

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide
June 18, 2017



Preach It – Tom Lipsey

INTRO:

Happy Father's Day Week! Share your favorite memory of a man in your life that has been influential to you – dad, husband, grandpa, father, co-worker, boss, etc...

DIVE IN:

Pastor Tom walked through Ephesians 3:1-13 in this week's message. If you look at the bigger context, this passage is a tangent or an "aside" to the bigger thought that Paul has in his writings. The thought of verse 1 picks back up at verse 14, and the enclosed 12 verses are Paul filling in the back story before he continues his thought and prayer. Read vs 1-13 together and discuss:

1. Paul starts this passage by saying "When I think of all this..." what is He referencing? Check out the highlights from chapter 2 for background and context.
2. Paul refers to himself as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles..." Paul was literally in prison when he wrote this letter. As you read through the following verses, how does that bring credibility to what he writes?
3. The entire Old Testament is God telling the Israelites to set themselves apart. Gentiles are seen as the outsiders. Suddenly with Jesus, God unites all people under a single umbrella of grace. Vs 5 illustrates this idea that was only recently revealed through the spirit. Christians still often want to isolate instead of include – who are "Gentiles" in your world that God's revealed to you to reach?
4. The natural tendency for believers is to seek comfort. God's plan is for us to seek unity in the gospel. How do you see these two at odds with one another in the passage and in your life?
5. In vs 8, Paul seems to be demeaning himself. Is he? What's he trying to say?
6. Do you use your own sense of "unworthiness" to not tell people about Jesus?
7. Paul says his calling is to explain the mysterious plans of God. What are you doing to make God's purpose (salvation for all) understandable and attainable to those around you?

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Vs 2-13 are an explanation of Paul’s call to share the Gospel with the Gentiles. In light of that, he prays a beautiful prayer for the Gentile church in Ephesus in vs 14-21. Read vs 14-21 together and discuss:

8. Paul’s prayer is for the Gentiles – outsiders and non-believers of the Gospel message. How do you pray for your 8to15?
9. Paul prays that they’d experience the love of Jesus even if they don’t fully understand it. Have you ever experienced this? How can you help non-believers experience this?
10. Have you ever looked at vs 20 as a verse in relation to evangelism and the spreading of the gospel? How does that change your perspective on the verse?
11. How have the past two messages of the “Preach It” series helped change your perspective on communicating with and sharing the gospel with non-believers in your world?

NOW WHAT:

1. What part of this week’s message has had the greatest impact on you? What truth(s) has God taught you through the message and our group discussion?
2. What do you need to do with that truth this week to become a fully engaged follower of Jesus?