reminding you that Heaven is not the end of the story for believers in Jesus Christ!

A)Rapture happens today – how long are we in heaven? - 7 years –

B)Jesus comes back – and we come back with him – He is going to be ruling and reigning on planet earth

C)We are a part of His rule and reign – we have responsibilities and – roles to play in his kingdom

1)**That is also a part of our inheritance**

1 Corinthians 2:9 *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

Now The Bible doesn't tell us a lot about Heaven or eternity – what we are going to be doing.

A)I think that is on purpose – God knows it is going to be so incredible - HE KNOWS we couldn't handle it

B)He knows That if we knew exactly what it was going to be like we couldn't think of anything else !!!

1) (All Consumed) – Worthless

C)Almost like – if you know what is for Dessert – **You really don't want to eat dinner { THANKSGIVING**

D)Restaurants – don't show you the **dessert Tray before dinner** – a lot of us wouldn't order the main course (**2 of those / 3 of these**)

E)The Lord doesn't want us to see **this life as merely a formality –**

1)something we just have to get thru so we can get to the Good stuff

God wants us to know that part of what we are going to be doing in eternity is connected to how we use the inheritance now.

A)Point of the parable of the talents – use what you have been given and you are blessed with More

B)This is the plan – all of this is heading in a direction – Jesus is coming –

1)the fullness of times – bring it all together

C)YOU are in the know – you are in Plan -

How do I know that I will receive this inheritance? God will deliver?

A.) He has given me a guarantee! What a guarantee! V.13 -14

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

B) Being sealed with the spirit speaks **of 6 things...**

1)Focus on one of them today – the rest next week

#1 - Finished transaction:

A)Even today when legal documents are processed they are stamped with a seal to signify completion

B)You are sealed - signifying - it is finished - salvation is complete there is no need to add to it!

C)**It is a done deal** – the plan is set and you are in the plan and there is nothing that can change that/REJOICE

D)Start living like you know the plan – you know where this is all headed

1)You know – how you live – affects your part

Closing: We know the mystery – we know where it is all headed!

A)The world is like a house on fire! The house is going to burn

B)Do we try to save the house? Splash water or do we get the people out?

**C.) Lived in Oregon by a River Flood coming -
house destroyed - wallpaper - new carpet –
1)or warn neighbors to get to higher ground**

**When we know who we are in Christ – we
understand our purpose**

A)Priorities – Pursuits – People over possessions