

What is your place in God's plan?

Welcome and new coronavirus instructions.

Opening Scripture

Hymn mp Love divine all loves excelling (MP 449)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGGcqhKShQ8>

Scripture Reading Acts 1:1-11

Prayer

Reading 2 Tim 4:19-22

Hymn mp

Sermon What is your place in God's plan?

Hymn mp 769 who is on the Lord's side

Closing prayer

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is [20_11_08.mp3](#)



Welcome, pray

- Remember those days back at school, remember the sports you played, which was but I really enjoyed Rugby, if not too cold. I realise it is hard to picture me in the scrum, quite, my place was generally as a winger.

In rugby, there is a different place for everyone depending on their build and abilities. So it is with those Christ, who has called you up - to be in His team And just like any team sport - every person works together. God says to us that **each part does its work**. Eph 4:16. You can see that so obviously on the field, there they are all - working together, pushing forward together.

In the previous passage there were those who were against Paul. Sometimes they had the opposite shirt on. Though sometimes they were wearing the same jumper, but either worked against the team effort - or when the crucial moment came - and you looked around to see who to pass to - there was no-one there, no-one with you.

- ✚ Many had directly opposed Paul - or fled in his moment of need.

Now in this passage the final section of the letter, the small print and easy to skip over is a list of those greeted, they have not been hindering but helping. I hope everyone listening to this is a helper not hinderer. That you are doing all you can to further the saving message of Christ, the Gospel of God's grace, this is God's work.

Remember Jesus warned us with these words: "**He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters**". Mt 12:30, Lu 11:23

- Remember Christian the Pilgrim plotting his route to the celestial city – he came across all sorts of people. He had to work out who was who.

Some were hindering some were helping, one who helped was Mr Hopeful.

- Let me summarise - Christian again delivered from troubles travels on with another friend, Hopeful, who has come to be a pilgrim through the testimony of Christian and Faithful. Although the two escape the snares of the Hill Lucre, they are captured by the Giant Despair through Christian's foolish going out of the way, and held for a time in Doubting Castle. Again they escape, this time through the use of the key called Promise. On they travel to the Delectable Mountains, where four shepherds called Knowledge, Experience, Watchful and Sincere care for

them, and give them a sight of the Celestial City far ahead. Pressing on, through encounters with men including Ignorance and Atheist, they come to the Enchanted Ground.

- To prevent themselves being made drowsy and lulled to sleep, they talk of good things, and so pass through the Enchanted Ground to the land of Beulah, a place of true rest and delight. One last obstacle awaits them before they can reach the heavenly city: a river, death. There is no way to the Celestial Gate but through the river, the depth of which changes depending on the faith of those passing through it. Hopeful passes through quite easily, but Christian is at first overwhelmed with fears. Hopeful strives to keep his friend's head above the water with encouragements, and soon Christian gets a view of Christ that delivers him from his fears. So the two men pass through the River to the Celestial City, and are welcomed into glory.

So here's the list, the hopeful, the helpful: **Priscilla and Aquila, the household of Onesiphorus, Erastus, Trophimus, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.** 2Ti 4:9-22. They are those who help each other on to the celestial city. Here are the all important 'Key workers' in God's plan.

Let us consider what we know of them. First up are **Aquila** and his wife **Priscilla**. They first appear in Acts 18:2 **There he (Paul) met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.**

Paul first found them at Corinth. Aquila was a Jew, born in Pontus in north east Asia minor. They had come to Corinth when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. It is probable that they were converted under the preaching of Paul and had the advantage of his private tuition. It may well be at the death of Claudius, or whenever the decree for the expulsion of the Jews was repealed, that they returned to Rome.

Paul went to see them, "because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them." Ac 18:3

Here we see the providence of God Paul himself being a tentmaker. Perhaps Paul had been praying for someone with whom he could share the work. Someone of one mind, with the same experiences of coming to know the Lord. It must have been a joy to seem then come to faith, to stay with him

and grow in the faith through the sharing of the faith. Do you want to be strong in the faith? then Paul said to Philemon **"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that x2 you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ."** Phm 1:6

How many say *"If only I was closer to the Lord"* well it is simple, serving brings closeness to the Lord. X2 This is the problem with the lockdown; **It is easier to serve less - and harder to serve more.**

At BCM some were saying how frustrated they were not being able to do more – they could hand out food and it was 'bye' not in or go out.

