

# Ephesians Study: Week 5

## Ephesians 3:1-21 NLT

Paul was literally overwhelmed by the Gospel. He never ceased to be amazed at what God accomplished in and through Jesus. Even when he had something else he wanted to say, his thoughts and his words always came back to what God did through Jesus. Join us this week as he describes the 'mystery' of the Gospel, a mystery that has been revealed through Jesus. For reference, we used the NLT bible translation.

**\*\*\*Read Ephesians 3:1-13\*\*\***

## PAUL & THE GOSPEL

**Read the following verse, and describe the different words or phrases used to refer to the 'Gospel'.**

- ***Ephesians 3:2 - "Extending God's Grace"*** The Greek word translated "extending" refers to the context of a household. Paul just told us that Gentiles who believe in Jesus are members of God's household along with Jews who believe in Jesus. Now he refers to the Gospel as 'the extending of God's grace'. He is telling us at the core of the Gospel, it's all about grace. Together in Jesus, Jew and Gentile, exist as the household in which grace rules. God, in and through the Gospel, does not operate his household on the foundation of performance or merit, but on the basis of grace.
  - a. Read Romans 5:21, how does this relate?
- ***Ephesians 3:3 - "Mysterious Plan"*** Although Paul calls the Gospel a mystery, he does not mean that it is still a mystery. Before Jesus came it was a hidden mystery, but now Paul has insight. Because of this, it is available for all to understand
- What do the following verses say about the Gospel as a 'mystery'?
  - i. Romans 16:25-26
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
  - iii. Ephesians 1:9-10
  - iv. Ephesians 6:19
  - v. Colossians 1:25-27
  - vi. Colossians 2:2-3
  - vii. Colossians 4:3
  - viii. 1 Timothy 3:16
- ***Ephesians 3:6 - "The Promise"*** Here Paul takes the Gospel way back into the Old Testament in which the promise of God was given to Abraham and his descendant:
  - i. Genesis 12:1-3

- ii. Genesis 15:1-6
  - iii. Genesis 22:17-18
- b. This promise, long believed by the Jews to only be about them, now through the Gospel, includes the Gentiles.
- ***Ephesians 3:8 - "Endless Treasures"*** The words Paul uses to describe God are amazing! Now Paul calls his message 'the Endless treasures available'. There are not enough words or even sufficient words to describe how amazing God is. What God did in and through Jesus is so big that unless God himself opened our eyes we would never be able to wrap our mind around it. We can spend a lifetime studying and getting to know God, and we still will not know everything about Him. Jesus promised all who believe and follow him will never ever be hungry or thirsty: his Gospel is absolutely and continually satisfying.
  - a. Read John 6:35, how does this relate?
- ***Ephesians 3:10 - Wisdom in its Rich Variety***
  - a. There are no questions that cannot be answered and addressed by the Gospel. God is all-knowing and omniscient... God knows all.
  - b. What do the following verses say about God's wisdom?
    - i. Isaiah 40:27-28
    - ii. Isaiah 55:6-9
    - iii. Romans 11:33-34
    - iv. 1 Corinthians 1:20-24
    - v. 1 Corinthians 2:6-7
    - vi. Ephesians 1:8
- ***Ephesians 3:11 - Eternal Plan*** - God wasn't surprised by what happened. Before he created the world he knew what we would do. Before he created the world, before time and space existed, He knew what He would do. God created us knowing what Adam and Eve would do, what we would do, and that He would send His son Jesus to redeem us. When He created trees, He knew the wooden cross Jesus would die upon.... crazy!
  - a. What do the following verses say about God's eternal plan?
    - i. Ephesians 1:11
    - ii. 2 Timothy 1:9-10
    - iii. 1 Peter 1:19-20
    - iv. Revelation 13:8
  - b. It's nothing we can accomplish, it's all about what Jesus accomplished.

## THE GOSPEL ACCOMPLISHES WHAT?

- **Read Ephesians 3:6, list 3 results of the Gospel for the Gentiles.**
  - a. Share equally in the riches inherited by God's children.
  - b. Become part of the same body
  - c. Enjoy the promise of blessings

Why is Paul repeating himself? He understood the struggle it would be for ALL OF US to live out the Gospel. As one translation puts it we are 'heirs together', 'members together of one body', 'sharers together in the promise'. To get rid of the distinction between people groups is a difficult task.

- **Read Ephesians 3:10, what does this mean?**

- a. **"Use the church"**- the body which was previously divided and distinct, Jew and Gentile, are now the one people of God. Through this body, which is comprised of those who were once dead in transgressions and sins, and separated from the life and the promises of God; God is using to build His kingdom!
- b. **"Rulers and Authorities in the Heavenly Places"** - "Therefore, the principalities and powers are supernatural hosts in league with Satan and have a cosmic influence on the course of this age, its people, inventions, and institutions. These are the beings to whom the church is to demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God."
- c. For further study on this visit  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-cosmic-church>
- d. What do the following verses say about spiritual principalities and power?
  - i. Romans 8:38
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 15:24-25
  - iii. Colossians 1:16

All doubts about God, all minimizations of his authority, power and control, all questions about his love and integrity are silenced in this: that He has, in and through Jesus Christ, reunited us with himself and with each other.

- **Read Ephesians 3:12, how are we to come into God's presence?**

- a. Boldly and Confidently

What a privilege to approach God boldly, freely and with confidence. Think about how you would feel approaching a ruler or somebody famous...you would most likely be a little nervous or apprehensive. But thanks to Jesus, we can enter directly into God's presence and He welcomes us with open arms! Do not be afraid to pray, talk to God and spend time with Him... He is waiting to hear from you!

- **How do the following scriptures relate to Ephesians 3:12?**

- Romans 5:1-2
- Ephesians 2:18

- Hebrews 4:14-16
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 9:12
- Hebrews 10:19-22
- 1 John 4:17-18

## **PAUL'S ROLE IN GOD'S PURPOSES**

- **Read Ephesians 3:13, what do you think Paul is saying here?**
  - Paul is saying this...it is worth it all.
  - His life was worth giving up and risking for the gospel.
  - Following Jesus is never easy, there is always hardship.
  - Read Matthew 16:24, What does this mean?
    - Answer: We must be willing to endure anything to see people saved, it is worth it!

## **PAUL'S PRAYER**

### **\*\*\* Read Ephesians 3:14-21\*\*\***

- How could you apply this prayer to your life?
- What sticks out to you about this prayer?
- Does this prayer motivate you, why?
- What does verse 20 mean to you?