

EPHESIANS 3

IMMEASURABLY MORE

BIBLE STUDY



Introduction to the passage for leaders

Twice in this letter Paul reminds his readers that he is imprisoned - a prisoner for the Lord at the beginning and an ambassador in chains at the end of the letter. Why is he a prisoner? Why would God allow this? In today's passage, Paul explains his situation and also one of the greatest truths in this letter - "the mystery of the church".

In the New Testament, a mystery is not a something mysterious or unfathomable, but a truth that was hidden in the past by God but now revealed to those who are in his family. It is a "sacred secret" that is unknown to unbelievers but treasured by believers.

As you start the study today, pray that you will be struck by a fresh vision of what God's church represents, and by the potential that comes from a united, Spirit-filled church in our town and community.

Starter: What do you think people in our community think of when they hear the word 'church'?

What about you – what does church mean for you? When has it felt difficult and when has it felt special?

We join Paul now as he talks about the early church. He was certainly someone who got very excited about the place of the church in God's plan!

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Read Ephesians 3

Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Look at verses 2-6. Explain the meaning of the mystery revealed to Paul.
2. We talked about the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles last week. Why was it so important to Paul that the Ephesian believers fully took hold of what he was saying as the church was born?
3. How would you describe the role of the church, as seen in verse 10?
4. a) What role do you think Jesus plays in accomplishing God's 'eternal purpose' in the church (verse 11)? (see also chapter 2 vv 21,22)
b) Why do you think it is important to understand Christ's role before we can go on to claim the truth of verse 12? (What does it mean for us as believers? You could consider what the church would be like without Christ as its single head.)
5. Verses 14-21 mention 'love' and 'power' three times as being things that Paul prays for the church. In what context does he mention them? Why are they essential to the life of a church?
6. We saw in verses 10-11 that the church's role to show God's wisdom as a model of unity under Jesus. How is Paul's prayer in verses 14-21 asking God to fulfil that purpose?

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So what?

7. What implications does Paul's passion for unity continue to hold for us at Emmanuel today? In what areas might we struggle to be united?
8. How have you witnessed God's love and power in the life of your church?
9. How is God's wisdom being revealed by the church to the world at the moment?
10. Sometimes when we ask God to change us we can doubt if it's really going to happen.

If we could really grasp the words in verses 20-21, how would that level of faith impact the way we pray and worship Him?



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Read Ephesians 3 : 14-21

Looking at verses 14-16:

The Greek word for “inner” (as in “inner being”) means heart or soul which refers to our mind, will and emotions.

We know that our outer being becomes weaker as we grow older, but Paul prays that the mind, will and emotions might be strengthened by His Spirit (v.16).

Q: What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit can strengthen you in your mind, will or emotions as you grow older? Can you describe a time in your life when the Holy Spirit strengthened your inner being in this way?

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Looking at verses 16-17:

Paul says that when His Spirit strengthens our inner being, or ‘soul’, Christ can dwell or take up residence in our inner being (our mind, will and emotions) in a greater way.

Q: You may be experiencing Christ influencing your life for right living, or you may not be. Either way, what does it look like for you, in this season of life, to live in openness to His influence?

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Looking at verses 17-19:

If we replace harmful thoughts and emotions in our inner being with the Holy Spirit's influence, and live according to Christ's governance, Paul says we'll have a greater capacity to receive His love. What are some harmful thoughts and emotions in your soul right now that you feel are blocking you from Christ's influence and the power of his love?

**Pray through verses 20-21 for yourself
and where you are right now as you finish.**



**GOING
DEEPER**

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PRAY

Read verses 20-21.

How are you encouraged, motivated and comforted by this benediction?

Use the words of Paul's prayer in **verses 14-21** as a guide to pray for yourself and your church.



A PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen.

EPHESIANS 3 : 14-21

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LISTEN



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