

The Master Plan

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[0 : 00] What is God's plan for my life?

And sometimes we get so busy in our lives running here and there, doing things and that, and! not stopping to consider what is his plan for me? It's very important that we need to find it and to do it, to activate the master plan, the master plan, the master's plan for our lives.

So what is it? What is the master plan? The master's plan for my life, for me, for you, the master plan. I put it to you that God's plan is simply this, that we be like him, that we be like him.

Like Christ, Christ-like. This is his ultimate plan. 1 John 3 verse 2 it says, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

[1 : 26] Beloved, John says, we shall be like him. This is his ultimate plan, that one day we shall be like him.

This has been his plan, his best, his intent, right from the very beginning, right from the beginning. God's plan, God's design is that we be in his image, in his likeness, as image bearers of God. Bearing his image, stamped with his likeness. This is his original plan. In the context of eternity, this is the master plan.

In Genesis 1 verse 26, when we read of creation, it says, And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion, over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Let us make man in our image, bearing our likeness. After our likeness, it tells us that we shall be like him.

[2 : 37] At the end when he comes, when he appears, we shall be like him. And even at creation, we see that we were made as mankind in his image, in his likeness.

This is the master plan. So what is the master plan? We shall be like him. Secondly, how? How can we see this happen? How can we see this become a reality?

This concept of being like him? How can we be like him? How can we see this happen? How can we, that are mere human vessels, aspire to be like him?

How can we see the master plan become a reality for us? It can only happen as we are emptying ourselves. As we empty ourselves and as we are filled with him.

Amen. Filled with him. As we are emptying ourselves and as we are filled with him. His plan is that we be his vessel that he fills.

[3 : 38] And brothers and sisters, people here tonight, every one of us, every one of you are vessels, containers, receptacles. And we fill our lives, we fill our time with all kinds of things, don't we?

We can cram our lives, our time with many kinds of things. Some not so useful. And so we ought to be vessels, vessels unto honour. There's different kinds of vessels.

There's vessels unto dishonour and there's vessels unto honour. And God's desire, his plan, the master's plan for you, for me, is to be vessels unto honour.

In other words, designed and being those vessels that are meant, that are fit for the master's use. For his work, for his praise.

In 2 Timothy 2, verse 1 it says, If a man therefore purge himself from these, you know, clean yourselves from these things that are wrong, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified.

[4 : 40] In other words, made holy and meant, made fit for the master's use and prepared unto every good work. So God's plan, the master's plan is that we be those kind of vessels made, designed, prepared, unto honour, made fit and prepared for every good work.

Ephesians 3, verse 19 tells of being filled with all the fullness of God. God's desire is that we be emptied of self and filled with him so that we can be like him as chosen vessels.

So firstly, to be cleansed, made holy. This happens as we empty ourselves of that which is dross and valueless of our self and our fleshly selves, and be filled with him, with his spirit, letting go of guilt and shame and sin, and being filled with his perfect person and righteousness by faith. In Philippians 1, verse 11, it says, filled with all the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. He wants to fill us, we must be empty. There's that corresponding emptying and filling. And also, he wants us to die to self and live to him. [6 : 08] There's that contrast again of death and of life. As we die to self, we're made alive to him, made alive to righteousness. This is real life. In Acts 17, 28 it says, For in him we live and move and have our being.

True life is found in him. Life more abundant as he lives in us and walks in our shoes, as it were. But by faith we can see this happen.

For the Christians who live is for Christ to live in us and for us to die to ourselves. In Galatians 2, verse 20, that familiar one, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

His plan, it's still an unfolding plan as he continues his shaping work. He's changing us, ever changing us, ever forming himself in us.

[7 : 22] That one day we shall be like him. One day. This working is his own working, by his own doing. As we simply yield as clay in his hands, in the master potter's hands.

And the motivating, the empowering, the equipping, the power is of God and not of us. But it works in us.

Ephesians 3, verse 20, it says, Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that, we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.

Friends, the last is planned. What is it? We shall be like him. Like him. That is what it is. And we see that this wonderful work is an emptying of self and a filling with him, a dying to self and a coming alive unto him.

We've seen what the master plan is. Now let's look at how. How? How can this be? How can this be? This concept, this theoretical concept that we're hearing about.

[8 : 32] How can this be? As he fills us, as he lives in us, as he empowers us, as he works within us and through us. And then what will it look like? What will it look like if this is happening?

As we grow to be more like him, as we empty and fill, as we die and come to life, as he empowers us, as he works in and through us. What will it look like?

We'll see that in our lives there'll be fruit. There'll be some change of direction, a change of what matters to us. That his work, his service, his yoke, his burden will matter to us.

