

STRETCH

Ephesians: Session 5

The need for a **why?**

- Knowing *why* creates **Meaning**
- Knowing *why* increases **Quality**
- Knowing *why* fuels **Perseverance**



The briefing

his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, **to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**

Ephesians 1:9-10



- Lit. "summed up in him" – **Jesus will have the supremacy over all things – he is the answer and the conclusion.**

Outline of Ephesians

- Praise for God's Purpose (1:1-14)
- Prayer for God's Purpose (1:15-22)
- Principles of God's Purpose (2:1-3:21)
- Practicalities of God's Purpose (4:1-6:10-24)

The Principles of God's Purpose

- 1) Mercy and Grace
- 2) Unity and Diversity
- 3) **Revelation, Responsibility & Relationship**



Ephesians 3:1-6 (Revelation)

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 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. 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.

Discussion

- What words or phrases stand out as important as you read this through?
- Why do you think Paul goes off at this tangent? What do you think he is wanting to make clear?

Pulling back the curtain



God's Revelation

- A revelation of God's grace (v2)
- A revelation concerning Christ (v4)
- A revelation previously hidden (v5)
- A revelation given to the all Christians through the apostles and prophets (v5)
- A revelation of God's plan for Jew and Gentiles to be equal before God (v6)

What did they already know?

- **Gen 12:1-3** "all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you"
- **Isaiah 19:24-25** "In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance."
- Some non-Jews were already included e.g. Uriah the Hittite – one of David's mighty men (**1 Chronicles 11:41**)

What was new?

"This mystery is that the Gentiles are

- 1) **Fellow heirs** (not 'incomers')
- 2) **Members** of the same body (not 'second class')
- 3) **Partakers** of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (Included in God's promises)

Paul wants to make sure they **know** this!!

Our Revelation

"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**. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

(Col 1:25-26)



Ephesians 3:7-13 (Responsibility)

"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, and to bring to light for everyone what is 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. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory."

Discussion

- What is the content of the message Paul was to share?
- What is the method?
- What is the result?

Paul's responsibility

- **The message** – is about God's Grace and Riches in Christ
- **The method** – is preaching/ proclaiming – it is a message to be shared
- **The result** – is that through the church God's wisdom would be displayed to the universe, and people would have confidence to come to God!

Our Responsibility

Stewards of God's grace

- **Works** of Grace to walk in (2:10)
 - 1 Peter 4:10-12
- **Words** of Grace to share (3:7)
 - Act 20:24, Col 4:6
- **Wisdom** of Grace to display (3:10)
 - Through loving relationship in the church community - John 13:34-35

¹² Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. (NLT)



Ephesians 3:14-21 (Relationship)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

In your own words finish this sentence: “We are invited into a relationship with...

- a God who is...
- a God who has...
- a God who will...
- a God who is able...

Principles of God’s purpose

- **Revelation** – God desires to make known his plans to us (Amos 3:7)
- **Responsibility** – Receiving revelation creates a responsibility to share it – God’s grace and riches to us in Christ must be shared
- **Relationship** – The goal is to lead all people deeper into a relationship with God, through Christ, to experience his love in powerful life changing ways

God empowers all this

- **Eph 3:7** “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”
- **Eph 3:16** “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being”
- **Eph 3:20** “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us”