



IDENTITY theft

Sermon Discussion – 25 February 2024 Ephesians 3:1-13

Outline

- I. Paul was given a revelation into what was a mystery (1-4)
- II. Other generations did not have this knowledge (5)
- III. The exact mystery was that Gentiles are fellow members of the body (6)
- IV. Paul was a steward accomplishing this mission (7-10)
- V. This was God's plan for eternity (11)
- VI. Therefore, we must not lose heart (12-13)

Contemplate the mystery.

Think about all the work that took place by God the Father, Jesus our Lord, and the Holy Spirit to reveal to you and me the mystery that Jesus Christ is Messiah to all.

Not only that, but we also who were far from God have been brought near and we are now in Christ!

How wonderful!

Take some time to contemplate the mystery this week.

Consider your afflictions.

Remember, Paul told the Ephesians not to be discouraged over his afflictions. Why? Because he was afflicted for their benefit. He was afflicted for the sake of the Gospel.

Not only that, even though Paul is in prison, he is also simultaneously seated with Jesus in the heavenlies! He is in Christ!

Being in Christ, experiencing the work of Christ, and proclaiming the mystery of Christ provide a satisfaction that far outweighs any afflictions that this world has to offer us. Paul understood this and I pray that we will understand this as well.

Consider your afflictions this week.

Proclaim the mystery.

Paul made it his aim to proclaim the mystery of Christ. Will you make that your aim as well?

The mystery has been revealed. However, the truth is, to many it's still a mystery. Let us continue to proclaim this mystery.

Challenge yourself this week to be faithful to proclaim the most important message in all the world.

Teaching Point

God's purposes don't change – As seen in this last chapter, this was not a new idea. This should give us confidence in the Lord and increase our faith in Him. He knows what He is doing. His plans are perfect, and He is in control. Though the world sometimes looks like it is in chaos, God is still on His throne, and I am welcome.

Paul was given a revelation into what was a mystery (1-4)

Discussion Questions

- Verse, one starts with the phrase, "For this reason I, Paul..." What is the ending of this sentence?
- What does it mean to be a prisoner of Christ Jesus?
- What does a steward do?
- What does it mean that Paul is a steward of God's grace?
- How did Paul get a special insight into this mystery?

Other generations did not have this knowledge (5)

Questions for Discussion

- During what time was this mystery hidden?
- In what way did God choose to reveal it?

The exact mystery was that Gentiles are fellow members of the body (6)

Discussion Questions

- What exactly is the mystery that Paul is referring to?
- What word is mentioned three times in this verse? What is the significance of this word? How does it depict the relationship between Jews and Gentiles?
- This word describes three nouns: heirs, members, and partakers. Heirs of what? Members of what? Partakers of what?
- What does this description show about the relative spiritual position of the Jews and Gentiles? How can this promise be realized? (Through the gospel.)

Paul was a steward accomplishing this mission (7-10)

Discussion Questions

- Why was Paul a minister of the gospel? What special qualities did he have?
- Why does he call himself the least of all saints?
- What principles can we learn from this?
- What is the church's responsibility as mentioned here? What does this tell us about the believer's responsibilities?
- Who are the authorities in the heavenly places?

This was God's plan for eternity (11)

Discussion Questions

- Was this a new plan? How do you know? What does this tell us about God?
- How should this affect our attitude towards God?

Therefore, we must not lose heart (12-13)

Don't lose heart. If you or another believer are facing many trials, don't lose heart. Know that they are from God, just like Paul's were. Encourage other believers and also have faith in God yourself. He is a good God and cares for us.

It is well worth it to face trouble and tribulation for the sake of others and for the sake of the gospel. Don't try to avoid it. Serve God faithfully, and if trouble comes as a result, thank the Lord that He considered you worthy to suffer for Him.

Application:

Are you a watcher or a participator? Are you part of the audience or one of the workers? Every believer is to be a worker. In most churches, 90% of the work is done by 10% of the people. There is a lot of kingdom work to do both inside and outside the church. Each believer is given a gift and resources to use for building God's kingdom. What work is God calling you to do for Him?