**The Plan - Discussion Questions**

**Sermon Summary:** What is the meaning of life? What is your purpose? Is there a master storyline for history and our lives? This series is showing us how the whole Bible is the one story of God. Each of us has a part to play, but none of us is the main character - Jesus is. He is the hero and we are small, supporting actors highlighting His victory and joining in His plan. Come be reminded of the five acts in God’s great story so you can submit to the plot and play the role assigned to you.

**The Plan**

Ephesians 1:7-12

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit…” Revelation 22:1-2

The Great Story of God begins and ends with **Shalom**

“According to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” Ephesians 1:9-10

* What is the meaning of life?
* Who are you?
* What is your purpose on earth?

“Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, work at their play, and to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot.” Gordon Dahl, in *Have we Lost the Plot* by Fran Sciacca

**The Great Story of God:**

* Act 1 - **Creation** - “it was very good” (Gen. 1:31)
* Act 2 - **Corruption** - “sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin” (Rom. 5:12)
* Act 3 - **Covenant** - “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:3)
* Act 4 - **Christ** - “everything must be fulfilled that is written about me” (Luke 24:44)
* Act 5 - **Culmination** - “the river of life… the tree of life” (Rev. 22:1-2)
  + Scene A - **Apostles** - “the foundation of the apostles” (Eph. 2:20)
  + Scene B - **Church** - “so that through the church” (Eph. 3:10)
  + Scene C - **Eternity** - “we will also reign with him” (2 Tim. 2:12)

“And gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:22-23

“Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” Amos 5:24

**Get Started:**

1. What is your favorite movie or book? Why?
2. Choose one movie or book from the group and discuss the key elements in its story - plot, tension, characters, climax, resolution, etc.
3. How does the narrative create an “imperative”? How does the story and the plot move the characters along?

**Dig In:** Read Ephesians 1:7-12

1. What stands out to you in these verses? What spiritual blessings described here are most meaningful to you now? Why?
2. What does verse 10 mean, “to unite all things in him”? See Col. 1:19-20 for a parallel passage.
3. Read Eph. 1:22-23. How is Jesus actively filling the world? What does this mean for your day to day work and your personal ministry?

**Move Forward:**

“Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, work at their play, and to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot.” Gordon Dahl, in *Have we Lost the Plot* by Fran Sciacca

1. How have you seen this reality in yourself and others you have known? How do you tend to get “off plot”?
2. Why is it so important to know the One Story of God? How has it helped you to find meaning and purpose in life?
3. Since God is working to “unite all things” in Christ - restoring shalom first in people and then in churches and regions - how can we contribute more proactively to this plot line?
4. Share one person or place you think needs some peace and love this week. Pray for opportunities to join Jesus in restoring shalom!