

Ephesians 3.1-13

A Secret too Good to Keep!

BLUE Sky October Holiday BJ –Breathing INDO SMOKE in Singapore

70 People /18 Countries – Conference on INTERNATIONAL Students

Get heads around Phenomena – ACADEMIC DIASPORA

INTELLECTUAL MIGRATION – almost 4 Million Global Int’l Students

GREAT Percentage STUDENTS – Either FROM ASIA or IN ASIA

My Table – Korea, England, India, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia

Young Malaysian Student Worker: Problem in their Int’l Student Group

Foreign Men asking BEAUTIFUL Malaysian Young Ladies PHONE #'s

Hearts CONFLICTED – Wanted Men SAVED but NOT be STALKED

TODAY WE All have SOME SECRETS – Don’t want Others KNOW

MEMA / PASSWORDS are PRIVATE / Even SPOUSE doesn’t Know

FEAR of MODERN PERSON > IDENTITY Theft – Secrets Exposed

PAUL writing to ANCIENT World: Secret Societies, Mystery Religions

GOD of ISRAEL – True & Living God > has MYSTERY, a SECRET

Step into Ephes 3 PAUL in 50’s SENIOR Moment – Loses THOUGHT

Paul was MORE than just WRITER...was Primarily a WORSHIPPER

LOST in Wonder – Starts off PRAYING for Believers to Understand

(SAME Pattern Chap 1 > Instruction / Intercession, Preaching / Prayer)

Cheerleader to Church: “God is AWESOME!!” > Wow! He Really is!!

Paul uses MYSTERY 3 X’s Ch 3 - 6 X’s in Ephes - 21 X’s in 13 Letters

Common Word for GREEKS >> Secret Religions, Initiations, Rituals

TODAY Meaning: THINGS we DO NOT & CANNOT Know, Puzzling
 UNDERSTANDING Mysteries of Life = Discover MEANING of Life
 Poets, Philosophers, Professors, Prophets, Pastors, Pundits > Show Way

TODAY Life has MANY Meanings, WE Determine OWN MEANING

“At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of life.”

United States Supreme Court, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 1992

1. Mystery of Christ

PAUL “Mystery” = OPEN SECRET: Once HIDDEN, NOW Revealed

Mystery is NOW KNOWN ONLY Because GOD Makes in Known

Don’t NEED a PASSWORD to Find it > Need PROPHET to FOLLOW!

Jesus Christ – God’s FULL and FINAL Prophet – OPENS God’s Secret

HE is the WAY, TRUTH, and LIFE – WORD of God INCARNATE

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints...this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory... the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...to declare the mystery of Christ

Colossians 1.24-7, 2.2,3, 4.3

a. Revealed v. 3 the mystery made known to me by revelation

SECRET OPENED by God > Without Revelation NOT KNOW GOD

REVELATION = OPENING, UNVEILING – God is the REVEALER

NOT Something Paul INVENTED or BORROWED from Internet

Paul was NOT PLAGARIZING from PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS

Paul: “I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ”

Galatians 1.11-12

v. 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

NOT that God IGNORED Gentiles – Often mentioned Hebrew Scripture

No ANCIENT Imagined BARBARIANS becoming SO Blessed

Many OT PROPHECIES & PROMISES Point to GREAT Day of the LORD

NO ONE in OLD Covenant Understood NATURE & METHOD of Fulfillment

PAUL See's things even ANGELS and PROPHETS Never IMAGINED!

PROMISES Given to JEWS - Historically MIS-APPLIED

HEBREW Flavor of Pictures & Prophecies – Jews CLAIMED Superiority

IF there is Any Place for GENTILES > They must become JEWS First

MESSAGE Paul NOW Receives very OPPOSITE of Former LIFE'S Purpose

The JESUS he Lived to DESTROY > DELIVERED him into Real LIFE

Meaning of Paul's Life to KILL Xtians > NOW he will be KILLED for Xtians

Jesus: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." Matthew 13.16,17

b. Reading – GREAT News RECORDED in God's BOOK

v. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ

God SPOKE TO Paul, Today God Speaks THROUGH Paul to US

APOSTLE Sent by Jesus to SPEAK for Him - Words form Foundation of Church

v. 5 revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit

Apostles & Prophets – God's INSTRUMENTS – HOLY: Set Apart by Him

Write Words of Scripture - Spirit-breathed INERRANT, INFALLIBLE Word

“the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone”
Ephesians 2.20

1st Christian Converts in UGANDA in 1877 called BASOMI “the Readers”

