

Running the Race Well

Ephesians 3:1-21



February 1, 2026

Context: The Letter to Ephesians

- Written by Paul (AD 60–64) to the church in Ephesus.
- Ephesus: major city of trade & pagan worship (Temple of Artemis).
- Church made up of Jews & Gentiles.
- Themes: Unity & Spiritual Growth.
- Paul reminds believers to live out their new identity in Christ.

Ephesians 3:1-3 (NKJV)

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation (administration) of the grace of God which was given to me for you,³ how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery

Ephesians 3:3-5 (NKJV)

(as I have briefly written already,⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),⁵ which 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:

Ephesians 3:6-7 (NKJV)

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

- **3 how that by revelation He (God) made known to me the mystery**
- **mystery** means “A divine plan that was hidden but is now revealed by God”
- Gentiles are now **fellow heirs** with Israel,
- members of the **same body**,
- **partakers in the same promise in Christ (v6).**

Ephesians 3:8 (NKJV)

8 To 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,

- **unsearchable riches of Christ**
- **the boundless riches of Christ**
- “the wealth of who Christ is and what He has done that can never be fully explored, measured, or exhausted. It includes: His grace; His mercy; His wisdom; His love; His power; Our inheritance in Him.”

Ephesians 3:9 (NKJV)

**⁹ and 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;**

- What is (v.9) the fellowship of the mystery?
- new revelation of God “making one new family in Christ, with a shared inheritance, shared Spirit, shared identity as one body, and shared access to the Father.”

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NKJV)

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,

- **manifold wisdom**
- “many, richly diverse intricate”
- multi-faceted, richly layered brilliance of God’s redemptive plan, now put on display through the united people of Christ

Ephesians 3:12 (NKJV)

**12 in whom we have boldness and
access with confidence through faith in
Him.**

- **boldness** is the “freedom to speak openly, with no intimidation”
- **access** is used for someone “gaining admission to someone important”
- **confidence** is “trust, full assurance”
- “directly into God’s presence with freedom, security, and full assurance, not because of our performance, but through faith in Him”
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Ephesians 3:13 (NKJV)

13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Ephesians 3:14-16 (NKJV)

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory,

Ephesians 3:16-18 (NKJV)

**to be strengthened with might through
His Spirit in the inner man,¹⁷ that
Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith; that you, being rooted
and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to
comprehend with all the
saints what *is* the width and length and
depth and height**

Ephesians 3:19 (NKJV)

19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- **be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man –**
- to “be made strong, empowered, given inward fortitude, divine enablement, in your heart, will, and spirit.”

- **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**
- “take up permanent residence, feel at home at the control center of one’s life (thoughts, desires, decisions) through faith.”

- **being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend... to know the love of Christ,**
- which speaks to a settled, ongoing condition, a deep-rooted nourishment, stability, a firm foundation of God's love.

Paul prays...believers

- would be Spirit-empowered at their core,
- Christ-occupied at their center,
- love-rooted in their foundation,
- experience the limitless love of Jesus.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- **Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think**, meaning this is God's ability to work beyond our imagination.
- **according to the power that works in us**, meaning God's power is already active in the life of a believer.

- to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever, meaning this is God's work (plan and testimony) through the church, not a perfect people, but a redeemed people through out every generation of people.

- God's plan is bigger than we think and it includes you and me.... His plan in me is my race.
- The church is a living display of God's wisdom (redemption plan) in all those running the race.
- Spiritual strength for the race comes from the inside.
- Christ's love is the foundation and the goal of our race.

- Ephesians 3 shows us that ...
- God's eternal, multi-layered rescue plan is now revealed in Christ,
- displayed through the united church,
- rooted in Christ's limitless love, and
- empowered by God's strength working within us.