And it will be by his doing, by his transforming power. What will it look like? His character will show. His character will show.

As we become like him, we'll start to act like him. We'll start to do his works. And God's working is a faith that works by love. Well, I'd like to think, if I could put it in simple language, that each one of you will be his vessels.

[9 : 49] And that as you go about your day by day lives, that there'll be something working in you. That God will be so at work within you that there'll be an evidence there.

It will be as if we have his DNA. We'll have the DNA of Jesus Christ in us. That as we're becoming more like him, we'll be marked by the things that mark him.

We'll be stamped with the stamp of who he is and what he is about. And there'll be a sign put up over our lives under new management.

That we'll see there'll be something that sets us apart. As the Bible says that we have to be a peculiar people. It's kind of almost a funny way of putting it in our English language today, to be peculiar.

But we know that it needs to be something special. Something that stands out from the crowd. And you know, sometimes when you go down about the place and you pass a big crowd of people and there's something that marks them.

[10 : 57] They're the colours of the scarves and the beanies they're wearing. And you think there's something about them. They're standing for something. There's something about them as they're heading off to the footy match. And you've got one crowd with a certain set of colours.

And another crowd with another set of colours. And they don't always talk nicely to each other. But you see these footy fans. The footy fans, they're wearing the colours. And it's very clear who they identify with.

Isn't it? There's something that is very clear about what they are identifying. What they are identified with. And it ought to be the same with you and me as God's people, shouldn't it?

That there should be something that identifies us. That our identity is Christ. You know, when they called the early church Christians, it meant Christ ones.

That there was something about Christ about these ones. They were Christ ones. They were Christians of Christ. And that is our identity. That is what we identify with.

[12:03] We identify with Him. And we develop to be more like Him. To be more like the Spirit of Christ. His Spirit. His likeness.

His character. His identity. His nature. His attitude. His acts. His actions. His actions. That each of us will grow to be more like Him.

To be like Him. With His character. For example, scriptures like Philippians 2. Tell us what His character looks like. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and complainings, disputings. That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke. In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

There's that will and that do of God's good pleasure. There's that being blameless and harmless. Having something that identifies us. We're wearing the colours, as it were.

[13:08] That we belong to that team, as it were. And we're shining as lights in a dark place. Now we don't know what Jesus looks like today.

You see, many artists take their interpretation of what He looked like. We don't know what Jesus looks like. But we definitely do know what Jesus acts like.

And what Jesus acts like is right here. It's the acts of Jesus in the Gospels. It's the acts of the Apostles in the book of Acts. And so we should act like that.

We should act like Jesus as the Gospels show Him and as He continued His work in the acts of the Apostles. Showing His own church, His own people.

There should be that identity there. And His plan for us is likewise that when we identify with Christ, He gives us something to do.

[14:12] As a Christian, we're not passive, we're active. And in Matthew 11, 28 it says, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.

For I am meek and lowly in heart. And ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. So when we identify with the Lord Jesus Christ, we take on His yoke.

We take on His burden. And it's not a heavy one. It's a yoke that is easy. It is a burden that is light. And we shall be like Him.

We shall be like Him. So that His desire becomes our desire. That His burden becomes our burden. So that His mission becomes our mission. What is His mission?

To seek and to save the lost. What is His desire? Not willing that any should perish. We shall be like Him. Now what does that mean? That's what it means.

[15:14] That we will be Jesus to our world. We'll be His voice. We'll be His vision. We'll be His hand extended. We shall be like Him. What will it look like to realise this?

To be Jesus to your world. When Jesus went to the cross, He set His face like a flint. He set His face like a flint.

And He was determined to go there. And He is the one who works in us and lives in us. And He shines through us. He shines His light. His glory from us. In Proverbs 4 verse 18.

The path of the just is as the shining light. That shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The path of the just is as the shining light.

Now I think as we become more like Him, we're going to shine brighter. We're going to, as it were, make that light shine. We're going to make it gleam.

[16:12] We're going to make it more and more glorious. More and more bright. More and more shining. And His glory will get brighter as He gets closer. And the path of the just will shine more and more unto the perfect day.

His glory will shine brighter from us as growing Christians will grow to be more glowing Christians. We've seen what is the master plan to be like Him.

How? As we're empty and filled. As we die and are made alive. As He works in us. Works through us. How?

What will it look like? Will it be more like Jesus? Will it be doing His works? Will it be bearing His yoke? Will it carry His burden? Will it have His heart?

And we'll see His glory as we shine brighter and brighter. Why does it matter? Why does the master plan matter? Why does it matter? Colossians 1, 27 tells of the riches of the glory of this mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

[17 : 23] Why does it matter? Why does it matter? Because you've been designed for His glory to shine. We've been designed to be containers, vessels of His glory. Why does it matter?

