

Ephesians 3:1 to 4:16: The Mystery of the Gospel

Key Thought: Paul will start shifting gears. He reveals here the purpose of his letter, a concern that the gentile believers in Ephesus, concerned over Paul's imprisonment, might think that his message was somehow incorrect after all. He wants them to understand the great and central truth of the Gospel; Jesus Christ has fixed all the damage from the Fall. The fall brought division between God and man, between people, and between man and nature. All of this is restored in Christ. Therefore, the mark of the Gospel is unity, which is found in the Church, until now something no-one could understand (the mystery).

From here, Paul will shift gears and start his practical teaching on what this unity should look like. He uses the term body, an example used elsewhere in his letters. He doesn't explain in the same detail as elsewhere (1 Cor. 12), but we are each given a gift to mutually benefit each other. Christ is the giver of the gift, the head of the Body, and our ultimate goal-to be like Him.

Ephesians 3: 1-13 Paul Assures the Ephesians Regarding His Imprisonment and His Message

- Paul is in prison because Jesus wants him there. As a result, he isn't concerned and neither should they.
- As he considers why, his calling to be the preacher to the Gentiles, he continues to be amazed at the great gift God has given him. He was totally unworthy of grace, but has been given the greatest opportunity of all; taking the Gospel to the Gentiles.
- The great message of the Gospel. In Christ all divisions are healed. The Gentiles are on equal footing with the Jews. Peace is restored between God and Man, and between men.
- And mankind, who can't see God, is a lesson to the spiritual world, which can. If there are no divisions among us, if we give glory to God, how can they justify divisions in the spiritual realm, a failure to give God His due glory.

Ephesians 3: 14-3:21 Paul Busts Forth in Prayer Again as he Considers the Love of Christ Behind the Gospel

- Paul prays that they would be strengthened with power from the one, true Father.
- This power is found in the Holy Spirit.
- Who makes it possible for Christ to dwell within us.
- When Christ dwells within us, we are made conscious of His great love for us.
- This love is more than physical space and time can contain, or be fully understood.
- Having this love within us brings us to full maturity-being more like Christ.
- To bring glory to God.

Ephesians 4: 1-16 Paul's Practical Instruction. How We Live in Unity.

- Since we are all in the same position relative to Christ (In Christ) our lives should show it. How? We treat each other with gentleness, humility, and patience.
- Unity ends all divisions, which should be evidenced by peace.
- Our unity is based on the fact that we all share one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.
- Unity is not sameness. We are all uniquely gifted by Christ for the benefit of all.
- We mutually use our gifts to build each other up, and allow the Body to grow and develop through works of service.
- The Body is fully grown when each and every member is completely filled with Jesus.
- When mature we will not be easily confused by false doctrine and teaching, but follow only Jesus, the Head of the Body.

Applications:

- The peace, joy, patience of a Christian is not rooted in our present circumstances but acknowledging that God has placed us where He wants us. This was the secret of Paul's attitude. What can you do this week to cultivate a similar approach to life?
- How great to you is the fact that you are saved, regardless of your past? How can you express it this week?
- How can your life this week demonstrate that you believe Jesus has reconciled all things? Hint: gentleness, humility, and patience are suggested.
- When do you feel most weak, most distant from God? Will you follow Paul's advice and ask the Spirit to help you make your innermost being more open to Jesus, and then let Him love you?