

God's Plans Work
A Study through the book of Ephesians
Ephesians 3:10-13

One of the reasons why we can completely trust our Heavenly Father is because all of His plans work (see Isaiah 46:10). Amazingly, God has called us together as His church to demonstrate this fact! It's true, let's talk about this today.

In the book of Ephesians, we learn that there are a many wonderful reasons for why God created the local church. We are to be a place of His presence, a temple of worship, an institution that equips, a community that expresses Jesus' heart, truth and touch etc.

Today as we continue our journey through the book of Ephesians, we come to 3:10-13 where we discover that God also designed His church for the purpose of demonstrating His wisdom in how His plans worked. Let's unpack these verses.

Ephesians 3:10, "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."

While we know that God's angels minister to those who are saved and they long to look into and rejoice at the working of the gospel among men (Heb. 1:14, 1 Peter 1:10-12, Luke 15:10). This verse is not about God's angels.

Rather from the context of Ephesians 6:12, this is referring to the demonic realm that includes in its chain of command what is called "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."

The reason God wants us as a church to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to the spiritual dark forces out there is because Satan in his own self-deception, thought he ruined the plans of God when he successfully tempted Adam and Eve, hurling this world into its fallen state.

So how do we as a church show the manifold wisdom of God to the fallen angels? One of the ways is according to what Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

By the strong name of Jesus, the gates of hell cannot keep us as a church from breaking in and rescuing those who are bound by Satan and on their way to eternal damnation (Mark 16:15-20).

But there is more, in the next three verses we find that God made known by His church that His eternal plan worked through Christ, that His eternal plan worked through prayer, and that His eternal plan worked through suffering.

Ephesians 3:11, "according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Notice that God had an "eternal purpose", in other words, a planned purpose before anything was ever created. That purpose was accomplished in Christ Jesus and is now demonstrated in His church. The Scriptures tell us what God's pre-creation purpose was.

In 1 Peter 1:19-20 we are told that Jesus was chosen before the foundation of the world to be our perfect Lamb of sacrifice. This is why we are also told in Revelation 13:8 that Jesus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Not only that, in Titus 1:2 we are told that God promised us eternal life i.e. our salvation before the beginning of time. And in 2 Timothy 1:9 we find that grace was given to us in Christ before time began.

On top of this, we learn in Ephesians 1:4 that before the creation of the world, God chose for all who are in Christ to be holy and blameless in His sight. And in Matthew 25:34 we are told that God prepared our entrance into His heavenly Kingdom from the foundation of the world.

This means that before anything ever began, redemption through Christ Jesus was already planned and was woven into the fabric of creation. Because we are now beneficiaries of that redemption, we as a church demonstrate God's wisdom that His plan worked.

Ephesians 3:12, "In Him [Jesus] and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."

We as a church also demonstrate to the dark forces that throw doubt, condemnation and discouragement at us, the manifold wisdom of God in our approach in prayer.

For as bad as sin was that caused a rift between God and man, we find that God had a plan in Christ, and that plan worked! For Jesus, on our behalf, did more than repair the rift.

We see that now in our faith-based relationship with Christ we imperfect and flawed people can approach our holy and righteous God with freedom (free from fear of rejection or wrath) and confidence (confident we are loved, accepted, welcomed, and that God hears our prayers).

Ephesians 3:13, "I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory."

Finally, the enemy thought that he can thwart God's plans through our suffering. But God had a plan that worked, starting with His Son Jesus, He demonstrates His wisdom by taking our suffering and using it for His greater good. As seen in this verse with Paul.

Paul suffered by going without, being unjustly imprisoned, and enduring the rough treatment that went with it (Acts 16:22-23, 2 Cor. 11:25-29), so that he could spend time praying for the Gentile believers, writing to their churches and counseling and directing their spiritual leaders.

Paul was saying to these believers in Ephesus that God who set him aside to not only be their apostle also used his suffering for them. In Paul's eyes this was proof that God loves and cares for them, thus, in this way his sufferings are their glory.

One of the amazing truths for we followers of Jesus is that God doesn't waste our pain, but will use it for ours and others greatest good, as we submit ourselves in our suffering to Him.