

The Master's Plan
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Ephesians 1:3-12

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

According to verse 10, when the fullness of time is come, the Lord Himself is going to gather together in one all the saints in heaven and all the saints here on earth.

Jesus is going to set up His Kingdom here on earth. Life for us is going to take on a whole new personality like we have never imagined before.

We look forward to an eternal life of action, adventure and accomplishment in a new world filled with righteousness and glory.

You would think we would be more excited about it that we seem to be.

It seems that in our culture today, everything centers on retirement. The American dream today is all about having a grand and glorious retirement.

Work hard and plan and save and just maybe...just maybe you will have a paid-for house and enough money in the bank so as to not have to worry when you choose to no longer work.

If you do a really good job of saving and planning you can travel and fish and golf and just do what you enjoy until you die.

That rarely works out for most people.

Young people tend to put it off because it seems to them they will live forever anyway.

Old people still worry no matter what they have in the bank.

We've got our 401K and our IRA and our Social Security and our mutual funds and our diversified portfolios and our Medicare.

And then when we finally do retire all we can talk about is how good it was back when we were working.

One guy who just quit retirement and went back to work was asked why; his reply was that "a man can only fish so much".

If retirement is so wonderful and is the fulfillment of the American dream and as such is what our goals should be centered on...then why don't you read about retirement in the Bible?

Does not the Bible tell us about everything good thing worth living for?

2 Peter 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

The reason you don't read about retirement in the Bible is because in God's plan for your life it doesn't exist!

Our older years are not given us to lay down and quit or to just go play; they are designed as graduate school in preparation for what is coming next!

One day soon our Master's plan will be fulfilled when all the saints of all ages are literally brought together as ONE in Christ.

That is the time we ought to be living for!

Hebrews 12:22-24

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.

Why are we not looking forward to and planning and preparing for that day?

Abraham was: **Hebrews 11:8-10**

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

Do we think it is going to be too boring because we know there will be no sin?

Surely you don't think we will just float around on clouds plucking on a harp all day?

That's why one guy always referred to his rather brash wife as being like an angel...he said she was always up in the air harping about something.

Seriously...have you ever given any thought to what you might be doing in the New Kingdom?

Some think when we get to heaven we will just magically know everything there is to know about everything.

I don't find that in the Bible anywhere. I'm pretty sure you are going to arrive in heaven with just the knowledge you have accumulated up to the day you leave earth.

Everything I read about the New Kingdom points to joy and activity and real work and fulfillment.

Isaiah 2:2-4

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

All nations; that's millions of people; shall flow into the City of God, which is our new home.

For one thing, who is going to do all that teaching?

I see judges and peace-keepers and all stages of government; even some blacksmithing!

I don't know exactly what I will be doing in the New Kingdom, but I am pretty sure I am being prepared for it now.

This whole step-by-step preparation is laid out for us here in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

You are a part of a much bigger plan than you have likely realized up to now.

I believe that virtually everything we go through in our Christian lives today is in preparation for the new Kingdom that is to come.

After all this life is but a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away...Once we are with the Lord, our next life is forever!

We know that life is not us, it's about Jesus.

We ought then also to know that about now; it's about what is to come.

You can see the Lord's plan under way. Our preparation has begun!

Step one:

I. Step one of our preparation is getting you saved.

A. That was quite an operation in itself.

1. Look at all the Lord went through just getting you to trust His Word.
2. Look at all those spiritual experiences that brought you to the point of faith.
3. Look at all you had be taught in order to know what you could really trust in.

B. Then there was salvation itself.

1. It's one thing to finally and truly trust the Bible as God's Word.
2. It's another to then experience the peace that comes with placing your trust in Jesus to save you from your sins.

3. Ephesians 1:12-13

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

3. Our salvation is so personal and such a grand experience, it's sometimes hard to see it as a small part of a much larger plan.

II. Step two of our preparation is bringing us together.

A. *Jesus has broken down the walls; He commands everyone He saves to get into Church.*

1. And He commands the Church to receive everyone He saves!

2. **Ephesians 2:11-22**

11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

3. God has builded us together to form one body in Christ.

4. We've got to learn to get along and to work together.

5. If we don't, we won't be worth a plug nickel in the New Kingdom.

B. *It is in the Church we learn to work together.*

1. We must learn to have the same love one of another; no prejudices.

2. **1 Peter 3:8** Finally, *be* ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

3. **Philippians 2:2** Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

4. No partiality among brethren; how could someone Jesus died for and saved be of any less value than any of us?

5. **James 2:1** My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

6. Red and yellow, black and white, brown Gentile or Jew...we are all the same in Christ.

C. It is in the Church we are united in peace.

1. **Ephesians 4:1-3**

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

2. **Colossians 3:15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

3. Not only will the nations no longer learn to war, there's to be no more of these little individual wars either.

III. Step three of our preparation is the establishing of our purpose.

A. Our purpose is God's glory.

1. **Ephesians 3:21** Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

2. Glory in the Church above all things.

B. But not just in the Church.

1. Our entire life is to abound to His glory.

2. **1 Corinthians 10:31-33**

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

3. In the New Kingdom every last saint of God will be dedicated solely to bringing glory to our King.

4. We must learn this here.

5. And this is no easy task for those who have spent their entire lives from day one seeking their own desires above all else.

IV. Step four is basic training.

A. In the New Kingdom we will have one distinct advantage over life today.

1. We will not have our sinful flesh to hold us back.

2. Even so, our ambition to do well and to do all we can for God's glory will not, I believe, be automatic.

B. A good work ethic and good habits and right commitment and loyalty come from basic training that is going on now.

1. The teachers and pastors and other Godly examples in the Church are the drill sergeants given to teach us the basic principles of Christian life.

2. Ephesians 4:11-15

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

3. Right now we spend much of our Christian life trying to replace the garbage and constantly deal with our sin.

4. Imagining what it will be like no longer having to deal with our flesh.

Conclusion:

Let me ask you this? (I realize some of this may be speculation.)

If you are lazy now, do you think you will automatically become a "go-getter" in the New Kingdom?

If you have trouble submitting yourself to authority now, do you think you will automatically find it easy to take orders in the New Kingdom?

Do you think you are really prepared to embrace the New Kingdom that is coming?

I suppose the real purpose of this message today is to remind us that we who believe have no business living just for the things of this life.

We are bought with a price, we are not our own!

We must lift our sights higher.

Are you living for what is coming...or just for what is here?