

The Gift of God's Grace

Ephesians 3:1-21

7/21/02

Intro

- Mexico team has returned.
- Pray for the Africa team.
- Writing scriptures on the walls of the new building.

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In chapter 2, Paul has been teaching that Jesus is our peace, who has broken down every wall, and that we are being fitted together as living stones into a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Paul begins chapter 3 with the words, "For this reason..." He is about to give God glory and give us his heart in a humble prayer, but he interrupts himself. There is more he wants to say about this whole subject.

Paul goes on to give us greater insight into the grace of God to him, and that's where we can gain wisdom for ourselves.

Notice also, that Paul calls himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ, he was in a Roman prison, but understood that he was ultimately in Christ's hand.

In these verses, Paul gives us greater insight into the surpassing riches of His grace.

I. We, too, have been given the stewardship of God's grace.
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A. What is the definition of God's grace?

- Treating someone better than they deserve.

- By grace we have been saved, but it also by grace that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing.
- We could have been saved without all the spiritual blessings that God has decided to give to us.
- But he has determined to give us far more than salvation – by His grace.

B. By God's grace the mystery of Christ is now revealed.

- A mystery here means that that which was formerly hidden is now revealed.

Vs 6

- To be specific – that the Gentiles are:
 1. Fellow heirs,
 2. Fellow members of the body,
 3. Fellow partakers of the promise.

Illus – Some say that this means that all the promises to Israel now belong to the church, that the church is now Israel. But when a man and woman marry to they cease to be man and woman? The distinction remains as it does with the Gentile and Jew.

To this day, the Catholic Church believes the Holy land is theirs.

- But Paul is referring to the promises in Jesus Christ.

II. What is the message of God's grace?

Vs 8-10

- A. The unfathomable riches of Christ.
 - “Unfathomable” literally means, “not capable of being traced by footprints.” In other words it is too great to find the end.
 - This means that one of the most exciting messages of the gospel is how great God’s grace goes – far beyond salvation.
- B. To make plain ...
 - What has been hidden in God and now revealed.
- C. In order that the “manifold” wisdom of God might be revealed.
 - “Manifold” is a reference to the “many colors” of God’s wisdom.

Illus – The gospel is so incredibly rich in Christ Jesus. Most people intuitively approach God based on keeping the law in some form, but the wisdom of God is now about how God’s grace is lavished upon.

For example, He Himself has fulfilled all the requirements of the Law and then given this to us as a gift of His grace.

- D. Now in Christ we have both boldness and confident access to the Father.

- We can now approach the throne of God with great boldness and confidence because we have the righteousness of God in Him.
- Compare Hebrews 10: 10-25.

III. What is the power of God's grace?

That we should be...

- A. Strengthened with power in the inner man.
- B. So that Christ may dwell in our hearts.
 - This is not a reference to salvation, but that Christ would “be at home” in our hearts.
- C. That being rooted and grounded in love...
 - They may be able to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth.
 - And to know the love of Christ (which surpasses knowledge).
 - That they might be filled up to the measure of the fullness of God.

Conclusion

Paul then finishes with a doxology that has within it a great promise in itself – that God does exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ask or even think.