✚ **Lord what can I do for you in this situation?**

Paul and Aquila became co-workers, they travelled together and they went into the synagogue to reason with the Jews together. Paul says to the church in Corinth: **"Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, - and so does the church that meets at their house."** 1Co 16:19 Why a church there?

Maybe as tentmakers they had more space in their house or because they were mature in the faith, either way as church leaders they were also able to help others including a zealous but poorly informed Apollus who we are told **"began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."** Ac 18:26

Paul had benefitted much from them and describes them as **my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus.** Ro 16:3 My fellow-workers. In the Christian cause, they had aided him – helped him - in his work.

Jesus told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" Lu 10:2

the household of Onesiphorus. He lived at Ephesus with Timothy, and his kindness to the apostle when he was at Rome is already mentioned in 2Ti 1:16-18 where he says **"May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains."** 2Ti 1:16

Paul goes on to commend him **"¹⁷ On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. ¹⁸ May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day!**

You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.” ^{2Ti 1:17-18}

What a help he was, he knew it - and others knew it.

Notice it is the household. Here is a man so steady in the faith his whole household is in the faith with Him. What a strong clear testimony.

I can think of some, not many, where the whole household are in the faith.

Is that your household? Is everyone else in the home with you? Is it a household of faith united in Christ and together for the gospel? [Nathanael](#)

20 Erastus stayed in Corinth. So who is Erastus? Paul writing from Corinth to Rome says at the end of his letter “**Erastus, who is the city’s director of public works, sends you his greetings.**” ^{Ro 16:23} So he is the treasurer of a major city, a public officer, he holds an important key position. [A bit like Sadiq Khan Mayor of London](#)

Erastus coming to faith in Christ, his conversion through the gospel is a proof of the wonderful success of the apostle’s labours

Paul on his way to Jerusalem stayed for a while at Ephesus and Luke, Paul’s travelling companion recalls ^{Ac 19:22} **He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.**

Apparently his home was Corinth and although has accompanied Paul his work did not allow him to travel much, he was too much tied to his desk.

[Arzoo case in Pakistan or the Josh Williamson case in Newquay how many have now heard the message who would otherwise never have hear?](#)

How few in high places hear and respond to the gospel, how little do they hear, - that is why some are taken to court so that others may hear – and how hard it is for the rich to respond – But God’s grace is sufficient. If God calls them will he use you to bring them to the saving faith?

So what of **Trophimus**? Who is he? In Jerusalem the crowds gathered in anger at Paul whom they said had brought into the temple **Trophimus the Ephesian**. After the riot at Ephesus Paul heads to the coast and along it ^{Acts 20:4} **He was accompanied by a number of people including Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.**

3a

There’s some biographical detail – but there is a main lesson here - As they travelled **Trophimus** fell sick on route so Paul leaves him in **Miletus** a famous early Ionian Greek city then on the coast of Asia Minor.

Paul leaves him there to recover. So why didn’t Paul heal him? Paul healed others many others - why not him?

This raises the question about healing. The apostles healed all manner of diseases miraculously, why? What was the point? it was to confirm the message and the key doctrines of the faith. Paul passed so many who were sick and yet all the healings we read of were to authenticate the message.

^{Ac 14:3} **So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. A supernatural affirmation of the message**

That is how it was with Jesus himself. Hebrews 2:3 in speaking about the message says ³ **how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit *sign gifts* distributed according to his will.**

His disciples likewise were there with this life saving message: **Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.** ^{Mr 16:20}

Paul himself was ill in Galatia where he had to stay due to an eye disease.

So now we have the Bible, the work of the apostles is completed, don’t expect the same signs and wonders. God does sometimes heal his people and that is done through prayer in the church.

