

## I. Introduction

- A. As a kid growing up, one of my favorite TV shows was—well; let’s see if you can guess it. Here are some clues—don’t blurt it out, just raise your hand when you know.
  - 1. They turned it into a movie in the late 90s.
  - 2. It had a pretty familiar theme song—here it is.
  - 3. The series had a loveable villain named Dr. Zachary Smith.
  - 4. A space ship named Jupiter 2.
  - 5. A robot that was famous for saying, “Danger, Will Robinson!”
- B. I’m talking about *Lost in Space*.
- C. A family sets out in a space ship to colonize a planet, and things go haywire. They end up landing on the wrong planet, and ultimately wandering through space, trying to find their way home.
- D. What you might not know is that *Lost in Space* was based on another familiar story, called *The Swiss Family Robinson*, which gives new meaning to “Danger, Will Robinson.” In *Swiss Family Robinson*, a family is marooned on an island, making the best of things, till they can finally come home.
- E. In the history of storytelling, there’s a major theme about lost people finding their way home.
- F. Like the Jews wandering through the wilderness.
- G. Like Odysseus trying to find his way home.
- H. Like Shrek saving Fiona, and journeying back home.
- I. Every culture has stories that follow this pattern. People find themselves separated from home, and face many obstacles till they find their way back home. It’s called the Journey Motif or the Quest.
- J. The reason these stories work is because they tap into a deep truth inside every human heart...
  - 1. People are on a quest for God.
- K. People are on a quest for God, but many times, they don’t know it. They think it’s a quest for money, sex or power. In reality, they’re looking for God. Or they think they’re on a quest for a wife, or a husband, or to dump the current wife or husband—or they think they’re on a quest for a great career and the American dream and all of those things are fine. It’s just that they don’t work right until you’re heart is tight with God.
- L. Until you come home to God, you’ll always be lost in space.

## II. The Ephesians

- A. The people who first read this book lived in a town called Ephesus. Along with the surrounding villages, Ephesus was one of the greatest cities of the Roman Empire.
- B. It was also home to one of the greatest churches—or cluster of churches—in the ancient world.
- C. This book of Ephesians was a letter written to these churches. It was written by Paul, the missionary and church planter.
- D. The people of Ephesus faced the same struggles we face today. They were victims of forces beyond their control. They were tiny specks in a great cosmic machine—at the mercy of the stars and the zodiac, at the mercy of the fates of the gods, of fortune or chance, at the mercy of idols and volcanoes and storms and droughts, at the mercy of the great goddess Artemis, the chief god of the Ephesians.
- E. They were small people in a big universe. They were lost in space—wandering, trying to find that deep sense of peace—trying to find their way home.
- F. Not different from us at all.
- G. And along comes Paul the missionary. He points to Jesus and says He’s the way home.
- H. So they found Jesus. They came home to God. Their journey was over. Their quest had succeeded.
- I. Just like us. So many today could stand up and say, through Jesus, I’ve found my way home. My life is not perfect, but my heart is at rest. I’ve come home to God, and He is my peace, and He is my king, and He is my friend.
- J. So many of us can say, through Jesus, I’ve not only found God, I have also found MYSELF. I’m no longer lost in space and time.
  - 1. If you feel unsettled today.
  - 2. If you feel dazed and confused in the world today.
  - 3. If you feel like you’re on a journey, but you don’t know where.
    - a) Then God has a message for you today—a message for a pilgrim on a journey. And His message is found right here, in Ephesians 1.

## III. Scripture

- A. *Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him (Ephesians 1:9, 10, NKJV).*
- B. Complicated words in a very long, complicated sentence.
- C. But deep words on a really amazing topic.
- D. Do you want to know what this is about?
- E. This is a glimpse into your Father’s heart.
- F. Many of you know that five weeks ago, my father died. He had Jesus, so for him, love wins and he’s in heaven—that I’m glad about.
- G. But several times, I’ve had this weird thing happen to me and if you’ve lost your mom or dad, I have a hunch you can relate.
- H. What’s happened is that I find myself thinking about my dad, and wondering about some of the details of his life. For example, he played triple-A baseball for the Chicago Cubs farm team. He got hit by a pitch and broke his wrist.

