

REVIVE CHURCH- BELIEVERS REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

EPHESIANS SERIES #11

***Ephesians 3:1-13** 1For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— 2if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. 8To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. 13Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

In Ephesians 3 Paul reveals God’s strategy to confound the evil one by His kingdom mystery that works in the church. There are some deep theological truths concerning God’s intent for the church. Paul’s explanation creates great expectation within us that the church will assault the realms of darkness!

***Eph. 3:3**how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:*

In the first eight verses of the chapter Paul mentions God’s mystery three times, His intention was to convey this mystery of God to the Ephesians as well as the church at large.

We are part of the Masters plan in this age and the age to come. A plan so wonderful and marvelous that is meant to catch us up into the eternal and sincerely look into this mystery.

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. He wants it to be understood so that we can participate in it. **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.

1Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2**Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Under the new covenant we are stewards or entrusted with mystery that we are meant to pursue in fellowship with God and one another. We might ask how do you steward a mystery?

There are two specific mysteries mentioned in Ephesians 3:1-13

I. Paul starts breaking open the mystery that He received through personal revelation.

***Eph. 3:6** that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.*

It is difficult to translate into English the dramatic words that Paul is using to describe the changes that was introduced by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gentiles are now heirs with Jews, the Gentiles are now of the same body with the Jews, Gentiles are now partakers with Jews of all the great things that God has planned for His people. Gentiles did not become Jews, or replace Jews, God created a new man out of the two races. In God's plan one does not have superiority over the other.

- ***Ephesians 2:15-16-15**having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

II. Eph. 3:8-11 *8To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

Paul recognizes his own smallness relative to the largeness of God's beautiful, masterplan. Paul's name means small. Paul went from being an expert in the law and a

resume that was unmatched, to a man who was fully content being a minister of Christ, a servant to his master. In ancient Greece the word use for minister was also a table waiter or servant.

- In order to grow in our understanding of mystery it's important that we understand that we too, though so significant to God, are small in comparison to God's glory in every way.
- **Paul is not contradicting himself when he says that the riches of Christ are unsearchable.** We have to understand the differences between the revealed mystery of Christ and the unrevealed mystery that will keep us amazed forever.

The concept of the manifold wisdom of God can compared to a diamond ring whose radiance is so marvelous, so beautiful that no matter which way you turn it its radiance shines forth.

1. You cannot get it all in with just a glimpse, you must behold each specific facet of His beauty with the understanding the more you behold, the more facets of beauty you discover.
2. God's wisdom is available in any and every situation, it shines forth in any circumstance and drives back the works of darkness.

In the context of this passage, we are told that the manifold wisdom of God is meant to be received, understood and revealed by the church, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This is an incredible truth that we are invited to grow in understanding . **The phrase principalities and powers occurs 6 times in the Bible describing the vast array of evil and malicious spirits who war against the people of God in the invisible realm where spiritual activity occurs.** The Lord desires that these demons would see the glory of Jesus Christ wisdom within the church. This wisdom of God is made known through His church.

This reminds us that we are called for something far greater than our own individual salvation and sanctification. We are called to be the means by which God teaches the universe.

God's plan from the beginning of time was to assault the powers of darkness through the church. **The believers blessing that we have been discovering through Ephesians 1-3 lead us to a posture of warfare against the invisible realm where evil forces reside.** This plan, this wisdom from God was not known or understood by those before the death and resurrection of Christ. Under the New Covenant the plans of God are made known. The plan of attack is

part of God's eternal purpose fulfilled through Jesus Christ and now made known to His bride.

The greater our understanding of God's eternal plan, the greater confidence we can have as believers in blessing and in difficulty. The key to having true kingdom vision from God is believing His word and having it engrafted into every thought, until it takes root and matures. By faith we can believe that no matter how dark the force or trial that we can recognize by faith, rooted in the word of God that the ultimate triumph belongs to Jesus Christ.

God has given us the ability in this lifetime to willingly pursue His beauty and to reach for it knowing our destiny is sealed by the Holy Spirit, held in the hands of the Father, secured by the very blood of Jesus Christ. As His beloved we get to look into the divine mysteries of God, knowing that we get to participate in them in part now and fully when Christ returns to receive His own. The demonic realm however, will be forced to recognize the beauty and wonder of Jesus Christ with facets of Christ glory being released by the church to beings who will never be able to experience the divine. They are forever separated from the presence of God!

1 Peter 1:10-12 (NKJV) 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace [that would come] to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.

In the big picture, God doesn't use the angels to reveal His wisdom to the saints, but He does use the saints to reveal His wisdom to the angelic beings, both faithful and fallen angels. This reminds us that we are called for something far greater than our own individual salvation and sanctification. We are called to be the means by which God teaches the universe a lesson, and a beautiful lesson.

“What then have they to learn from us? Ah, they have to learn something which makes them watch us with wonder and with awe. They see in us indeed all our weakness, and all our sin. But they see a nature which, wrecked by itself, was yet made in the image of their God and ours. And they see this God at work upon that wreck to produce results not only wonderful in themselves but doubly wonderful because of the conditions.” (Moule)

O be not, ye converts, ignorant of the word of God; be not oblivious of the operations of God in your own souls! The angels desire to look into these things. Do you look into them?"
(Spurgeon)

Home groups

1. How do we steward the mysteries of God?
2. Are you fully content like Paul to be a servant of God? What does this look like?
3. Discuss the difference between the revealed mysteries of God given to us in Scripture and the unrevealed mysteries.
4. Discuss- we are called for something far greater than our own individual salvation and sanctification. We are called to be the means by which God teaches the universe. In the big picture, God doesn't use the angels to reveal His wisdom to the saints, but He does use the saints to reveal His wisdom to the angelic beings, both faithful and fallen angels.
5. Discuss the quote from Spurgeon