

United In Our Mission

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:01] Well, as you can see, I'm going to preach from the floor this morning, and I'm going to use this whiteboard because we've got a picture to draw. If you want to open up your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1, it's on page 1159 of your Pew Bible.

And let me start, before I read that passage, let me start with a question. If I were to ask you, what's your plan for 2025?

How would you answer? Some people in the room would be like, plan? I'm winging it. Let the Spirit lead. Others go into personal betterment mode.

Well, I'm going to get in shape. I am going to stick to a budget. Jenny and I are adjusting our budget for some purposes. I'm going to read more.

I have purposed this year to try to keep up with Zach Melgren and his rigorous, rigorous reading schedule. And if I can read a third of the books you do, brother, I'll be happy.

[1:15] So we've got personal betterment plans. Some of you, when you hear what you plan for 2025, you go into calendar mode and vacations.

Oh, we're going to go there to do this on that date. And then we're going to go there and do this on that date. And it's always good to have things in your calendar where you're looking forward to, right? But let's change things up a little bit.

Instead of asking what your plan is for 2025, let's ask this question. What is God's plan for 2025?

What is God seeking to accomplish?

And if we were to ask that of God, God, what is your plan? He tells us. He's revealed it. He's made it known.

In Ephesians chapter 1, 3 through 14, we have an unpacking of God's plan for the fullness of time.

And I can tell you right now, God is not winging it.

[2:26] He's got a plan from before the foundation of the world to make disciples of all nations to the glory of his great name. And right now, he is accomplishing that.

And we get to join him in what he is doing. So right now, in our time together at the start of 2025, I want to convince you of that plan.

And I want you to start asking this question. What is God doing in my world right now? And how can I join him in what he is doing?

How can we do that? So we're going to draw a picture this morning. Yes, it's true. I am saying draw a picture in church. I'm going to put it up on the board.

And if you would, by your best ability, do that in your bulletin or your notes. You're going to walk away with a picture that depicts this plan for the fullness of time.

[3:29] Many of you have heard this material before. But I have kind of come at it from a different angle this morning from Ephesians chapter 1, 3 through 14.

I want you to see five distinctive features to this plan. Now let me read Ephesians chapter 1, 3 through 14. It's actually what we sang.

Come praise and glorify is putting to song what you're about to hear. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will.

To the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us and all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[4:58] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in it, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory.

Do you have an amen? Okay. This passage answers the question, why do we make disciples? What is our mission? And so five distinct features of this plan from Ephesians 1.

Number one, this plan is a triune plan. And so I'm going to depict it with a triangle, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, representing the triune God.

It's in Ephesians 1.3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us in him, Christ, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[6:18] We see each member of the Trinity. God the Father, person number one of the Trinity. We see God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, second person of the Trinity. And there is a third person of the Trinity, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

That word spiritual, better translated, spirit blessing. So right in verse 3, we have a Trinity citing, this plan for the fullness of time is a triune plan.

And then what happens in the rest of this passage? We see the individual members of the Godhead working this plan out together like the ultimate jazz trio.

Let me point it out. First, the focus is on the God the Father in verses 4 through 6. In verse 4, he chose us.

In verse 5, we learn in love, he predestined us. In verse 11, it's according to the purpose of his will. God the Father ordained his plan of salvation.

[7:27] God the Father ordained the plan of salvation. The second member of the Trinity that comes into focus is in verses 7 through 12.

The Son, the second person of the Trinity. And in verse 7, we read that in him we have redemption through his blood. The in him, verse 7.

Look at the end of verse 6. In the beloved. It's a reference to the Son. We've been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the beloved Son. Beloved.

Talking about the second person of the Trinity. And this idea of redemption is this concept, this idea. It's talking about salvation. Of being purchased back out of slavery.

And you're purchased with a ransom price. And we know what Jesus said about himself. I've come not to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many.

[8:31] Here's the point. God the Son accomplished God's plan of salvation. God the Father ordains it.

God the Son accomplishes it. And then in verses 13 through 14, we see the Holy Spirit coming. The Holy Spirit is not a what or an it, but a who.

A him. He's a person. And what we see in verses 13 and 14 is this. In him, Jesus, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory.

