

Message Study Guide

(Scriptures & quotes from this week's message are available on thorncreek.church/live)

Warming up

1. What's the greatest mystery book, movie, or story that you know? How would you define a "mystery?"

Digging Deeper & Application

Take your time reading the scripture given. If possible look up the verses in different versions and pause at each verse and discuss it.

2. The letter to Ephesians can be broken down in two sections. The first three chapters is about WHO we are in Christ Jesus. The last three chapters are about HOW we should live because of Christ Jesus. The word, "mystery" is mentioned several times. Paul the apostle uses the word, "mystery", 21 times in his Epistles. A mystery is that "which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets". According to Mark 4:11, what did Jesus say about "mystery?" Based on this verse, who understands the mystery, and who doesn't?
3. Please read Eph 3:1. How does Paul define himself?
 - a. Compare this verse with the quote from Bible Scholar, Ray Stedman: "Paul was in prison in Rome. A prisoner of Caesar, awaiting trial before Nero. But never once does he say that he is a prisoner of Caesar; it is always "a prisoner of Christ Jesus." He saw that Caesar was not the one who had the final say about him; Jesus did. The duration of his confinement was not determined by Caesar, but by the Lord Jesus."
 - b. Pastor Ruben said we give our problems too much credit. We become worried and anxious about the political powers in our world. We let problems define our purpose. What can we learn from verse one about the attitude we should have about our problems?
4. Ephesians chapter three is really a prayer. But, Paul get's distracted in his prayer. You could say verses 2-13 should be in a long parenthesis. But, Paul goes off on a tangent to talk about this mystery. Please read Ephesians 3:1, 14-15, to get an idea of his original sentence.
5. Now read Ephesians 3:2-13. This is the section that talks about the mystery. According to Ephesians 3:2-5, what does Paul want his readers to understand?

- a. This is personal for Paul! Compare this passage with these other passages: Col 2:2-3; Col 1:25-27; and Eph 1:7-10. What do these other passages say about this mystery? What is the name of this mystery?

 - b. In Ephesians 3:6, Paul drops a bomb. What does he say that creates such havoc? Who are Gentiles? Compare this verse with the quote from Bible Scholar, John Phillips: “The Jews were infuriated when Paul taught that believing Gentiles were full members of God's family and the fellowship of saints. The Jews' national pride was stung. Even in the church many Jewish believers thought that Gentiles should become Jews in order to be Christians, or at least they should be regarded as second-class citizens in the kingdom. Paul's emancipating gospel annoyed many Jews, even within the church. They felt threatened by his zealous, far-reaching efforts to bring more and more Gentiles into the church.”
6. Pastor Ruben said, “The greatest lovers of God, love without boundaries. They love the person that everybody else overlooks. They love with a love from God, which transcends requirements, standards, and hidden conditions.” Would you make a commitment to love those outside the circle with the love of Ephesians chapter three?
7. Pastor Ruben talked about a WARNING. The Gentiles didn't work for this salvation. They were invited into it. The warning is this: Don't take the grace of God for granted. Don't take the freedom we have in Christ as an opportunity to sin. Don't ride a blessings without bleeding for it.

Application

Below are the main points of the message. Discuss how they apply to your life.

- God has your life in His hands.
- God has a plan for you.
- God has His eye on you.
- Your problem is not your end.
- Love others with an Ephesians three kind of love.