

EPHESIANS



Where do we place our Confidence?

Why do you think some believers and churches lack the confidence God wants them to have? Where do churches place their confidence?

How about us as individuals? How confident are we in sharing the gospel? In discipling someone we don't know well?

How excited are we about the future in Christ?

Ephesians 3:1 - 5 - The Church: A Mystery Revealed

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

How important is identity?

- **For this reason – Paul begins his second prayer in Ephesians.**
 - **He immediately interrupts the prayer to explain the mystery of the Church.**
- **Paul's reintroduction:**
 - **“I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ.**
 - **External: Roman imprisonment. Acts 21:30-33; 22:1 - 23**
 - **Internal: A captive, or slave, to Christ's purpose. Acts 9:15-16**
 - **Acts 23:18; Ephesians 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:8; Philemon 1, 9, 23**
 - **How do you identify yourself in Christ?**

Stewardship of Grace

- **Stewardship = Management of God's grace.**
- **Minister = servant (diakonos)**
- **Paul's role: Deliver the message of God's grace and organize the integrated church.**
- **What does it mean to be a steward and minister of God's grace today?
What does that look like in your daily life?**

The Mystery Revealed

- **What is this mystery?**
 - **Greek - mystērion - an open secret. A truth into which someone had been initiated.**
 - **A sacred secret now disclosed. The mystery was not revealed in the OT or the gospels.**
 - **Paul and the other apostles were given the mystery by direct revelation of God. (Verses 3,5). Why was this important?**

The Mystery Revealed

- **What was revealed about the Gentiles in the Old Testament and the Gospels?**
 - **All the nations of the earth will be blessed through Abraham. Genesis 22:18**
 - **The messiah would receive the nations as his inheritance. Psalm 2:8**
 - **Israel is given as a light to the nations. Isaiah 49:6; 42:6; 60:1-3**
 - **The nations will make a pilgrimage to Israel flowing too her like a river. Isaiah 2:2**
 - **Jesus commanded that we go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. Matthew 28:20**

The Mystery Revealed: Why was it hidden?

- **Why was the mystery of the church hidden?**
 - **To keep the knowledge from Satan and his minions.**
 - **To educate the powers and principalities in the spiritual realm.**
 - **1 Peter 1:10-12, Luke 15:10, 1 Corinthians 11:10**

Ephesians 3:6 – 11 – The Mystery Declared

Ephesians 3:6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Unity in Christ

- **What is this mystery?**
 - **Gentiles have equal access to God through Christ. They are fellow heirs.**
 - **Colossian 4:3**
- **Unity in Christ = Double Union**

Paul's Background

- **What do we know about Paul's background? What was the context of his ministry? How did that affect his ministry to the Gentiles?**
 - **Pharisee, persecutor, chief of sinners**
 - **Called to preach to the Gentiles.**
 - **God's grace overcame the cultural barriers.**
 - **How does your past shape your ministry?**

Paul's Message

- **What was the content of Paul's message?**
 - **Unsearchable (infinite) riches. Greek word: anexichniastos**
 - **What do these include?**
 - **Resurrection from the death of sin.**
 - **Victorious enthronement with Christ in the heavenlies.**
 - **Reconciliation with God.**
 - **The incorporation of Gentiles and Jewish believers in this new society called the church.**
 - **The end of racial hostility.**
 - **Access to the Father through Christ. and by the Spirit.**
 - **Membership of his kingdom and household.**
 - **Being an integral part of his dwelling place among men. We are His holy temple.**
 - **Promise of a glorious inheritance.**

Paul's Message

- **What was the content of Paul's message?**
 - **Paul's message was to bring to light (to make all men see) what is the administration (plan) of the mystery (the church) which for ages has been hidden in God.**

Paul's Message

- **What was the content of Paul's message?**
 - **Make known the manifold wisdom of God.**
 - **Manifold = Multicolored**
 - **Audience: Rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.**
 - **Church = God's tapestry which displays His wisdom.**

Paul's Message

- **What was the content of Paul's message?**
 - **The church is not plan B.**
 - **It was God's plan from eternity.**
 - **It was accomplished in Christ.**
- **How does this eternal perspective affect your view of the church?**

Ephesians 3:12 - 13 - The Responsibility of Grace

- *12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. 13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory. (NASB)*

Confident Access

- **Through Christ we have confident access to God.**
- **Through Christ we can have encouragement in suffering. Ours and others!**
- **How can understanding our place in God's eternal plan give us boldness and confidence in the face of trials?**

Stewardship Today

- **We all have a stewardship.**
- **We are created for good works in Christ at the moment of belief.**
- **Don't let your past hinder your calling.**
- **Trust God's power to use you.**