Because it's why you were made. It's why we are here. It's why we live and breathe and have our being. That we might please Him. It's why you were made. In Revelation 4 verse 11, They praised, They are worthy O Lord to receive glory and honour and power.

For Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. It's your purpose for being. It's why we're on planet earth.

It's why we're here. It's our purpose to be carriers of His glory. In Ephesians 1 verse 12 it says that we should be to the praise of His glory. That we should be to the praise of His glory.

We shall be like Him. When we are like Him, we'll speak like Him. We'll speak what He speaks.

We'll care about what He cares about. We'll speak His word.

[18 : 29] In Colossians 3 it tells, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing and so on. Singing with grace in your hearts. We're made to be messengers of His word.

And how will they hear unless we speak? We must communicate His word. His plan is that we be His voice pieces. We communicate, we witness His word to those around about.

And to walk as He would walk. And sometimes it's telling to think, if the Lord Jesus was here, right here and right now, in this place, in our street, in our world, in our town, what would Jesus do?

What would He do? What would He do? We shall be like Him. So the works that He would do, we should be doing. This should be the practical result of being like Him.

That we'll be Jesus to the people that we can be about. And it's a telling thing to think of that, just to grasp that.

[19 : 36] To be Jesus to our world. To be the Lord Jesus to our world. 1 Corinthians 2, it says, We have the mind of Christ. So we should think like Jesus thinks.

Now those things that would occupy His energy and His intellect and His decision making, should be that which occupies our mind.

We shall be like Him. In Philippians 1 verse 8, it goes even further as to how we can identify with Christ. Philippians 1 verse 8, it says, For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

That's pretty graphic language isn't it? But Paul said, he yearned, he longed after these saints with that compassion, with that gut ache, the inner compulsion, the inner core of Him was moved.

As he yearned, as it were, as in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Now this is the kind of intensity of feeling here, of the sense of that identifying with Christ.

[20 : 46] That we have the mind of Christ, we have the bowels of Christ. His heart, His core, His delight, His desire should possess us. His heartbeat, what is His heartbeat?

Souls, souls, souls. It's why He came, to seek and save the lost. His heartbeam, His heart, His love should so constrain us, should so move us.

As 2 Corinthians 5 verse 14 says, For the love of Christ constraineth us. There's that intent there, that compulsion, that driving force, that total desire that moved Paul.

For the love of Christ constraineth us. We shall be like Him. We are His rightful possession.

There's people in our world today talking about building the third temple and there's all of these thinkings going on. But really, we don't need the third temple to be built in Jerusalem.

[21 : 52] Because the living God is in living temples today. The living God is in living temples. Living, breathing, human being temples. Men and women are His living temples today.

In 2 Corinthians 6 verse 16 it says, Ye are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. And I will be their God. And they shall be my people.

We are His temples. Each one of us here that know Him, we are His temples. Now some of these temples are still building projects in progress. I know when this particular building was being built, there were some people getting really impatient.

Thinking, how long is this going to take? And it did take quite a long time for this particular physical building to be built. And it's like that with us too, isn't it? That we are still Christians under construction.

And God is still working on us. Because it takes time to build a building. It takes a process. And it's the same with, we shall be like Him. It takes a process.

[22 : 54] In Galatians 4 verse 19, Paul says, My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. There's a sense where Christ to be formed in us, it takes a process for Christ to be formed in us.

And it takes a refining process for us to be made more like Him. And as part of being like Him, there's that sense where sometimes it's a bit uncomfortable.

Because we have a cross to bear. To be like Him means to take His cross. To be like Him means to bear His reproach. In other words, scorn and abuse, suffering of shame and disgrace for His name. Hebrews 13, 13, it says, Let us therefore go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Now when you will be like Him, there will be people who won't understand.

Some of your peer group, some of those around about you will think you're a bit of an oddball. A bit of an odd one. Because you won't fit in to the popular culture and the fashion and fancy that the world wants to conform you to.

[24 : 14] And when we shall be like Him, it might mean that others will say, Oh, you're a bigot. A hate monger. A non-conformist.

You don't fit. There's a cost to being like Him. To being identified with Christ. There's a cost to being like Him. Because we're going to have to bear His reproach.

A cost to be identified with Christ. It means a cost even amongst Christians that some will think, Oh, you're going over the top with your Christianity.

You know, just to kind of just be a bit mediocre like the rest of us. You know, there's a cost to stepping out of that which is lukewarm. And the careless kind of Christianity that is so endemic and popular today.

There's a cost to be like Him. But we must embrace the cross. We must embrace God's plan, God's will. The reproach. We shall be like Him.