So here's what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit regenerates sinners.

He gives us new life. And he applies what Christ accomplished according to God's ordained plan for our salvation. So God the Father ordains salvation.

[9:35] God the Son accomplishes it. And God the Spirit applies it. He's our guarantee. Now when you hear that seal language, we're not talking about silicon caulk around your sink, sitting on your table, on your countertop.

Not that kind of sealing. It's the sealing of a signet ring. It's the mark of possession. You belong to me.

It's a guarantee. It's what a king would mark, this hot wax on a letter. It guarantees whose it's from. And so the Holy Spirit is our guarantee.

He applies what Christ has done. It's all good news. God's plan is a triune plan. Do you know who Vince Guaraldi is?

Vince Guaraldi is a jazz musician, was a jazz musician. And he had a Vince Guaraldi trio. And you might be familiar with them because they're the guys that played the Peanuts Christmas album.

[10:43] You may have known him. They're author. They performed Take Five. Wynton Marsalis, George Winston were all indebted to Vince Guaraldi.

And that trio made some music together. The triune God is making music, gang. God, the Father, ordained salvation.

God, the Son, has accomplished it. God, the Spirit, is applying it. And it is the music of salvation in the ears of sinners. To the praise of his glory.

There's no one like him. What is this plan? It's a triune plan. Does anybody else think I have Lego Batman voice?

It's a triune plan. The second distinctive feature to this plan is that it is a big plan. It's big.

[11:46] If you look at Ephesians 1.10, you read this. As a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in heaven and earth.

So here's how we depict it. One big arrow. And this is eternity past to eternity future.

The sovereign triune God has a big plan. And you might say, well, what kind of big? Well, let's look at its scope and its scale.

The scope of this big plan is all time. It's a plan, according to verse 10, for the fullness of time.

Eternity past, eternity future. It's from before the foundation of the world, verse 4, to the inheritance to come, verse 11 and 14.

[12:54] It's a plan for the fullness of time. God is sovereignly orchestrating all things in human history for his grand plan.

And so we can put in this plan creation, fall, redemption, consummation.

When Jesus comes back and makes all things right. It's all part of his plan. But then we also see the scale of it. What's involved in it?

Did you see that in verse 10? As a plan for the fullness of time to unite not some things, all things, to unite all things in him, in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, things above, things below, all things.

God has a plan for all time, for all things, including the present 8 billion people on the planet and the billions of people who have gone before and the billions of people who will come after. They will all stand before his judgment throne someday.

[14:07] And he will make all things right. He will bring full, final, and forever peace. Right now, Christ the King Church, we own this building.

It's a meeting house. It's a place where we gather. This building is not us. This building serves us.

It's one big gospel tool. And over the last couple years, we've been doing some work to it.

We've had a team that did some great work in our bathrooms, gave them a refresh. Last year, in the fellowship hall below us, man, that place looks awesome now. It's beautiful.

We've got plans for the sanctuary. I know you guys love the carpet. But we've got plans. We've got thoughts. We need to do something about the heating system in this place.

This is a 22,000 square foot facility. This side and that side. And when you start hearing all that, you start, whoa, that's big plans. I mean, cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching.

[15:18] But you know what? It's just a drop in the bucket. It's just a drop in the bucket. Plans, five to ten years for a building.

22,000 square feet to address the beauty of the building and the heating systems of the building. It's just a drop in the bucket. Command compared to God's plan for the fullness of time?

Our 70 to 80 years is just a dot on the line of eternity.

God's got a big plan. What's God's plan? It's a triune plan, and it's a big one. It's worth giving your life to.

Third, it's a Christocentric plan. In verse seven, we see that phrase.

[16:27] In him in whom we have redemption. And then, remember, we look back at verse six. In the beloved. Talking about the second person of the Trinity. In him.

Check it out. Look at this. Verse three. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ.

Look at verse four. Even as he chose us in him. And then verse five. Before him. Verse five.

Through Jesus Christ.

Verse six. In the beloved. Verse seven. In him. Verse nine. Which he set forth in Christ. Verse 10.

To unite all things. In him. Verse 11.

