

“Trust”  
 Ephesians 1:3-14  
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In the movies, when someone says, “I have a plan” it’s usually not a good sign.

If they add the words, “trust me” - - forget about it!

In *Guardians of the Galaxy*, Quill has a plan.

“I have a plan”, he says.

“**You’ve** got a plan?”, Raccoon responds.

“Yes”

“Well, first of all you’re copying from me when you say ‘I have a plan’”

“No I’m not, people say that all the time, it’s not that unique a thing to say”

“Secondly, I don’t even believe you **HAVE** a plan”

“Well I have - - part of a plan”

“Ok, what **percentage** of a plan do you really have?”

So - - as if the fact that this example is from *Guardians of the Galaxy* was not enough of a give-away, you see what I mean about - - supposed plans - - right?

Other examples abound...

“Gentlemen, I have a plan - - it’s called blackmail”, says Dr. Evil.

Dr. Evil who - - like so many villains with a plan - - doesn’t wait to watch the victims as his evil plan unfolds - - and they of course get away - - like Bat Man and Robin.

David Spade plays Richard in *Tommy Boy* who has a plan.

“I’m gonna need your watch - - I have a plan”, he says.

In video games it’s the same:

“I have a plan - - I just need money”, is another version...

If these examples have anything to teach us about plans it seems to be that there are a lot of buffoons and a lot of villains with - - plans.

There are good plans too, of course.

Unlikely adventures that save the day...

From Ghostbusters to Space Cowboys...

To true stories about winning a fishing contest to save an Orphanage.

The thing is - - these good plans are unlikely too.

Which is part of what makes them - - entertaining.

So there seems to be something about - - the unlikely-ness of - - plans.

When the monster in the horror movie attacks - - there is usually NOT a running car waiting - - at least not in real life.

So we all nod knowingly at the often quoted line:

“If you want to make God laugh - - make a plan”

The plans of us humans - - seem - - precarious - - a lot of the time.

To take it closer to reality - - and out of Hollywood - - we all know about how precarious life can be - - when we think of the Wildfire season - - or this last year of Covid and all the constant changes that made planning almost impossible.

Then just when things were starting to seem like they were getting back to normal - - your pastor announces his retirement! / I have appreciated the support of so many of you over the past few weeks. / And I really DO trust that both you and I will see many gifts in the future.

But - - it certainly is true that we don't know the future.

Which is why I am planning to retire now.

No one knows the future of their health - - or their lifespan.

All of this is a reminder:

Human plans - - seem precarious - - much of the time.

Which is no reason NOT to plan.

This is more about - - managing expectations.

Being wise - - and honest - - while we - - plan in faith.

So - - IF - - human plans - - seem precarious - - much of the time...

What about God's plans?

Is there a way to CONNECT our plans - - with God's plan?

Would that help?

How can we plan in faith - - while being wise about uncertainty?

I hope to spend the next few minutes on these questions.

To start - - let's consider - - the idea of God's plan.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians begins with a reference to God's plan.

This ancient text - - is confident - - about God's plan.

So from WHERE - - does this confidence - - come?

Well Ephesians in the Bible says, that God's plan is a "plan for the fullness of time".

Ephesians says that God's plan has to do with US - - being blessed.

Ephesians says that God's plan is about forgiveness and grace.

And God's plan, according to Ephesians, gives us wisdom.

And God CHOSE this plan - - "before the foundation of the world!"

So blessing and grace, forgiveness and wisdom all sound pretty good.

But what do these references to TIME mean?

What is the "fullness of time"?

Well, for one thing, the fullness of time seems to be - - YET to come.

This plan - - is clearly not yet totally fulfilled.

There are at least some aspects of our lives that are not yet as Ephesians says:

“Blessed - - graceful - - wise - - and forgiven.”

But that IS the plan!

In Ephesians God says, “I have a plan”

“Trust me”

What WE have to do is figure out IF we do.

Or - - how we can.

That’s what faith is all about.

Faith would draw a distinction between - - God’s plan - - and human plans.

In that - - we can trust God.

But God’s plan and human plans MAY have a similarity too.

The unlikeliness of these plans - - is the similarity.

God’s plan IS unlikely!

It’s too good to be true!

Jesus - - who died a bloody death - - is how God blesses us?

At first it seems - - unlikely.

But according to Ephesians - - it is a plan we can trust.

I think Paul would say:

Don’t trust in riches - - but DO trust in the riches of God’s grace!

Don’t trust the words of unwise people - - but DO trust the wisdom of God.

The idea that Jesus Christ - - who was executed on a cross - - could bring redemption to all humans on earth - - and unite everything on heaven and earth - - IS the great mystery of faith - - and is the foundation of God's plan. / That is what Ephesians says.

The question now is - - what do YOU say?

What will WE say in response?

You don't have to answer THIS MINUTE.

But I think you do have to answer at some TIME - - if you want to live in faith.

Sometimes it seems like we have to have all the answers right away.

We need a plan right now!

The problem is - - if we go with the wrong plan - - it doesn't matter WHEN we did.

Believers have been struggling to get a plan for centuries.

The only thing is - - life is short.

Life doesn't last forever.

So back to time.

A plan - - for the fullness of time.

That's what Ephesians calls God's plan.

"A plan for the fullness of time."

As I was thinking about that phrase, I came across a poem by Billy Collins.

It is called: "Bags of Time"

"When the keeper of the inn where we stayed  
said we had 'bags of time' to catch the ferry,  
which we would reach by traversing the causeway  
between this island and the one to the north..."

“I started wondering what a ‘bag of time’  
might look like,  
and how much time one could hold.”

Wouldn't it be nice if we really DID have - - bags of time?

Whatever - - that means.

It seems to me that some days we live like we DO have bags of time.

And other days - - it feels like our time is up.

Maybe only God really has “bags of time”.

And maybe that's what the fullness of time is.

In any case it seems to me - - that if we are going to really take in these Biblical words  
from Ephesians - - we have to keep two things connected:

Those two things are: plans and time.

Plans are not plans forever - - plans are plans for a time.

Even Gods plan - - is a plan for a time - - that is “the fullness of time”.

The good news is that if we DO trust God on this - - if we are willing to trust - - then we  
can be confident that God's plan for the fullness of time DOES include US.

God's plan is not some random cosmological disaster.

The HEART of God's plan is US! You and me!!

Ephesians says we INHERIT this plan.

This plan is about blessing - - and grace - - wisdom and forgiveness.

So as we look ahead and make OUR plans, maybe we can keep that in mind.

Amen.