- I. But one thing I don't know is if he ever hit a home run. JD asked me, and I didn't know. So my first thought was, next time I see dad, I have to ask him, Dad did you ever hit a home run?
  - J. Then immediately, my next thought was—wait a minute. Dad's gone. I can't ask him that. And I feel sad all over again, but it's not as bad as at first.
  - K. What I'm getting at is this—there is a distance between my dad and me, and I can't close the gap. It's impossible. He's gone, he's in heaven, and he's far away from me. I have no access to his heart. What I know now is all I'll ever know and no more.
  - L. You might feel the exact same way, because your dad's gone too.
  - M. Or maybe your dad isn't gone, but he might as well be. He's been out of your life. He's been absent. He's been unavailable or distant or too stoned or drunk to care.
  - N. But for whatever reason it may be, your father's heart to you is a closed book.
  - O. He's a million miles away, and you don't know him, and he doesn't know you.
- IV. The God Who Reveals His Heart
- A. Which is exactly why our passage begins with these words:
    - 1. *Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself...*
  - B. Whatever else this means, it means you have a Father, who turned His face toward you and opened His heart to you.
  - C. He did not abandon you.
  - D. He did not ignore you.
  - E. He did not close off His heart to you.
  - F. He made known to you the mystery of His will.
  - G. Don't answer this one out loud, but was your father good at self-disclosure? Did you really know what made him tick? His hopes and dreams? Many of us have way more questions than answers when it comes to Dad.
  - H. But not with God.
  - I. God didn't want it to be that way between Him and you.
  - J. God is good at self-disclosure.
  - K. God reveals His heart and doesn't hide.
  - L. So He made known to you the mystery of His will.
  - M. Let's break that apart.
- V. The Mystery
- A. Let's start with mystery.
  - B. Many of the ancient religions were called "mystery religions." They had secret initiations into all kinds of religious experiences: Artemis, Isis, Dionysus or any number of pagan gods. These secret initiations often involved secret oaths, and sacrifices, and even sexual experiences.
  - C. Only people who jumped through the hoops got to know the secrets. They had a higher connection with the gods. And because of that, they had a deeper, stronger spiritual power.
  - D. To be an initiator into the mysteries meant to have an inside knowledge of God that was unavailable to the everyday person on the street. In the mystery religions, the gods made themselves known only to a select few insiders.
  - E. So when Paul wrote that God made known the mystery, he exploded the pagan idea of mystery.
    - 1. Instead of something that could not be known, the mystery of God's heart could be known.
    - 2. Instead of a closed secret for a chosen few, the heart of God is an open secret for anyone who wants to know.
  - F. The word mystery here simply means this: the deepest truths of God's heart can only be known if God discloses them to us, and He has.
  - G. We cannot figure them out by logic or math or science.
  - H. We cannot figure them out by religious experience.
  - I. We cannot figure out the deep truths of God's heart through philosophy or comparative religion.
  - J. God is so big, and we are so small, that unless He takes the initiative and discloses His heart, we'll never crack the mystery of God.
  - K. But thank God, He cracked that mystery for us. He made known to us the mystery—meaning, He opened His heart, and said, here's who I am. I want you to know me. I want you to love me.
  - L. I don't want you to guess.
  - M. I don't want you to feel clueless.
  - N. I don't want you to feel like you don't know me, or that I'm a stranger.
  - O. I don't want you feel lost in space—like your Father is a million miles away.
  - P. So the God of our Lord Jesus Christ did something no other God has ever done in any religion of all the earth:
    - 1. God officially made all His secrets open secrets.
  - Q. God made known His heart, and He did this through Scriptures and He did this through Jesus on earth—and that's more than enough revelation for a lifetime. That's all you'll ever need.
    - 1. When you dwell in the Bible, two things happen.
    - 2. Your questions get answered.
    - 3. And your answers raise more questions.
    - 4. But you feel deep inside every question has an answer in God.
      - a) If God feels like an unknowable mystery, could it be that you haven't spent enough time in His Word? Think about it.
  - R. God made known His heart, and He did it for love.

S. And so here is the Bible, here is the great flashing beacon of the heart of God—the great homing device for every wanderer who has lost his way, or lost her way—flashing out the love and mercy and power of a Creator big enough to hold the universe in the palm of His hand, yet small enough to dwell in your heart, and walk with you and talk with you, and tell you are His own.

