**Series: The Immeasurable Greatness of His Power**

**Title: 5. The Plan of God - Revealing His Power**

**Ephesians 3:1-13**

**Description:** A message about Immeasurable Power sometimes doesn't gel with our observations. Has something gone wrong in God's plan?

# Context

* 3:1, thought interrupted - prayer cont. in v14. At the thought, "*prisoner on behalf of you*".
* concluded in v13: "So, I *ask you not to lose heart...*"
* Fact is, Paul's message of Immeasurable Power doesn't fit with their observations. The world shutting Paul up.
* Is immeasurable power seen? Could Paul have it wrong?
* KBC is a little church, unimpressive in many ways. Where's the immeasurable power? The Church is always under threat to a greater or lesser degree in the world. This doesn't seem very significant - what is going on this morning... cf "paradox". IF GOD HAS A PLAN, IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE WORKING VERY WELL!
* If it feels that way, that all this talk of Power is unreal, this is for us

# Read 3:1-13

...(6) just spent the last 2 chapters saying this

# Intro

v8,9, Paul explains the double-sided nature to his ministry, "*to preach*" "*and to bring to light*" - building one on the other... We've looked in depth at the riches of Christ and the resulting power that we should expect from that... In light of the apparent weakness and LACK of power -   
**Paul's point is: God's Power toward us is undeniably proven in the way He carries out His Plan**

**Our Goal**: to explore, peek into things we're not qualified to. **cf 3:20** - power we cannot imagine. cf God's "*plan*"- we're supposed to understand these?!! Yet that's where the gospel leads us to - 'to preach Christ... and to bring to light the plan'... With the good news of Christ the "dimmer switch" is turned up, and God's plan becomes visible.

**Putting ourselves in our place**

If we listen rightly, a right sense of our disqualification - to put us in our place, 2 words:

* (10) "*wisdom of God*".
  + just **Consider** that. Just in **Creation**. The impossible depth of mining physics, and time. (Illus: Youtube on *time dilation*, complexity of the eye, life itself and its self-repair).
  + *It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to [discover them]*. (Pro 25:2, esv and nlt)
  + yet, **creative wisdom** just one aspect. (v10) refers to "*the manifold wisdom of God*" or 'multi-coloured' facets and categories of all supreme God.
  + so just to put us in our place and help us to tread with reverence: >> Greatly disqualified to poke at God under our microscopes.
* (9) "*the mystery*"
  + def: something secret becoming revealed; once unknown, now mind-blowing.
  + in (4), 'the mystery of Christ' - cf (5) once hidden, now mind-blowing...see v(8), "unsearchable riches of Christ" = ie, 'a careful examination of renders too much to handle'
  + and truly, Christ to us, is called "Wisdom from God" in 1 Cor 30
  + so just to pur us in our place, and remember that outside of Loving Christ, there is no power or wisdom.

# Pray

# Proposition

in (9), **Perspective on God's power** is seen not only in the Mystery of Christ, but in **the Plan of God** (read)

## "The Plan"

* the word is "*stewardship*", economy, management of... the "execution plan" - how the Mystery is carried out. The Way the Plan is carried out, reveals the Power of God
* **The Plan: The mystery hidden, the mystery revealed**

## The Mystery Hidden in Time and Space

* 2 details of the staging of God's plan:
* "*the plan is, the mystery*":...
  + *1. hidden for* ***ages***
  + *2. in God who* ***created all***
    - *that's time and space.* Now this is very relevant to us because the plan unfolds on the stage of Time and Space. Ours! [our history, this world] The things we see, touch, the passing days...**are part of His plan**... With the result that: what is invisible, unimaginable, immeasurable has been funnelled into the confines of time and space - in an execution plan.
  + "*hidden for ages*" - **lit**: hidden from the aeons - not just a long time, but every aeon that existed since the beginning.
  + and only *God* who staged it, *knew it*; - Feel the **contrast** between God, 'the creator', and 'all' - includes everyone and anyone who might've known what was coming - all mankind and non-human spirits, angels and demons.

There **is** a plan. Our Time and Space has a purpose. To be the Church we need to be, we need to know the Riches of Christ, and we need to know how we fit in Time and Space. Why we are here, why we have bodies (why God doesn't just take us up to Heaven), why we suffer in such a corrupt world that tries to shut our mouths up.