[25 : 15] We shall be like Him. Friends, think now. What about you? What about you personally here today? You can only answer this for yourself. What about you?

Do you know? Do you care about the Master's plan for you? Is He filling and refilling you? Or are you running on empty? Are we treading water?

Or spiritually static and stagnant? Or is He refuelling us? Refiring us? Refilling us? Rebuilding us in our most holy faith?

Is He at work in you? The Master's plan is still His plan. Beloved, now are we the sons of God? And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. We shall be like Him. For we shall see Him as He is.

[26 : 17] Consider the Master's plan. We shall be like Him. It is that we shall be like Him. Our identity is Christ.

That we be a vessel. A vessel not unto dishonour, but a vessel unto honour. Unto His honour and praise. That as we empty of self, He can fill us with Himself.

That as we die to self, He can bring us back to His life. And be made alive unto righteousness. That He can empower us as weak as we are to do His works.

That we can bear His yoke. Let go of our own yoke. But take His yoke. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. That His desire will become our desire.

That His heart will become our heart. That His mind will be our mind. That His bowels will be our bowels. That His core, His being will be our being.

[27 : 28] That His walk will be our walk. That His mission will be our mission. And that will shine more and more and more unto the perfect day.

As carriers of His glory. As messengers of His word. As voices for His word. And that will be constrained by His love. His constraining power.

That will be His temples. That Christ will be formed in us. So that day by day by day, we'll be more and more and more like Him. That Christ will be formed in us.

That will be identified with Him. Even if it be with His sufferings. Even bearing His reproach. That we can be in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

Shining as lights in the world. And just to wrap it up. Just think of this thing. And this struck me of Lake. And it might strike you likewise.

[28 : 30] You have an influence. You have an influence. You have an influence. Now consider your circle of influence. There's only a finite number of people that you're going to meet on planet earth.

Through the course of a human span. Of your life span. There's only a finite number of people that are going to come into contact with you. A finite number of people in each of our lives.

People that we impact. People that we have an influence on. People who have an influence. People who you have an input into their lives. And this is a reality.

It's a fact. Isn't it? There's many, many that we will not have an impact on. We can't do anything about them. But we can have an impact on those that we do have an influence on.

That are in that circle. As it were the people whose lives we touch. And we shall be like him. We shall be like him. And when the Lord Jesus wants to minister to other people.

[29 : 37] He's going to use you and me to do that. And so when there's people we care about. We want to reach out to them. With his love.

You know I think of those times when we hear of ones that are sick in hospital. That we want to reach out and touch them. And be Jesus to them.

And there's others when we want. When there's people in our lives that we want to see turn to Christ. You know we can pray and pray. But we need to open our mouths. We need to be Jesus to them.

We only have a short allotted span here below. There's a finite amount of time that we've got. And when it boils down to it. What matters?

What matters? What is of value? Will it be the master plan? Will you let him have his way with you? Will you let him have his plan? Affected in your life?

[30 : 36] Take hand how you build. Who you influence and how. Think about what underpins your life. And what you're building on.

What you're building where. What makes a life really count? And what are the foundations?

Brothers and sisters. It's needful that we reflect on these things.

And be vigilant. About the influence that we have. And the limit to that. There's a limit to what we can do. Let's make what influence we have count.

So that. When people say. Oh I knew a Christian. George went to church for you. And. He wasn't. A very good Christian.

They judge us. They judge us don't they? Non-Christians judge us. And. Rather let it be. Well I knew. I knew Fred. And. He went to church for you. And there was something. About him.

[31 : 34] That he was an influence. And. He was like Jesus to me. Wouldn't that be good if people. Would say of you. Of me. That. He, she. Was like Jesus to me. And. And.

He was like Jesus to me. Wouldn't that be good if people. Would say of you. Of me. That. He, she. Was like Jesus to me. And how they lived. In.

In what they said. In their encouraging ways. In. In that. Exaltation. In that. Edifying. In that. That imparting. From them.

They were like Jesus to me. And we can be like Jesus to one another. We all need. His grace. Don't we. And when the rubber hits the road. That we'll be like him. We'll be like him.

And. Friends. He can. Do that work in us. As we empty. And are filled. As we die. And are risen to life. As. He empowers us.

[32 : 29] As he shapes us. As Christ is formed in us. We'll be more and more like him. And we'll shine more and more. Shown brighter and brighter. Unto the perfect day. Know his plans.

Know his plan today. The master plan. It's the perfect plan. It's the ultimate plan. When he comes. We shall be like him. It was his original plan.

Back in Eden. Made in his image. Bearing his likeness. To be like him. To be like him. To be like him. To be his vessels. Vessels unto honour. That we be to the praise of his glory.

And we shall be like him. Let us pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you that. Our life is finite.

