

Don't Lose Heart: When God Shows Off

Ephesians 3:10,13

Theme: God's Omnipotence

FCF: individualism

Point: God is in such control over the universe that he shows himself off through the church

App: understand the Gospel, proclaim it, and live it out

Intro: Tchaikovsky and the cymbal player

Characters were great to watch, but it was the ingenuity of the composer that got the most recognition.

What this verse is setting up for us is a cosmic stage, and it is the ingenuity of the invisible composer who...

God controls the stage.

Multi-faceted wisdom

Wisdom - "God's wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals. This definition goes beyond the idea of God knowing all things and specifies that God's decisions about what he will do are always wise decisions."¹ - Wayne Grudem

see Isaiah 46:9-10

Multi-faceted - *polypoikilos*

illustration: diamond

One facet: his eternal purpose of creating a family/home/marriage (3:11)

but when you turn the multi-faceted diamond of God's wisdom around...

Another facet: he's bringing everything together under the Son (1:10)

Problem: **things are not together.**

divorce

gossip

racism

war

genocide

grief

<-- it seems evil is multi-faceted, as well. Different pain, **same problem**

How will the Father reconcile everything under the Messiah? (1:10)

God's answer will *bewilder the audience*.

God is bewildering the audience.

Rulers and authorities (3:10)

What are these?

Ephesians 6:10-13

Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand

¹ Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology*. p193

angels and demons <-- hard for us. modernity.

German New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann emphatically denied the existence of a supernatural world of angels and demons. He believed that the NT had to be demythologized so it can become more palatable to modern people.

C.S. Lewis

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. - **The Screwtape Letters**²

Ephesians 2:1-2

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient

Christians believe in the existence of demons, yet...

it is not a battle between good and evil...it is a show

On the stage of history, God's answer that bewilders

1 Corinthians 2:7

...we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined before the ages for our glory

Hidden facet: the *mystery* is how God will accomplish his eternal purpose...

Mystery...

Ephesians 3:6

The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and partners of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel

Mystery: Through Christ, gentiles are made members of the same family.

The "unrighteous" are accepted by grace

The unfolding mystery of the Gospel: he will win the world through shame!

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that would come to you searched and carefully investigated. They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when He testified in advance to the messianic sufferings and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Angels desire to look into these things.

The twist...

God is the author. The universe is the theatre. The angels and demons are the audience. *God is showing off the mystery of his plan through the church*

² C.S. Lewis. *The Screwtape Letters*. L.70

God's main character is the church.

Of course! God wanted to show off his grace in the foolishness of his cast...

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (HCSB)

Brothers, consider your calling: Not many are wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world—what is viewed as nothing—to bring to nothing what is viewed as something, so that no one can boast in His presence. But it is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became God-given wisdom for us—our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, in order that, as it is written: The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:21

For since, in God's wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached.

Foolish characters, foolish message (like a cymbalist showing off the composer)
He has nothing to bring but cymbals, and gladly gives music to the notes the composer has drawn up! **He brings the attention to the composer's work.**

How do we apply this glorious text?

identity and life.

Church:

FCF: God's wise mystery is with the church not an individual in the church

FCF: the church is the primary instrument of God for his eternal purpose

We've got to be serious about gathering and scattering--God is!

"Through the church" does not mean "through the pastors."

Ephesians 4:10-12

The One who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ

Who is a minister?

You are called/mandated by the God to get out of the bleachers, where the angels are.

We do not need to worry about demons/angels. Just this...

Made known: when the mystery of Christ (gospel) is...

1. understood (4,9)
2. proclaimed (8b)
3. actualized (1:10)
 1. at your places of relationship (job/family/recreation)

Tchaikovsky and the cell phone.

DO NOT BE CAUGHT IN THESE DAYS WITH YOUR FACE DOWN.