

Small Group Questions...

Who do you think WE are? (Ephesians 3:1-13)

Have someone pray asking the Spirit to move and speak during your small group time.

ICEBREAKER

- Describe to the group what comes to mind when you hear the word MYSTERY...

The dictionary def of a mystery is anything that is kept secret or remains unexplained or hidden.

However in the verses that we will look at today Paul is wanting us to know that the secret is out and he wants to explain the content of the mystery... so that we will know who we are in Christ and we will advance His Kingdom with boldness and confidence in the natural and the supernatural...

You may like to read Ephesians 3:1-13

DISCUSS

Ephesians 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

Why is Paul a prisoner under house arrest?

V2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

3 things about THE MYSTERY

1. What is so mysterious about V2?

V4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

2. The second part of the mystery is Jesus. Again why is this mysterious?

V4b The mystery of Christ V5 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. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

3. What is the third part of the mystery?

In your own words can you describe the MYSTERY?

Here is a hint...

Salvation through Jesus, revealed to Paul for everyone! That's the mystery.

RESPONSE

So now that we KNOW the content of the MYSTERY, Paul continues with some practical out workings...

V7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

What stands out to you in this verse?

V8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,

1. Do we really believe that that no one is beyond God's saving Grace?

1a. You may like to spend some time praying for the person/s in your world (there might be a number) that you think "There is no way... they are too far gone, a million miles away."

1b. Let's praise God that he has saved us!

V9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. Petersen says in *The Message*; My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along.

2. The second practical outworking is to make plain or to illuminate this mystery. Does your life bring out into the open and make plain the Gospel. How does your life illuminate Jesus?

V10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. V12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

3. The third outworking is that this illumination happens...

The Message says; *Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!*

He uses us the church to make known this extraordinary PLAN of GOD, the MYSTERY of the GOSPEL...

RR's summaries this passage and the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL with these words and I think it's a great way to wrap up, *"God calls unlikely people into His family, in and through the underserved and unsuspecting work of Jesus to use them in unsuspecting ways to advance the KINGDOM."*

-He did it through Paul

-He did it through Jesus

-He did it through the apostles the prophets and the early church

-He wants to do it through this church

-And he wants to do it through you...

Maybe you are struggling to believe all of this and maybe you have stopped dreaming of ways to advance God's Kingdom. Overlooked the calling that God has placed in our hearts by His Spirit? Maybe it's all got a bit too hard...

Church my encouragement is this, we are a privileged generation, the mystery of Jesus has been revealed to us and we need to believe and hold onto this story with everything we have. We need to know without a shadow of doubt who we are in Christ and we need to keep dreaming of ways to illuminate, to make plain the Gospel and to build God's Kingdom throughout all spheres of our society, the arts, education, sport, business, family, health, community and the CHURCH.

Chat about this to finish...

So who do you think we are?

We are some of the most unlikely, who have been brought into God's family through the undeserved and unsuspecting work of Jesus and we are now called to advance His Kingdom in unsuspecting ways. Let's get amongst it church AMEN?

PRAYER

You may like to close by praying for each other

God Bless.