■ [Go to a special ‘healing meeting’, go in in a wheel chair – you will need one on your way out”](#)

However, When the message is taken by God’s people today to the lost the miracle, the sign, the wonder is the changed life of the carrier, that is you! Made alive / Born again by the Spirit of God. This is the modern day miracle. **We take the message – but we are the message.**

Well who is next? **Eubulus greets you**, this is a name commonly occurring in the classic writers, but of the persons here referred to we know nothing.

Well wat of **Pudens, Linus, Claudia** who also send greetings to Timothy

3b

As before we are in the midst of a thick fog. Here are some Christians at Rome, who may well be converts of Paul. But just who they are there is some conjecture - but no certainty.

They seem to be in some order, from those most known – to those least known. He finishes, tails off the list with the phrase **all the brothers**.

Not everyone makes a big splash and noticed by all around, but the Lord sees and he is pleased –and will reward.

Not everyone is remembered - although today – [Remembrance Sunday](#) - we are urged to consider those who gave their lives sacrificially and to be grateful “**lest we forget**” But the Lord always remembers every act of love and service done in His Name - none go ‘un-noticed’ with him.

Gospel

What part do you have? What is your place in God’s plan?

✚ **Some would prefer that God should have a place in your plan!**

- Sometimes people say to others “God has a wonderful plan for your life” And there are so many books on ‘discovering God’s plan for your life’, Isn’t that exactly what everyone wants to hear! - But it’s not true.

God calls all to come to His Son Jesus Christ. He is calling every one of you listening today to forsake, to give up your own way, and turn to follow Jesus Christ –and his way. Are you doing that? Will you do that? If you are it will be obvious - and you will be useful, for The Lord Jesus is the captain and those who follow him do so gladly

If you haven’t turned to follow Christ, then there must still be some way you are clinging on to as more preferable. Maybe it is your independence, maybe it is a coveted sin, sometimes people get themselves so caught up in a recurring sin that they cannot escape. A lifestyle that pushes the Lord away.

If that is you - unless you call out to Him in your desperation and with a humble heart turn to Jesus Christ – then God’s plan for you is years of separation from God and final judgment and hell.

The CROSS is there.

How many there are who chose for themselves – That is then God’s plan for them!

4a

Application

1. So what about you in this, what part do you have? If you are in Christ then you are in His mission, on His side, serving His purposes and seeking His Kingdom to come here on earth.

Where will you play in the team? What are you doing to help push forward?

2. So are you a prayer?
3. Do you contact people, encouraging by sharing through a letter or a card, an email, text, WhatsApp, etc. etc
4. Are you one who can join in with the book-table and hand out Good News Papers. Or maybe you can leaflet homes.
5. Can you take cards round to those who have been to the Chapel over the year, I have a fair list. Let me know, you just need a car - and a willing heart.
6. Maybe you are able to help with the fabric of the Chapel or Church house to keep things well looked after that we will do things well and be a good witness to those around. I won’t mention names but there is someone who will be painting the Minibus wheels one by one.
7. Maybe you are able to help with the accounts, or some secretarial work.
8. Maybe it’s the Church website so we can have a good shop window to the world outside.
9. Are you able to help with a number of electrical jobs that need doing?
10. Are you good with woodwork and can help out here?
11. Could you make scripture banners to enhance the inside of the worship area?
12. Perhaps you are not sure –come and see me or Tim. Whatever you are doing - if you are doing it for Him - then it is pleasing and acceptable.

- *What kind of worker are you? Don’t be a piano stool person – you know what I mean? when a piano is to be moved, do you get behind and push, or do you pulls and guide, or are you the one who grabs the piano stool!*

Paul wanted Timothy to know about these people. Whatever you are doing then there is great encouragement in knowing we are joined with others all pulling together and praying for the one great cause the cause of Christ.

✚ **Feel you are resigned to the small print, don’t worry - the Lord sees - like rugby God uses all sorts.**

- **Like someone building a Cathedral, we may be doing a small part to us**

How is it that we can be enabled to serve week in week out – year in year out, end do so enthusiastically God’s grace, The Spirit of God at work in a believer. **22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”** 2Ti 4:9-22 **END**

4b