Knew BLESSING of God > found in BOOK of God

WORD – 2 Edged Sword – ENDURE beyond HEAVEN and EARTH

MUSLIM book called QURAN – Records Visions of God to Muhammed

ONLY Authoritative VERSION of Book in ARABIC

MOST World’s BILLION MUSLIMS cannot READ Arabic

RESULT – MAJORITY of Muslims do NOT even Try to Read Quran

NOT SUPPOSED be CASE for Christians – Are YOU Reading Bible?

Almost 3000 Languages have at Least SOME Part of Bible Translated

GREATEST Fear of Pastor – Does Flock Read Word?? – I PRAY So!

I KNOW you’re Reading Textbooks, Websites, WeChats – Right NOW!

You have NO REASON not Read Bible – Any Language Word of God

A simple layman armed with Scripture is greater than the mightiest pope without it.

Martin Luther

I am as BUSY and LAZY as Anyone Here – But I need to Read Bible

TRIED and FAILED in Many Bible Reading Plans – Keep Trying!

“Before you put you head on the pillow, make sure you have put your nose in the Book!”

Stuart Briscoe

TUESDAY TRAINING – Next 3 Tuesday Nights in October

Doctrine of Scripture – FOCUS on Importance of Bible in our LIVES

We are not apostles as Paul was. We have not received fresh revelation. But the revelation is ours no less than it was his, and our responsibility to proclaim it is the same.

James Boice

c. Relationship what was revealed to Paul was picture of Beautiful Bride

Seems LEAST LIKELY Man to show LOVE of God to Lost GENTILES

SHOCKING Encounter with RISEN JESUS on Damascus Road

CALLS Paul into RELATIONSHIP - Both as SERVANT and SON

“God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me”
Galatians 1.15,16

God who LIKES you much MORE than Any of your FACEBOOK Friends

GOD declares His MERCY, KINDNESS, GRACE, and LOVE for US

v. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

OUR ONE FATHER has Made us into ONE FAMILY in CHRIST

Broken DOWN Dividing Walls of HOSTILITY and Become OUR PEACE

Fulfills PROMISE of God to Abraham “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you”
Genesis 12.3

Now ALL NATIONS COME to God >> JESUS is the SAVIOR of the World

Peter: "...the Gentiles...heard from my lips the message of the gospel and believed. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith... We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."
Acts 15.7-11

2. Membership in the Church

God REVEALS His Word in Scripture > Builds Church to DISPLAY Word

Not only do we NEED CHRIST, Also need COMMUNITY of Xtians

World Hears WORD from Bible > Should SEE the Word in the CHURCH

In our JOURNEY with Christ we NEED Xtian Friends, Sm Gp, Life Partners

VIEW of LIFE will be SHAPED by SOCIETY we MOST Associate WITH

a. Before Creation

v. 9 to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages

PAUL already TOLD Us in Ephesians WHAT that Plan IS

GOAL of Redemption : CHURCH, People who GLORIFY His Name

CHURCH was PLANNED Before CREATION was Made

Chosen before the creation of world Ephesians 1.4

To make CREATION God SPOKE DECREES “Let there BE..”

To save CHURCH God had to SUFFER and DIE “It is FINISHED...!”

“the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” Revelation 13.8

b. In History What GOD PLANNED before TIME – PERFORMED IN Time

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Ephesians 1.9-10

Christ and His Church is the CENTER of History and the GOAL of History

vs. 9,10 the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Word MANIFOLD v. 10 > Multi- SPLENDORED, COLORED

All WONDERS and WISDOM of the PLAN of God for Church

CHURCH – as Radiant Bride of Jesus – GLORIOUS DISPLAY

VISIBLE PROOF of PLAN and POWER of God in the WORLD

HEAVENLY REALMS – Seen on Earth in Pews, Pulpits, People, Programs

Gospel sent from HEAVEN to Church, Church Glorifies God of Heaven

History of Church becomes GRADUATE School for the Angels

Not Watching UN, White House, Kremlin, Watching GOD'S CHURCH
 UNITY of ALL TRUE Christians is NOT just FUTURE Reality for Heaven
 We need to DISPLAY and DEMONSTRATE that to the WORLD NOW
 BEST Display I have ever Seen in THIS Room – Much Room for Growth
 How could God by OUR Father if we in Christ can't be Brothers & Sisters?

