

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

SESSION 5

Letter to the Ephesians: Ephesians 3 - LEADERS GUIDE

ICE BREAKER

Start off with an ice breaker to get everyone warmed up.

WELCOME

Welcome back guys!! Today, we're going to pick up our study and complete **Ephesians 3**. This chapter can actually be broken into 2 parts. The **first 13 verses** are more of an introduction to Paul and he explains his unique role in God's purpose for the Gentiles [*after all he is known as the "apostle to the Gentiles."*]. The second half deals with the remaining verses **[14-21]** and focuses on Paul's prayer [*the prayer actually starts in **Ephesians 3:1** – has a short break as he describes his ministry in **verses 2-13** – and starts again in **verse 14**]. In **verses 14-21**, we see how his prayer explores the "mystery" of how Jesus Christ makes the Gentiles fellow heirs and members of the body of Jesus Christ [*the church*] through the Gospel.*

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 3:1-6**

EPHESIANS 3:1-6

Ok, at the beginning, we see this phrase – **"For this reason..."**

Now, when we see this [*along with "therefore"*] we should realize this is a context clue that immediately points us back to the end of **chapter 2**. And in our review above, we saw that **chapter 2** was all about salvation by **grace** through **faith**. And, not just any salvation, but the salvation of the Gentiles.

So, **"for this reason,"** for the great salvation of the Gentiles by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, Paul submits his prayer of gratitude! His entire ministry revolves around spreading the good news of the gospel and proclaiming the **mystery** of God.

QUESTIONS

How does Paul talk about his imprisonment in **verse 1** – and what does that tell you about his understanding of God's sovereignty over his life and the ministry God has placed him with the Ephesians?

In **verse 2**, Paul uses the word "stewardship." In what way has Paul been a faithful steward of the gospel to the Ephesian believers?

How many times does Paul mention the word "mystery" in the first **6 verses**? **[3]**

- Why this word?

How would you explain the “mystery” that Paul describes? *[The mystery the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Jesus has always been God’s plan for the salvation of the world. Jesus alone redeems all people, and He alone, dwelling in his people, is our hope.]*

What are the implications for you personally?

What does the revelation of this “mystery” imply for our evangelism?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 3:7-13**

EPHESIANS 3:7-13

As a minister, Paul’s calling/ ministry is more than just self-sacrifice and service towards others – he **LIVES** to proclaim the glorious mystery of the gospel AND the grace of God that is ours through Jesus Christ. AND, he KNOWS this because he experienced the gospel...God’s grace...when he was the “very least of all the saints.” So, he speaks from **experience**.

In **verses 10-13**, he explains the grace that God has shown to the **church** – the very vehicle through which He has planned to make His gospel known through...even to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” This, he says is the “eternal purpose” realized through Jesus Christ. Paul instructs the church at Ephesus to remember the access they have – through their faith in Jesus.

QUESTIONS

In Ephesians 3:7-8, how does Paul show humility regarding his own salvation and calling from God?

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul uses very similar language to what he uses in 1 Timothy 1:15 [have someone look up]. What do you think Paul is trying to emphasize here about his status before God and apart from Jesus Christ?

- What can we learn from his understanding of the depth of his sin AND his need?

What are the unsearchable riches of Christ?

- Why do you think it is right to say the riches of Christ are unsearchable?

In verse 9, what does Paul teach us about the eternal plan of God, which has now been fully revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What do you learn from Ephesians 3:10-13 about God’s purpose for the church?

- Is there anything that is surprising to you about the calling the church has been given?
- In what way could these verses encourage you to better appreciate the work of First Baptist?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 3:14-21**

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Paul's prayer is all about making his vision for God's church a reality, where everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, comes together. He asks for **strength** for the church members to truly understand and embrace the amazing love of Christ, a love that's beyond our full **understanding**. But then he switches gears, talking about the incredible **power** of God that goes beyond anything we can imagine. He's convinced, and we should be too, that only this divine power can create the kind of divine love that's needed in our **churches**.

QUESTIONS

What prompts Paul to pray with such humility and gratitude?

What does Paul pray for? *[to be strengthened with power through his Spirit; may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge; and, you may be filled with all the fullness of God]*

Why do you think it is important to meditate on the love of God?

Why do we need the power of God?

Why do verses 20-21 encourage us to pray with great expectations?

According to verse 21, why should we pray for God to do amazing things?

CONCLUSION

The calling that Paul received to proclaim the “mystery” of the gospel of Jesus Christ should be a reminder for us of how the good news of Jesus has come to us as well! And what good news it is that we – through Jesus Christ – get to experience the eternal blessings of God. Today, we should spend time praising God for His grace that He provides to us through His Son and ask Him to make us even more captivated by His love and His mercy. Finally, we should spend time asking God to remind us of our own calling – to make Him known to a world in need!

What about Paul's prayer in [Ephesians 3](#) is an encouragement to you to pray?

What do we learn about God from [Ephesians 3](#)?

- Was there any “aha moment” for you?

Outline for how we will study Ephesians:

- **April 14th: Ephesians 4** – Live in supernatural unity to the glory of God.
- **April 21st: Ephesians 5–6:9** – In regeneration, walk in love toward one another.
- **April 28th: Ephesians 6:10-24** – Strength through the whole armor of God.
- **May 5th: Hangout Night or Content Make-Up**