

EPHESIANS



Rooted and Grounded
in love

Lesson Five EPHESIANS 3:1-13

Day 1



Father, help me to see the treasures you have for me in your word. Help me to delight in them and find complete satisfaction in you.

- Read Ephesians 3:1-13 several times. Read through the passage *prayerfully*—responding to what you are reading with praise, thanksgiving, confession or surrender. (God speaks to us through his word and we respond back to him through prayer.)
- Pick one word or phrase that stands out to you to ponder on throughout the day and week. (It may be something that resonates with you or that you want to understand better.) Write it here.
- Write one sentence summarizing the passage.

Day 2- Eph. 3:1, 13

Write out verses 1 and 13

1. How does Paul describe himself in verse 1?

Digging Deeper:

According to the verses from Acts, what were the circumstances of Paul's arrest?

Acts 21:27-33 When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks (Gentiles) into the temple and has defiled this holy place." For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.

For Discussion:

Why do you think it is significant that Paul calls himself a prisoner of *Jesus Christ* and not of *the Roman emperor*?

Digging Deeper:

Why does Paul say in verse 1 that he is a prisoner on behalf of the Gentiles?

Acts 9:15-16 ...[Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.

Acts 22:21 And he [Jesus, in a vision] said to me [Paul], 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Galatians 1:15-16a But when he, who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...

2. Amid Paul's suffering in prison, what is he concerned about? (v.13)

-Paul says that his suffering for the Gentiles is their glory, in what way is this true?



God chose Paul to give the good news to the Gentiles. That calling involved suffering. Here's how Paul looked at it: *I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body the church.* (Colossians 1:24 NLT) To Paul, the gospel was worth the suffering.

- ❖ How does Paul's willingness to suffer in order to tell others about the good news of Jesus challenge you?

- ❖ How does your own comfort ever come between you and God?

- ❖ Is God leading you to suffer for anyone's sake, inside or outside the church, in sacrificial service, or in sharing the gospel?

- ❖ If you are suffering now ask God to show you how he could use it for his glory.



Father help me to remember that I too am called to proclaim the good news.
Forgive me for letting the smallest things deter me from that so often.
Help me to be passionate for others to know how wonderful you are!

Day 3- Eph. 3:2-6

Write out verses 2-6

3. In verse 2 Paul says he was given stewardship of God's grace. Define the word *stewardship*.

- How can you be a good steward of God's grace?

4. What are the three parts of the mystery that was made known to Paul according to verse 6?

- What makes this mystery possible according to the end of verse 6?

5. What made God's plan a mystery according to verse 5?

Scholar's Note: "Christian 'mysteries' are truths which, although beyond human discovery, have been revealed by God and so now belong openly to the whole church. More simply, *mystērion* is a truth hitherto hidden from human knowledge or understanding but now disclosed by the revelation of God."¹

Digging Deeper:

There were hints of this mystery throughout the Old Testament beginning with Genesis 12:3 when God spoke to Abram saying:

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Psalm 67 is called the Great Commission of the Old Testament:

Psalm 67:1-5 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

- Highlight the hints in these verses from Genesis and the Psalms that point to the inclusion of the Gentiles.



I praise you and thank you Father that you have made your saving power known to me for my joy and gladness and your praise!

Day 4- Eph. 3:7-8

Write out verses 7-8

6. What qualifications does Paul give for the reason he was chosen to preach to the Gentiles according to verse 7?

Digging Deeper:

In verse 7, Paul says that he is able to be the minister of this good news because of God's grace and power in his life. How was the working of God's power so evident in Paul's life according to the following verses in Acts?

Acts 9:1-6 But Saul (Paul), still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" and he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

7. Even though Paul has been chosen by God for this special calling, how does he see himself in verse 8?

- Why do you think Paul sees himself this way?



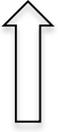
Paul lived deeply in the reality of his great sinfulness and the knowledge of God's amazing grace to him; mindfulness of these combined truths worked humility and confidence into his being. The more seriously we take our sin, the more dearly we will hold God's grace and the more readily humility will flow into our hearts.

- ❖ One of the ways we humble ourselves is by asking God to show us our sin and then when he does, turning and repenting of it, thanking God for his forgiveness and grace. Make asking God to show you your sin, a regular part of your prayer life.
Pray with King David: *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! Ps.139:23-24*
- ❖ How can you minimize yourself and magnify Jesus in your daily life?

8. What was Paul called to preach to the Gentiles according to verse 8?

- What riches of Jesus have you seen so far in Ephesians?

- What does it mean that the riches of Jesus are unsearchable?



O God I am so undeserving of the unending riches of Jesus my Savior. Thank you for your lavish grace! Help me to grasp the vastness of these riches I have in Jesus and forgive me for living at times as if I am poor!



Oh, the depth of the riches...of God! Paul exclaims in his letter to the Romans (11:34). The riches we have in Jesus are so deep we are unable to fathom them—they are immeasurable, boundless. Our finite, earthbound, 3 dimensional minds cannot fully comprehend the riches that are ours! The life of following Jesus is far from boring or disadvantaged, it is a life of seeking unimaginable riches in Jesus.

- ❖ What are some practical ways we can tune our hearts to value more deeply the riches of Jesus?

Picture and Ponder:

"[Paul] was convinced, as we must be, that Christ never impoverishes those who put their trust in him, but always immeasurably enriches them. Here then was the double obligation Paul felt, first to share God's truth and secondly to share Christ's riches. So what is needed today for a recovery of evangelistic zeal in the church is the same apostolic conviction about the gospel. Once we are sure that the gospel is both truth from God and riches for mankind, nobody will be able to silence us."²

Day 5- Eph. 3:9-12

Write out verses 9-12

9. In verses 8 and 9, Paul lays out the two-fold mission he was called to. The first thing in verse 8 was to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus to the Gentiles. And the second part in verse 9, was to explain to everyone (this new humanity of Jews and Gentiles), the plan of the mystery. What was it God was creating (the plan of the mystery) out of the new humanity of Jews and Gentiles according to verse 10?

- What stunning role has God created the church for?

Scholar's Note: "Manifold" (polypoikilos) is a poetical adjective meaning "very varied"³, or "many-colored", and was used to describe flowers, crowns, embroidered cloth and woven carpets."⁴

For Discussion:

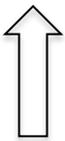
How do you think the church reflects the varied colors and beauty of God's wisdom?

Picture and Ponder:

"...the full gospel concerns both Christ and the 'mystery' of Christ. The good news of the unsearchable riches of Christ which Paul preached is that he died and rose again not only to save sinners like me (though he did), but also to create a single new humanity; not only to redeem us from sin but also to adopt us into God's family; not only to reconcile us to God but also to reconcile us to one another. Thus the church is an integral part of the gospel. The gospel is good news of a new society as well as of a new life."⁵

For Discussion:

How would you answer someone who says they love Jesus, but have no use for the church?



Father let me not take the gift of your church for granted. Help me to grasp the weightiness of the privilege, blessing and the responsibility that you have given in creating the church.

10. Where does the creation of the church and its purpose fall in God's planning according to verse 11?

¹ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 116). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

² Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 121). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

³ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

⁴ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 123). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (pp. 128-129). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Thoughts from John Stott

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