Need both MESSAGE from God AND COMMUNITY Centered on God
 LIFE Choices, Values, Ideas, Directions SHAPED by Community

Ancient / Traditional Cultures > Individual submits / serves Family, Tribe
 Self-Worth > Family Honor, Community Status, Tribal Prominence

Like SPORTS Team > WIN or LOSE Together!

Christianity > INDIVIDUAL Importance – YOU Must be Born Again
 God loves YOU, Sometimes Gospel Collides w/ Family Honor / Status
 GOSPEL has brought LIBERTY to Captives all over the WORLD
 Christ brings HOPE and FREEDOM – People in All our Nations

TODAY we enjoy God's GIFTS but we IGNORE God the GIVER
 POST Christian Society – I am IMPORTANT, because I SAY SO!
 Don't NEED my FAMILY, TRIBE, or CHURCH for VALIDATION
 I don't CARE what ANYONE Else Thinks! I DETERMINE my Reality!
 Television Show "The Office" – American Version – BOSS Michael
 DESK > Coffee Mug proudly displayed "World's GREATEST Boss"
 He had NO PROBLEM with the FACT that he GAVE MUG to Himself

Too many Christians have had their VIEW of God's Truth FROZEN

It's time to see what I can do, to test the limits and break through. No right, no wrong, no rules for me. I'm free! Let it go, let it go.

“Let it Go” by Idina Menzel

Imagine an Anglo-Saxon warrior in Britain in AD 800. He has two very strong inner impulses and feelings. One is aggression. He loves to smash and kill people when they show him disrespect. Living in a shame-and-honor culture with its warrior ethic, he will identify with that feeling. He will say to himself, *That's me! That's who I am! I will express that.* The other feeling he senses is same-sex attraction. *To that he will say, That's not me! I will control and suppress that impulse.* Now imagine a young man walking around Manhattan today. He has the same two inward impulses, both equally strong, both difficult to control. What will he say? He will look at his aggression and think, *That is not who I want to be,* and will seek deliverance in therapy and anger-management programs. He will look at his sexual desire, however, and conclude, *That is who I am.*

Tim Keller

We NEED Truth of Scripture AND Testimony of Faithful SAINTS to Stand

Jesus: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” John 8.36

Salvation of INDIVIDUALS > But not in ISOLATION from Others

ONE Family in Christ > Fulfillment of Promise > Revelation of MYSTERY

Multi-Cultural, Ethnic, Linguistic, Denominational,

MORE DIVERSE YET UNITED > More we Show the Victory of X

FINAL Day Not only will WORLD See MIGHTY BRIDEGROOM

They will see with HIM a SPOTLESS BRIDE

3. Ministry of the Christian

Paul calls us to FOLLOW him as he FOLLOWS Christ... learn from him...

a. to see v. 4 ...you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ

UNDERSTAND > Glory in WHAT God has done in Christ for NATIONS

What a GREAT oPPORTUNITY we have Right Here in ZGC

WORSHIP with the WHOLE World Here

How much are you Venturing Out of your Comfort Zone?

Are all your Friends here the Same Color, Culture, Country – BORING!!

Angels NOT here to Watch us Perpetuate our Old PREJUDICES!

b. to serve

vs. 7-8 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ

Perhaps you NORMALLY thing of GRACE that SAVES – That is RIGHT

But Paul ADDS that we also SERVE by GRACE, God working IN & THRU Us

GRACE did not DRAW Us to be SPECTATORS in the House of the LORD

GRACE INVITES, ENLISTS, ENABLES, and EMPOWERS Us

FATHER invites us to CO-LABOR in Work of GOSPEL MINISTRY with Him

This grace enabled Paul to leave behind his old ways of thinking, his cultural and ethnic prejudices, to leave his home and his own people and go to the world as a servant.
Paul Gardner

They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.
Galatians 1.23,24

Call to SERVE – Not UNIQUE to Paul > Ephes 4-6 Spells out our Calling

We may easily be too big for God to use, but never too small. Dwight Moody

c. to stand

v. 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Several Times Ephes – Paul KNEELS in Prayer before the Lord – Ends letter..

take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore... Ephesians 6.13,14

NOW in Christ we come Boldly Before God with our HEADS HELD HIGH KNEES may be KNOCKING – But Praise the Lord IN HIM we STAND!