Now we know *a number of reasons* - e.g. **to make disciples (Mat 28)**, to be **a sanctifying presence (Phi 2)**, to **declare God's praises** to the world (1 Pet 2). But Paul gives us yet another reason- which is stunning, and it brings a bigger dimension: it brings to light a reality that we couldn't come up with, had God not revealed it.(3,5)

## The Mystery Revealed in Time and Space

* in (10), read. 4 important details about the revealing
* the plan is to reveal the mystery "**now**" - IN TIME
  + v9 Mystery of Christ hidden from aeons - History has shifted with the resurrection of Christ, a new aeon - the age of the Holy Spirit
* the plan is to reveal the mystery "**through the church**" - IN physical SPACE
  + v9 was Hidden in God. God now unveiling and bursting out what was locked inside.
  + that's not the only space affected - there is also non-physical space
* the plan is to reveal the mystery "**to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places**"
  + 6:12 - same words, describing every evil force - demons - opposed to God, His goodness and His work; (Read) "darkness", "evil"
  + cf 2:2 - enslavers of humanity
* the mystery being revealed is called, "**the wisdom of God**" / the **manifold wisdom of God**
  + broad spectrum of varied and inexhaustible wisdom. The complete satisfaction of Justice and Mercy, sinners forgiven, undone work of Satan by Christ

THE PURPOSE - THE PLAN

* + **cf 3:11** *the purpose of the aeons, realised in Christ* = **i.e. the purpose of Time and Space - the plan that God is carrying out now,** by showing off His Church, 'trophy of grace' - but as Paul puts it: the purpose of Time and Space is for God to boast in the face of evil - [that is so deep - and has such huge implications for the church]

THE METHOD

* + **cf 3:12** - grand display: ***boldness*** (free mouths not shut in shame), ***access*** (safety, welcome), ***in confidence*** (fully persuaded beyond doubt) - reconciled to God.
  + If we don't think it's that amazing, we don't see what the demons see. We don't see the evil of the human heart, the condemnation of our sin and the horrors of hell. Satan did a thorough work. But God is so WISE, he worked a salvation that cannot be prevented or dismantled. By sending His own Son, He has made a full and sufficient end to the power of darkness.
* **ILLUS**: I watch You-tube to understand physics, the creative wisdom of God. Demonic powers watch ... **You-the church**... and see, "the multi-" wisdom of God.
* No doubt, any being who plans against God must think itself wise, in its own eyes. God's plan is to reveal otherwise: even in surprising places - in insignificance, in jail, "*God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong* (1Co 1:27).

**ILLUS**: God's Plan: Hidden and now Revealed to spiritual rulers and authorities

* 9 "*to bring to light*" - photizo, Light. Photo, and Photon.
* Photon - basic element of light, no mass, travels at 300k km/s, able to carry and transfer energy
* When we look at magnificent creation - us who are blessed with eyesight - photons travelling to our retina and transferring energy to receptors, translated by the brain (!)
* we see varieties of colour based on the frequency of these photons - spectrum of colour seen in the rainbow.
* **But** the same power of photons is found in surprising places. There are colours we don't see, because their frequencies can be raised or lowered beyond what our eyes can discern.e.g. Infra-Red, Ultra-violet - they're Hidden. And beyond those colour-frequencies either way - an entire spectrum of invisible power, Invisible, but real. The invisible colours over which wifi downloads, and microwaves cook.

Now, There is a whole unseen spiritual world - which is waging war (6:10). The rulers and authorities in heavenly places are exceptionally powerful, unlimited by human boundaries, and able "to see" spiritual realities - call it the Infrared and Ultra violet realities of God which is invisible to us. By their knowledge and their hatred of God they can wisely convince us to follow suit.

But God is **infinitely wiser**. From the beginning, he has hidden entire portions of the spectrum of his wisdom - He has worked a mystery. A mystery once hidden, now mind-blowing, a mystery he demonstrates before them, a mystery into which angels 'long to look' (1Pet1:12):.. **Col 1:27**

God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27)

See the wisdom of God. Paul can say from prison, v13

" So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory"

# Application

Where's the power? Ask the demons. God is parading this church, in time and space, in the face of evil.

That's why it's a "stewardship". There are various stewardships - Paul has one by God's grace, for preaching to the Gentiles. But far larger and more significant than that is the Plan of God for our time and space - that this local church called Knysna Baptist inherits with every other true church, the Stewardship of the Mystery - the plan - to be the time and space demonstration of His Power to defeat evil and save and transform sinners

Questions to ask ourselves

* Do I find the promises of Christ immeasurably rich? Am I even part of God's display here, though I may attend? : (6) have I entered into the same-inheritance, the same-body, the same-promise?
* If I am, does my Time and Space depend only on what human eyes see and think, or am I serving God's purpose to boast in the defeat of evil?
* Am I looking for motivation in the observations of the visible world, or the revelations about the invisible?
* Will I search the Holy Spirit's filling, in earnest prayer, in myself and in the church, for the greatest possible manifestation of His Power?