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**God's New Humanity:  
"Mystery No More"  
Ephesians 1: 3-10**

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**Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:**

*"All these civilizing goods — from television to supermarkets — are merely means which smooth our path through the world and make it easier to travel. But what will it profit us, if we make smooth social and technical progress on this level road and no longer know where we are going, in whose name we are living, and what the goal of our destiny is? For then perfectionism in the way in which we master life leads precisely to a life which has not been mastered. Then we shall be wandering aimlessly over a smooth and level plain.*

*May it not be that our neuroses and our predilection for psychiatrists derive from the fact that we have become a heap of misery in this great empty plain? What good are our refrigerators, what good is the well-oiled apparatus of our style of living, if we no longer know what we are living for?*

*Albert Einstein once said that we live in an age of perfect means and confused ends. The question which is inherent in that statement I consider to be the most important question of our times. It has to do with the boredom which is deadly, with the emptiness which frightens us, but also with the fulfillments which make life worth living. It has to do with the crucial task which has been set for us, namely, to distinguish between the "means," which make our life easier, and the "meaning" of our life, which is the only thing that makes life possible. Even the person who has perfectly solved the problem of the means can still perish in suicide because a life without meaning is dreadful. And this dreadfulness actually increases as the outward course of this life grows smoother.*

*I can express what I mean by this as a Christian in the words of our Lord: "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" All the means of mastering the world can turn a man into a fool if he overlooks the crucial question. That this should not happen, I consider the most important question of our time." - Helmut Thielicke*

**Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:**

- How many references to the person and work of Christ can you discern in this passage? What is the effect of such deliberate and consistent interweaving the person and work of Jesus throughout? Do you ever find yourself assuming and trivializing the work of Christ?
- Interact with the long quotation from Helmut Thielicke from above:
  - What is his point?
  - How does his description of society "wandering over a smooth and level plain" our culture?
  - Do you think most people really are asking the meaning of life question? Does it matter whether it is Christian or non-believers? How are folks answering the question if they are even asking it?
  - What is the end and the meaning God is working towards?
- How is Jesus' life, death, and resurrection a blueprint for the new humanity God is creating?
- Where do you feel the disconnect, the dis-unity, of things on heaven and things on earth most acutely? How are you longing for the way it's supposed to be? Where are you thankful heaven is already breaking through?
- If Christ is a showcase for the the mystery of God's plan, as God's people, how is God inviting us to participate in what he working towards?