



Ephesians Week 5 - Ephesians 3:1-13

October 8, 2023 - Pastor Jason Carter

Recap on Chapter 2

- Only by grace have you been saved
- We are his workmanship created for good works for us to walk in
- We have been brought to God by the perfect blood of Jesus and His sacrifice and now we have access to God and can come boldly before Him.
- The church, the people, is God's holy dwelling, His plan. No matter our backgrounds or differences- we are united in Christ
- God sent Jesus to
- The one purpose or mission that will matter a 1000 years from now is God's mission and we are to participate in it.

Preface to the message:

Christianity **cannot be mastered**. It is discovered and revealed. It is **not a series of steps** but rather an ongoing relationship with Jesus which results in transformation.

So don't be surprised when you struggle in your pursuit of God, or discover the endless reality of how sinful we are outside of the grace of God, or discover your limits far exceed anything you bring to the mission at hand. **This is the point.**

God delights in partnering with us that His grace may be seen in us.

At the end of chapter 2, Paul is reminding the churches in Ephesus that the Jews and Gentiles serving God **together** is part of the great mystery that is now being revealed, and Paul has specifically been called by God's grace to be an apostle to the Gentiles. God chose the church to be His representative to show Satan and the demonic realm that His way was right.

Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV ¹⁹ "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and

risers to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

Chapter 3:1,2 "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

Paul is Christ's prisoner and stating that regardless of where he finds himself (a Roman prison or face to face with a local church), his **very purpose** is to see the Gentiles established in Christ. **He is promising that he will give his life for that purpose.** And he is telling the Jews of Ephesus who serve Jesus that they have a role to help Gentiles as well. **Paul is willing to endure for the sake of the Gentiles.**

- I have to ask myself, "Am I willing?" What would it look like for me?

A little backstory on Paul:

- Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 NIV ²³
 - Paul went through unfathomable trials to stay on mission and do what he was called to do. He was weak at times and tempted to sin as well, just like us.
 - Paul challenges us to not lose heart or lose focus in the midst of challenge.
 - As mature believers, sometimes we can get too comfortable and let the "younger" in the faith do the work of the mission, BUT it is on us to invest in and give the extra effort. We should be giving even more.

- How many of us lose sight of God in the midst of trial or difficulty? Or, we lose sight of our call or responsibility to God or others in the midst of hardships?

v3 NIV ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

Paul's backstory in Acts 9:

Paul, then known as Saul, had been intensely persecuting the church but has an encounter with Jesus and a revelation of truth. 3 years later he would connect with Peter and would travel with Barnabas.

v4 NIV "In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets."

We do not fully understand the tension in Ephesus. Paul is reminding the churches that in the midst of their growth pangs, their differences, a literal culture-clash, this was God's idea. Not just tolerate each other, but actually invest in and disciple each other.

God's word and His plans create tension for us. It is like they are experiencing an election year in the US (People losing their minds 😊).

We have culture-clash here at Good News: new Christians, those who don't even believe, 40 something different nationalities. **The one unifying thing we have is Jesus.**

- **Disciple Challenge:** we have an opportunity to share our story and our experience with Jesus and hear others' as well. We get a chance to grow together in unity towards Jesus and on mission.
- **Caution:** Be wary when people say they alone have a revelation or insight into God and be careful who you allow to influence you.

-Do you feel a culture-clash that affects your ability to invest in others? Do you feel like you are "tolerating" people rather than loving them into the Kingdom?

Paul has been given the responsibility to establish the church among the Gentiles. This mystery was also given specifically to Peter by revelation (Acts 11:1-18) and was prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 49:6).

v6 "This mystery is that through the gospel, the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus."

We who are mature in faith must be patient and long-suffering until Christ is formed in others. Behaviors follow beliefs. This is why we must help people discover the goodness of Jesus so they know Who it is they believe in and their behaviors will change in response to the Truth and freedom they discover.

Ephesians 3:7 NIV "I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power."

Ephesians 3:7 NLT ⁷ "By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving Him by spreading this Good News."

Paul considers his responsibility a gift of grace, a privilege.

It is a privilege that we have been "created in Christ Jesus for good works." Ephesians 2:10

- How conscious are we in utilizing what God has given to us, in engaging His mission with what He has intentionally placed in us? How can we be better at this?

- Are you asking God what He needs? Sometimes we don't ask because we are afraid of the responsibility. Is this or has this been you?

We are called to this mission.

- How will we meet the need of our people in our church?
- How will we meet the need of the "Gentiles" in our area?
- We are no different than Paul. We may have a different assignment, different giftings, different expression but we are still called. Do you agree? What do you need to do with this truth?

"There is woven inside each of us a desire for something more - a craving to be part of something bigger, greater, and more profound than our relatively meaningless day-to-day existence." ~ Paul David Tripp

- How do you see this to be true in your own life?

"There is woven inside each of us a *desire* for something *more* - a craving to be part of something *bigger, greater, and more profound* than our relatively meaningless day-to-day existence."

- Paul David Tripp

The difference between living a day to day existence and participating in something bigger is usually just clarity. This desire for something more, for purpose, is in the DNA of humanity but Christ refines it, clarifies it and purifies motives.

- What does Pastor Jason mean by this statement?

The most significant thing we will ever do will always include how we served other people, especially in the context of biblical Christianity.

- Why?

Biblical Christianity calls us for sacrifice.

- How so?

v8 NIV⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,

v8 NLT⁸ Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.

v9 NIV and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Paul's purpose verse in this section of the letter:

v10,11 NIV "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

v10 NLT ¹⁰ "God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

God was intentional and purposeful in uniting Jews and Gentiles, those who hated each other, into a redeemed people, His church, to be His expression of wisdom. He has been **stewarding this plan throughout humanity** until the time came to reveal it to the church as part of His multi-faceted/multi-purposed wisdom.

When satan, principalities, and demons see us, it is a reminder.

Colossians 2:15 NIV ¹⁵ "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

It is the greatest "I told you so" in history. What God promised, He delivered and satan picked the wrong side! **God is showing satan: "who you tricked and enslaved will now be my glorious answer on the earth!"**

- Do we get this? This means such strength and power for us. Such purpose. Sit here for a moment and truly grasp what this means for your every day life and purpose.

The Church>>made in His image>>redeemed by His sacrifice>>transformed by His power>>displayed as a trophy of grace>>and declared His representative to the powers that be!

Pastor said he delights in watching someone become aware of something he clearly sees and then watching them discover it for themselves.

- It could be spiritual: forgiven, loved, chosen, God really does love you... Or it could be their gifting or ability...**and eventually they see it.**
- As we pray that God help them see, we get to watch it unfold.
- Why is this so fun/amazing? Because when someone gets the revelation, they live in a different way. They serve, live and help in a different way. They may parent in a different way...

- How have you seen this in someone's life? Or maybe you were the one with the revelation?

Paul wants us to see the big picture about us, the CHURCH... our full purpose!

v12 NIV "In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."

v12 NKJV ¹²" in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him"

The Ephesians were used to placating the gods (trying to please them and get the attention of their gods), but we have access to God on our best day and worst day! We must remember this.

v13 "I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory."

Again Paul is reminding them that for him, it is worth any suffering to see them unified and on mission for the sake of Jesus.

- Am I living on mission?
- Are there people I am supposed to meet with? Grab coffee? Make time for?
- Have You been asking me to use my gifts, talents, abilities for lives to be transformed but I have been dragging my feet?