T. God made known the mystery. What mystery?

#### VI. Of His will

- A. The mystery of His will—according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.
- B. What does that mean?
- C. It means God knows what He wants.
- D. And it means God wants what He wants.
- E. Do you know what you want? Do you know what you really want? Honestly?
- F. How many times have you had this conversation?
  - 1. Honey, what do you want for dinner?
    - a) Oh, I'm easy, anything's fine.
  - 2. Okay, how about we pick up some barbecued ribs?
    - a) No, not that, I don't really feel like barbecued ribs.
  - 3. But, you just said anything's fine!
    - a) I know, just not ribs.
  - 4. Well, what do you want?
    - a) Oh, I'm easy, anything's fine.
  - 5. Sigh—okay, how about Chinese we'll order takeout.
    - a) No, that doesn't sound good either.
  - 6. Aarrggghh—what do you want?
    - a) Ummm, maybe I'll just make a salad.
- G. You don't even know what you want for dinner half the time.
- H. But not with God.
- I. If you asked God, what do you want for dinner?
- J. He would answer within one nanosecond: Chicken Parmesan.
- K. God made known the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.
- L. God knows what He wants.
- M. God wants what He wants.
- N. God isn't yanked around on anybody's chain.
- O. God isn't indecisive.
- P. God doesn't wring His hands before making decisions.
- Q. God doesn't edit Himself because He's afraid of what you might think or what anyone else might think.
- R. God is who God is, and if you don't like it, He's not going to change Himself to suit your tastes.
- S. God is not a people pleaser.
- T. God has no identity crisis.
- U. And this is an enormously powerful truth for people who have lost their way.
- V. Because the best way to get over your own identity crisis is to start with God—to take Him as your role model. Who are you, deep inside? What do you really want? What is your dream? What is that deepest longing—not the shallow stuff, but the really deep stuff?
- W. God gave you dominion, the right to rule. God gave you a measure of sovereignty. He made you in His image so when He wants what He wants; He's giving you permission to want what you want too.
- X. And the great danger is that you will stop short. That you will settle for surface wants and miss the deepest wants. That you will wander around without purpose or meaning or knowledge of God. Or that you will wander lost in space letting other people define you and tell you what to do and label you and mess with your dreams.
- Y. The great danger is that you will waste a life goofing off with second best, when your Father is on the edge of His seat, cheering you on toward your own personal highest calling—which is just like you, and just for you, and unique to you, and unlike anyone else's high calling.
- Z. God made known His will and His wants and His good pleasure of His will—and with that, you can feel safe. And with that you can feel at home. You don't have to worry about which Heavenly Father is going to show up tonight. He's predictable. He wants His wants.
- AA. And with that, you can feel permission to want your wants too:
- BB. God's deepest wants have to do with verse 10:
  - 1. *Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him (Ephesians 1:9, 10, NKJV).*

#### VII. The Gathering

- A. Verse 10 might be the hardest verse in the Bible to unravel, but I think it's the most rewarding verse in the Bible once you do.
- B. Really fast, one phrase at a time:
- C. In the dispensation of the fullness of times: That means at the right time, in the right way, in the right place—when God's epic story has reached its perfect high point—then God will pull the trigger on something He's been planning forever.

- D. He will gather together in one: this is one word in Greek, but it takes a whole bunch of words to get at its meaning. The closest single word is recapitulate, but I don't really know what that means—he will gather together in one, we'll come back, but what will He gather together in one?
- E. All things: that's how they referred to the whole universe, the whole cosmos—everything.
- F. Here's God's deepest, richest, most beautiful and awe inspiring want:
  - 1. In the right time, in the right way, in the right place, God will finally pull the trigger and gather together in one the whole universe and everyone and everything in it—including you and me.
- G. But what does that mean? How will He gather together under one head the whole universe? Look at the next two words:
- H. In Christ—here is God's heart. Here is God's deepest desire when He looks at you, and when He looks at the universe.
- I. God can't wait for the day when He does one thing:
  - 1. Imagine if all the planets in our solar system moved at random—all going different directions, the sun wasn't in the middle, and everything was chaos, unpredictable, and random. That's how life feels. That's how a heart far from God feels. Chaos. Crazyiness.
  - 2. That's the moral universe right now. It's like an orchestra with every member doing his or her own thing.
  - 3. But it won't be this way forever. One day, God will harmonize the music of the universe. God will turn a dissonant set of sounds into a symphony.
  - 4. Nothing will be left out, not one word, thought, deed, movement, event, chemical reaction, good or evil. Nothing will be ignored, not one person, angel, or demon.
  - 5. Those who need judgment get judgment. Those who need blessing get blessing.
- J. All will be put in place, properly ordered. The universe will be set straight with Jesus Christ in the middle. Like the sun. And every being, every person, every place, everything will be placed in its exactly right orbit around Him. Some will be close to Him, near and dear and precious and blessed. Some will be far from Him, distant, disconnected, in outer darkness (Matt 22:13), and unblest.
- K. But all will be right, for the first time since the fall.
- L. No more chaos. No more craziness. No more random disconnected unreality. No more insanity.
- M. There is a coming cosmic order in which everyone and everything gets defined by its relationship to Jesus Christ.
- N. And here is the great secret of your life, if you will receive it.
- O. Until that ultimate day comes—here is your sanity, here is your health; here is your road map home:
- P. To be the Lord of the Universe within, and make Jesus the center and everything else orbit around Him in your life now.
  - 1. How you do money orbit around Jesus.
  - 2. How you do your sex life orbits around Jesus.
  - 3. How you do relationships, and how you talk about other people behind their back, orbits around Him.
  - 4. How you do the internet.
  - 5. Your job, your schooling, your everything.
  - 6. He is the sun. He is the center of the universe within.
  - 7. The deepest reality, the deepest want, the only way to not be lost in space is to give Jesus His place at the center of your life. When you do that, everything else starts to work right—maybe for the first time in your life.

#### VIII. Conclusion

- A. God gave you your own universe. It's your own realm, your inner world and the relationships around you.
- B. This is your quest: to find Jesus and to make a life with Him at the center. This is happiness. This is peace. This is an end to chaos.
- C. It is what God wants. And, even if you don't realize it—it's what you want too. Jesus is always the way home.
- D. This is God's heart for the universe. And it is His heart for you.
- E. You have a Father who put His heart out there—what will you do with Him?