More than Conquerors in HIM who Conquered Sin, Satan, Death, Destruction

d. to suffer

Many HIS DAY & thru AGES have ACCUSED Paul of PRIDE

He IS Exceeding CONFIDENT in Christ but NOT for his Own GLORY

Special REVELATION did NOT Give him STATUS – Made him SERVANT

v. 13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Eph Xtians may have PITIED Paul in PRISON > But he is PUMPED UP!

To BE in PRISON Normally considered SHAMEFUL Thing!

PAUL BOASTS of the PRIVILEGE of being Worthy to Suffer for X

Value we PLACE on Something shown in what we will ENDURE for IT

He WEARS Suffering like BADGE of HONOR

Those who DO NOT SUFFER and NOT in the Pathway of MASTER

Saw ONE of BEST Friends Ever, Singapore last Wednesday Dr. Thomas Loh

Dr. Loh SLIT my THROAT – LITERALLY – TWICE

January 2007 Suspected Thyroid Cancer – CUT THROAT OPEN! FEAR!!
 Took ½ Thyroid Found Cancer – Might Not be able to Eat, Talk, Might Die
 Made me Sign Waiver that I Accepted all those Possible Consequences!
 Went for Church day before Preacher Said come up for Prayer > RAN UP!!
 Went Fine – Woke up Could Drink, Eat, Swallow, Talk...ALIVE!!

Then Dr. Loh – Found Cancer Gotta Come back and I Cut the Other Half Out...
 April 2007 – Come Back, Other Half – Flew from KZ to Singapore
 Wheeled into Surgery – Shook Hands with Doc's in OR – Slit my Throat Again!

Paul had CONFIDENCE because God led him Thru Suffering to Glory
 1st Time they SLIT your Throat its Scarry – Next Time it's a PIECE of CAKE!
 JEST: Wed – Dr. Loh had me Lay Down did Ultra-Sound all over my Neck
 UMMMM... (Oh...Lord, Not 3rd Time!!).. Then, Great!! Looks Great!!

Paul was NOT UNIQUE in Receiving Revealed Mystery – Other Apostles
 WAS Unique in Paying a COSTLY Price to DISPLAY It
 He took Band of Gentiles to Give LOVE Offering to Jerusalem Church
 FOUR Years of Prison – Judea and Rome – Price he PAID for UNITY

v. 1 I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles

The only reason Paul was in prison was because he thought Gentiles had the same access to God that Jews did. If he had been content to be a Jewish Christian with a mission to Jews or if he had been willing to keep Gentiles on a lower plane, he would not have been in jail.
 Kyle Snodgrass

Followed FOOTSTEPS of Master, CROSS to CROWN, Work of CHURCH

INTRIGUING Verse...

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church
Colossians 1.24

Nothing to ADD to ACCOMPLISH our Salvation

Jesus died our DEATH – ONCE FOR ALL – FOREVER to SAVE

Many more will die to ANNOUNCE His Salvation

College Kids in Roseburg, OREGON Martyred as Stood for Jesus last Week

To the ENDS of the EARTH – till the END OF THE AGE

Fill up the QUOTIENT of Suffering God has Ordained to Announce Gospel

TRIUMPH of Church > Seen even thru TROUBLES of the Christian

Sometimes it will Seem like EVIL WINS – For a SEASON – Grows DARK

But when we SEE the GRAND Design of God – as Paul did in Prison

SUFFERINGS are SANCTIFYING > Advance the Cause of GOSPEL

WEAKNESS of Paul – In God's Sovereign Plan > shows Jesus WINS

PRAISING God from PRISON > Paul man Truly, Eternally, Fully FREE

Paul: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."
Romans 8.18

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—
2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, **3** how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. **4** When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **6** This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. **7** Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. **8** To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, **9** and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, **10** so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. **13** So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.