

REVIVE CHURCH- EPHESIANS SERIES #3

Recap-Last week we covered Paul's intro to the Letter of Ephesians and what it means to be identified in Christ as a saint, God's glorious plans for us through pre-destination and the power of Him choosing us for adoption and living in the freedom of sonship by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:7-14 *7*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace *8*which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, *9*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. *11*In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, *12*that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

*13*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, *14*who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Paul continues into the blessings that are reserved up for those who have been saved and adopted by God. We have been graced with. 1-Redemption. 2-forgiveness, 3-grace, 4-God's wisdom and 5-prudence comes to those who believe. Each one of these truths carry with it a treasure of encouragement for the follower of Jesus. *Often times we need to remind ourselves of what promises He has bestowed upon us that we need to be thankful for and move from a positional truth to an experiential truth.*

Redemption-Christ purchased us from the domain of evil with His own blood. The image is a slave under the rule and reign of Satan, bound by evil and destined for hell being purchased by a beloved Master and Friend. *Jesus purchased us in order that we would be free from the bondage of Satan and sin in order to serve Him by choice and walk in the freedom of sons and daughters.* **The gift of salvation is entirely free yet has infinite worth.**

- Redemption refers to beings saved from sin, death and the wrath of God by Christ's sacrifice.
- We are redeemed which means **delivered by payment of a price** by the precious blood of Jesus!

1Peter 1:18-19 *18*knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, *19*but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Forgiveness-has at its root the cancelling of a debt owed. God could demand from us payment for our sin. *The payment for our sin is death according to Romans 6:23. Instead of demanding the payment due, God frees the sinner from death through the payment of Christ death.* You cannot overemphasize the truth that Jesus paid it all! He purchased you from death and darkness and brought you into the kingdom of light. Now fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has been fully restored. A life of love, obedience and thankfulness should be the response of the one who has been forgiven. He removes the debt against you and gives you His abundant blessings in His wisdom and in His understanding. The emphasis here is what you are redeemed with. You are saved by the precious blood of Jesus.

*9*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

The word **mystery** occurs six times in the book of Ephesians. When Paul uses the word mystery, he does not mean a hidden secret, rather the opposite. **God has fully disclosed His will to us! God does not leave us in the dark concerning His will, there is no secret code to work out. God has made His will known to us, He wants it to be understood so that we can participate in it.**

- Culturally when we hear the word mystery we think of a genre of books and movies that leave you hanging on until all the clues come together to solve a crime. **Culture thinks of mystery as something that has to be figured out.**
- Contextually, Paul's explanation of mystery is the exact opposite of our cultural understanding and this is so important for believers to understand. **Paul is explaining to the church that in the new covenant through Christ blood, the Word of God brings full revelation to those things that were hidden or veiled under the old covenant. God is making mysteries clearly seen. We are not detectives trying to bring all the clues together so we can have understanding to things that are still veiled. God has made known to us the mystery of His will.**

Jesus Himself gave us the primary revelation of all Scripture when He stated-

John 5:39 (NKJV) "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

Luke 24:27 (NKJV) And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

- God takes great delight in revealing the fullness of His love and the beauty of His plans. It is His intention to fully reveal His love and not keep it concealed.

Beware of those who preach and teach a special mystery revealed that only they have discovered

. *Gnosticism began as a second-century religious movement claiming that **salvation could be gained through a special form of secret knowledge.** Early Christian church fathers condemned gnostic teachers and beliefs as **heretical** (Heresy contradicts orthodox Christianity). There are current flows of secret knowledge in today's churches so we must make sure we know the scriptures.*

The term *Gnosticism* is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "to know" or "knowledge." The idea that secret knowledge is received by revelation that is not contained in the written scriptures.

Cults have literally been built through this type of deception and there are those in the body of Christ that hold to some forms of this. As Paul told Timothy Preach the Word (2Timothy 4:2). Any form of knowledge that takes the primary emphasis off the person of Jesus, His kingdom, the gospel and the simplicity of Christ crucified is a waste of time and can derail you. **Beloved we have to keep the main thing, the main thing.**

10that 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.

Dispensations is the Theological word that explains God's different dealings from one period to another. **Throughout history God has dealt with the human race in different ways. There have been three main dispensations including**

1. The Patriarchs, 2. The Law and 3. The Gospel

The dispensation of the **fullness of the times** refers to how God will bring His eternal plan together in His perfect time.

Paul is speaking to God's timing, His purpose or plan to bring together in one all things in Christ in such a way that no other group of people have experienced. So we could say everything that God has done in the past is purposeful and preparatory into what He will accomplish in the fullness of time.

Galatians 4:4 (NKJV) But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Just as in the fullness of time God sent His Son to be born, He will in His timing accomplish the miraculous bringing together as one the bride of Christ.

11In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

We receive an eternal inheritance because a will has been signed in our interest. God signed this will when Jesus died for us on the cross, the counsel of God's will means that anyone or anything that gets aligned with God's will is never going to be defeated because He holds all power and all authority.

- The will of God can be completely trusted. He has the ability to take anything and purpose it for His glory.

Romans 8:28-And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

- This verse is powerful and gives us understanding into the Father's heart who works all things according to the counsel of His will. This verse is also often misunderstood.
1. **This does not mean that everything that happens is God's desire, evil is happening all around us which God hates.**
 2. **For those who have been reconciled to God, who love Him then true good will result from difficulty or suffering. We can have confidence as His children that difficulty and suffering will be followed by blessing and purpose from God because He brings gold out of the furnace of difficulty.**
 3. **Our Father knows us intimately and knows what we need in our lives to run the race to completion. Though everything that is impacting you may not be from the hand of God, we can fully trust that if I am willing to lovingly Yield to His leadership, He will form me to look more like Jesus. God will work His will through the believer and the enemy cannot hinder the plans God has for you.** Our lives are to be to the praise of His glory.

13In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Paul recalls the sequence of events that impacted the Ephesian believers as well as every believer.

1. They heard the Gospel
2. They believed
3. They were sealed
4. They were guaranteed the future inheritance planned by the Father for all of those who are in Christ.

Upon believing, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. A seal is a device, such as a signet ring that has an owners name, a design or both. A medallion or ring used as a seal featured a raised or recessed signature or symbol so it could be impressed on wax, moist clay or ink to leave its mark. A seal usually was used to certify a signature or authenticate a document.

The Holy Spirit has been given as the downpayment for our inheritance until we are fully possessed by God when Jesus returns. *When you believed you were sealed with something that is of infinite value. The payment has already been made, you belong to God, He has put His own Spirit within you.* You are marked by His seal showing every spiritual principality “This one belongs to me”!

The Holy Spirit is our Guarantee! Guarantee is a promise or assurance, something that is given or held as security. The Apostle Paul declared that the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts is the guarantee that we shall receive our full inheritance from God.

Home group questions

1. Discuss the beauty of redemption and forgiveness and take time to thank Jesus for these gifts of grace.
2. Discuss the contextual meaning of mystery and how it is different than our cultural understanding.
3. Why must we be so careful not to entertain extra-Biblical ideas. Discuss the danger of Gnosticism (secret knowledge).
4. Discuss-Though everything that is impacting you may not be from the hand of God, we can fully trust that if I am willing to lovingly Yield to His leadership, He will form me to look more like Jesus.
5. Discuss the sealing if the Holy Spirit and praise God for the gift of Himself. What does it mean to you that if you are saved by the blood of Jesus you are sealed by the Holy Spirit?