In him we have obtained an inheritance. Verse 13. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him.

[17:25] This plan. You see the J? You see the J? Make that a cross. With an arrow up top.

At the center of this plan is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ's death and his resurrection. Both are essential to this work.

This plan that's been accomplished by the son. We also know that the same Jesus, well, he's the creator of all. And he is sitting on his throne.

And one day we're going to stand before him. That Christ is the hero of the plan. He's at the center of it all.

Yes, it's a triune plan. But the focus is on the son. What he's done. This redemption accomplished through his blood.

[18:26] It's central to his plan. Jesus himself. After he was raised from the dead. In Luke 24.

He appears to the disciples at two different times. And in both times he tells his disciples. That the law. That the Moses. That the prophets.

That the Psalms. In various specific ways. They pointed to him. He's the Messiah. But not just to him.

To his suffering. His cross work. And to his resurrection. That's how specific it is. All of your Bible is in some way.

Pointing to or pointing back to. Or pointing to the second coming of Jesus. Because Christ is central. To God's plan of salvation.

[19:26] It's a Christocentric plan. It's the gospel. In John. Oh no.

Excuse me. Romans 1.16. The apostle. Paul describes the gospel. As God's power. Unto salvation. Christ's death and resurrection. Gets something done. That nothing else can. The salvation of sinners. To unite all things.

That have been. Thrown out of whack. By sin. This is a Christocentric. Plan. It's good news. We were once.

Separated from God. But through the cross. His resurrection. We've been united. We were once. Guilty. Of our sins.

[20:28] But now we're forgiven. We were once. Slaves. To sin. But now. We've been set free. To live for Christ.

You know. Every. Plan. Has a hero. You know. We're in the midst of the. College. Football. Playoffs.

Right now. And I know. Besides Steve Bickle. And me. The room is filled. With Ohio State. Buckeye fans. But in order for.

A team. To win. The national championship. They need a hero. They need a quarterback. That's going to get the plan done. In an orchestra.

You need someone. In the first chair. That's going to get it done. And. If you're in theater. You need a lead. To get it done. If you're in business.

[21:27] It's a CEO. To get it done. Every plan. Has a central figure. Every plan. Has a hero. And when it comes to God's plan.

For the fullness of time. Jesus Christ. Christ. Is. The hero. Salvation is found. In no one else.

So. When we ask the question. What. What is God's plan. For 2025. It's to exalt Jesus. It's to make much of him.

And change us. The fourth distinctive feature. Sorry if I lost you. The fourth distinctive feature.

Of this plan. Is that it's a people moving plan. Or. As Jesus would say. It's a disciple making plan. Matthew 28.

[22:28] Or. Jesus would say it this way. Matthew 16. It's a church building plan. And the gates of hell. Will not prevail against it. We're talking about people.

God's plan for the fullness of time. That focuses on Jesus. Is about people. We get a hint of it. In chapter 1 verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our. We're. That's the Apostle Paul. Including himself. With the Ephesian church. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us. In Christ. With every spiritual blessing. The Apostle Paul. Was writing to a church. In Ephesus. That was made up of. Both you and Gentile.

And there was some hostility. Between them. And Paul's making the case. Jesus changes all that. When you. Come through the cross.

[23:27] You're changed. This is a people. Moving plan. God. Is radically. Changing people.

So if you look at. Ephesians 2. 1. Through 3. You read this. And you. Were dead. In the trespasses. In sins. In which you once walked. Following the course.

Of the world. Following the prince. Of the power. Of the air. The spirit. That is now at work. And the sons of disobedience. Among whom. We all once lived. In the passions of our flesh. Carrying out the desires. Of the body. Of the mind. And were by nature.

Children of wrath. Like the rest of mankind. But God changed all that. So here's how we depict it. Prior to the cross.

All of us. All of us. Are running away. From God. Because I know. I don't want any of that.

[24:25] God. I don't want you. If you want to talk about it another way. You can say it like this. Prior to Copernicus. Everybody thought. That we lived in a.

Earth centered solar system. That everything orbited the earth. But it wasn't true. In our sin.

We can think we're at the center of it all. We even think the triune God can orbit us. But God. In his grace. Before the foundation. The world set his love.

