

October 18/19, 2014

One for the Angels
The Truth about our Life in Christ
Ephesians 3:1-13
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Opening Discussion

1. Have you ever had information that was so exciting you couldn't help but share it with anyone who would listen? Share one of those experiences. What made that information so meaningful to you? Was it hard to share? Why or why not?
2. Suppose your neighbor learned that the water in your neighborhood was toxic and potentially fatal, but opted to quietly move away rather than warn anyone else in the neighborhood. Your child dies from the water. Later you learn your neighbor knew the truth but let your child die because he didn't want to bother you with a warning. How would you feel about that neighbor? What if you were the neighbor who knew the truth and remained silent and a child died. How would you feel?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It's not until you find something worth dying for that you've finally found something worth living for.

Bible Study

1. Read Acts 21-22 for some background to this Ephesian text. The crowd listened to Paul's defense until he said what (22:22)? How does that support Ephesians 3:1? Why was Paul in prison?
2. Ephesians 3:1 opens with "For this reason..." He is referring to what he has written in Ephesians 1, 2. Review the highlights of those two chapters.
3. Read Eph. 3:1-7. Paul claims to be a "steward" of the message of the mystery that was given to him by God's grace. What does it mean to be a steward of the message? What was the message?
4. Read Eph. 3:8-9. Paul states that his calling was to bring to light the truth regarding the "unfathomable" riches of Christ. Paul's terms are extreme in explaining what is true of us in Christ. Go back through Ephesians chapter 1 and 2 and identify all the "extreme" language he uses to describe what is true of us in Christ.

Read Eph. 3:10-13. Why would God do all this for us simply by grace? Compare this with Ephesians 1:6 and Colossians 1:18-20. Before whom is this masterpiece of grace displayed according to those verses? What do these other passages tell us about the angels' awareness of what goes on in the church?

I Peter 1:10-12

Luke 15:10

I Cor. 4:9

I Cor. 11:10

5. Paul states that “in Christ we have “boldness” and “confident access” through faith in Him. Compare that to Hebrews 10:19-23. What is the life changing power of grace? Is it merely a ticket to heaven so now we try harder or is it continual access into the presence of Jesus regardless of our performance?
6. Why is Paul not discouraged that he's in prison? Is there any higher calling for a Christian than to steward the message of the Gospel by sharing it with those yet in darkness?

Application

1. When was the last time you shared the truth of the Gospel with someone else? What should motivate us is not guilt, but excitement to be given the grace to serve others by unveiling this mystery of what Christ has done for them. How do we move from fear to excitement regarding sharing the message of Jesus?
2. List 3 people you would like to share this glorious message with. What are some simple first steps you can take in the next several weeks to open up positive conversations with these people?
3. Spend some time thanking God that He has revealed this “mystery” to us and pray that we would be faithful “stewards” of this mystery to others.