On particular sinners. And he calls them. Irresistibly. To himself. And he calls them. Through the cross of Jesus. Through the gospel. And when he calls them.

Out of the domain. Of darkness. He flips them. By his grace. And sets a new ground. Underneath them. And sets a new aim. And now.

[25:25] They are running. To Jesus. Together. Together. And so what happens is. When you believe.

What God has done through Christ. For the first time. You're actually brought into reality. That Christ is the governing center of all things.

Not you. And so now. You have Jesus. And now. We live for him. Along this road.

In between the advents. When life can be so hard. And so good. At the same time. But do you know what happens gang? Do you know when you have multiple people. Orbiting Jesus together.

In the same place. In the same time. In the same location. You know what you get? Get a church. Living for Christ. This is a people moving plan.

[26:27] This is a disciple making plan. This is a church building plan. Do you know what a repo man is? The repossession man.

A repo man is someone who steals back. Things that are owned by a bank. So let's just say.

That you take out a loan for a car. You default on your payments. The bank owns the car. Though you have its keys. And you know what it'll do?

It'll send a repo man. And that repo man will steal back your car. Because it belongs to the bank. It's not yours. Jesus is the great repo man.

He comes in and steals you out of the domain of darkness. Because you're his. You belong to God. He set his love on you.

[27:30] From before the foundation of the earth. And he calls you to himself. He comes and gets you. Claims you as his own. And brings you out of the domain of darkness.

And brings you into the kingdom of the beloved son. He brings you back. He brings us back.

And then unites us together as a church. This plan. It's not just a triune plan. And a big plan. And a Christocentric plan.

It's a people moving plan. And you know what? We get to join God in that work. We get to be a part of it with him.

You're part of the plan. The fifth distinctive feature. Of this plan. Is that this is a glory plan.

[28:35] It's a glory plan. Did you notice that? Verse 6. The beginning of it. To the praise of his glorious grace. Did you see it at the end of 11? To the praise of his glory.

Did you see it at the end of verse 14? To the praise of his glory. Glory. After each section. That focuses on one particular member of the Trinity. There's a call to glory.

It unpacks. Where Paul starts. Blessed be the God. And father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us in Christ. With every spirit given blessing.

In the heavenly places. This is a call to worship. This plan. Sing. This. The triune God is making music.

And we get to join him. In the praise of his name. The Westminster Catechism says it like this. The chief end of man. Is to glorify God.

[29:39] And enjoy him. Forever. So what is this glory? What is that? Well. Well. It's the magnificence.

Of who God is. And his workings throughout time. But when. When you see God for who he is. And the works that he does.

You stand back. And you say. That is amazing. You give him glory. You give him glory. His astonishing character.

His incredible power. All leverage for good. God. And. In. Psalm 96. We read. Oh sing to the Lord a new song.

Sing to the Lord. All the earth. Scope and scale. Sing to the Lord. Bless. His name. Tell of his salvation. This crystal centric.

[30:40] People moving plan. Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory. Among the nations. His marvelous works.

Among all peoples. Scope and scale. Glory plan. The word glory in Hebrew. Comes from a word that means heavy.

Weighty. And so when we give God glory, we are giving him his due weight, gravitas. That's where we get the word worth-ship from.

We recognize God's great worth and give him praise. So here's what happens.

Because when people living in the domain of darkness believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ and they get flipped by God's grace, we start populating heaven with worshipers.

[31:50] Giving glory to God. Myriads and myriads of people saved from every tribe, tongue, and nation giving glory to God.

Right now, in the heavenly throne room, there are myriads of people, saints, this is Revelation chapter 7, who are giving God and Jesus the Lamb the praise due his name.

They're singing to him. Here's what they're singing. They are saying, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. People from every tribe, tongue, and nation gather together. The one flock that Jesus laid down his life for gathered together for eternity, giving him praise.

It's a glory plan. God gets the glory for the work he has done.

[33:10] The work that he's doing. Not to us, O Lord, not to us. But to your name, give glory. Because of your steadfast love and faithfulness.

Psalm 115.1. That's what those who have been saved talk about. How wonderful their God is. How glorious he is.

You know, every team has an objective. Whether you are an athletic team. Whether you are a business. Whether you are an orchestra or a theater group or a church.

You always have an objective. You always have an end. And we make disciples. So that God is worshipped.

That God is praised. That he is glorified. John Piper says it this way. Missions exists because of the worship of God does not.

[34:18] God gets the glory.

Could you imagine this? This year, 2025. I wish you guys could be here during the week with all the foot traffic. It's wonderful. It can get crazy from time to time.

Could you imagine this? Over the course of 2025. God working in our midst. And more and more people through conversions.

Or through just kind of God opening their eyes and reviving them. They start to see the wonder and glory of God. And you have people walking around this building.

Saying things like, isn't Jesus awesome? Isn't he worth it all? I would do anything for him.

[35:21] Wouldn't that be wonderful? Wouldn't it be wonderful if the pews are filling up with people? Lifting their hands to God. Joining the myriads in the heavenly throne room.

Giving him the worth and praise to his name. I want to be part of that. There's some implications to this triune, big, Christocentric, people-moving glory plan.

Some implications. God's making disciples today. Aslan is on the move. The triune God is at work right now among the nations.

Flipping people by their grace. And you know what? It doesn't show up on CNN. It's not going to show up on Fox News. It's not going to show up on your news outlets. It comes through word of mouth.

That's why we are regularly talking with our mission partners to hear what God is doing. But do you believe that God is at work?

[36:34] In this place. At this time. Among us. I have stories. There are people in this room right now that were in darkness 11 months ago.

God is making disciples today. Aslan's on the move. Do you know what? We pray then. We say, God, God, what are you doing?

Show us what you're doing. Encourage our hearts. Implication two. You are part of the plan. Not just that you have been brought through and you got flipped.

That's part of the plan. But you're part of his plan of making disciples of other people. Brother, sister, you were flipped by God's grace.

Not to live for yourself. But for him. To be part of what he is doing. Do you know that God has strategically, providentially placed you in the relational networks that you are in?

[37:42] It's no accident. No accident. And he wants to use you in helping people move people to him.

He wants that. Yourself. Your spouse. Your kids. Your neighbors. Those you work with. Those you go to school with. Those who you compete with. All of these people.

Man. I've got to hear this every day. Because I forget. I think that this world is all that there is.

My 70 to 80 years. Maybe. Oh. I want to live for the line. I want to live for the glory of God. Do you?

No. Implication three. It's contested. It's hard.

[38:45] When you join in what God is doing, there are costs. There are things that you just can't do anymore. There are things that you will suffer as a result of it.

But you know what? You know what the question is? Is it worth it? It is worth it. Jesus is worth it. Watching God flip people from worshipping dead created things to the one living God. So worth it. So I get to say to you here.

Don't give up. If you are entering 2025. And you've been serving. And you are weary. God has grace.

Sufficient grace for you today. And tomorrow. Don't grow weary in doing good. No.

[39:46] We pray for things like courage. We pray for outpourings of the Holy Spirit to make us bold. To take stands.

To say no to things. To say that's wrong. And to point people to Jesus. Jesus is worth it.

Do you think he's worth it? God's got a plan.

It's a triune plan. It's a big plan. It's a Christocentric plan. It's a people moving plan. It is a glory plan.

So as we start 2025 together. Let's start by asking two questions.

God where are you at work? Show us where you're at work. And two. God would you use me?

[40:50] Would you use me? In raising up worshipers. Would you use me? In helping people. Move them to Christ.

Would you help me? Use me. To establish people in the faith. And to love one another. And to bear one another. As we together follow Jesus. I can't think of a better way.

A better plan. For 2025. Let's pray together. Father. Father. Father.

You are all glorious. Thank you for sending your son. Jesus. You are a wonder. And as we live between your advents.

We look to you. We depend upon you. We know your grace is sufficient. Would you revitalize us?

Would you stir our affections towards you again?

[42:01] And would you send in a fresh and full way. Your spirit to fall upon us. That we would live for you.

Without regret. Without holding back. But seeking to bring glory to your name.

It's in your name, Jesus, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.