

Ephesians: Good News of the Church

Ephesians 3:1-13

“God’s Wisdom on Display”– October 2, 2022



Introduction

On a scale of 1 - 10, how important would you say the church is, ten being the most important? If you are not a Christian or had a bad experience with a church, you may not consider the church's importance very high. Some may consider the church important, but how you spend your time, talent and treasure would display otherwise. If we don't see the value of the church, why would we prioritize it?

In spite of what others may say, the church is the most important institution in the world. The assembly of God's people is more significant in world history than you or I could ever imagine. The apostle Paul wants us to see that. This section begins with Paul in prison and ends with his suffering. Some might consider him a loser. Some might consider his message unimportant. Some might think the church is a sinking ship. The church in Ephesus was outnumbered by the people in that city who worshiped Artemis. They would be tempted to lose heart. If the church seems to be weak, losing or not doing what we think it should do, how can we not lose heart?

Sermon Outline

1. Be encouraged; the church is built upon the truth. Vs. 1-6
2. Be encouraged; the church is God's plan to display His wisdom. Vs. 7-13

Read & Discuss

1) Read vs. 1-6

Paul is not looking for self-pity when reminding the Ephesians that he is in prison. He is a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and his eyes are fixed on God who is sovereign over everything - even the hard things of life. How do you look at the hard things in life? Because Paul has found something worth dying for; he has found something worth living for. Do you have something like that? Is there something so precious in your life that it's worth dying for? Do you know Jesus like that?

Without God, we are like blind people groping in the darkness, but God has not left us in the dark. He has made Himself known by revelation given to the apostles who wrote it down in the pages of scripture. We are confident in the truth because God has spoken, and Jesus confirmed it.

Paul uses the word "mystery" four times in this passage. What is the mystery? It is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. ([Vs. 6](#)) We are fellow-heirs of the kingdom of God that come from the unsearchable riches of Christ. ([Vs. 8](#)) We each have an inheritance together as the same body. ([1 Peter 1:4](#)) The church is one body made of different members who must rely on and take care of one another. Once we were strangers, but now Jews and Gentiles are partakers of the promise. We are part of the same family.

How do sinful rebels from every nation and tribe come together in one body? It happens through the Gospel. What is the Gospel? God created us. He created us to love and obey Him, but we have rejected His rule. Because God is good, He will judge sinful rebellion. If you stop the story here, it's bad news. The wages of sin is death. ([Romans 6:23a](#)). However, the Son of God came over 2000 years ago to live the perfect life that we could not live. He died in our place, for our sins and redemption, and He rose again. When this is proclaimed, God opens the eyes of the blind to see the truth of the Gospel. It is by grace through faith. ([Ephesians 2:8](#)).

God's word is powerful and authoritative. Not only did His powerful work create the universe, but it created and sustains the church. If you are not a follower of Christ, what are you building your life on? Do you see the limits of your knowledge?

2) Read vs. 7-13

What is the purpose of revealing this mystery? Verse 10 tells us that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places - the Devil and his fallen angels as well as the angels in heaven. ([1 Peter 1:12](#)) The fallen angels are nervous to see this display, but the angels in heaven are thrilled. The heavenly places are an invisible spiritual realm. We can't see it, but it is real. The angels

- good and bad - have a front row seat to all of this. When the angels see the church - their response is, "WOW!"

The world does not respond that way. The world sees things from a human perspective. Today, we walk by faith and not by sight. Sometimes, we are tempted to lose heart. Paul is encouraging them to "hold on." Jesus will come again. He will unite all things under His good rule. On that day, the world will see and will know what the angels see today and what we believe by faith. What are some things that tempt you or cause you to lose heart?

Hold on. God is making known His manifold wisdom. The word "manifold" means "diversified" like a color palette of an artist. God is the painter; the universe is His canvas, and the center focus is the church of Jesus Christ. God's people are the paint brushes. The Gospel must be spoken. Paul calls himself the "very least" - he remembers that once he was Saul who hated the church and worked to kill and imprison Christians. He is amazed at God's grace to use a broken sinner like him as a paintbrush to display the manifold wisdom of God. Just like Paul, we are a conduit of God's grace. Have you considered yourself a "paint brush" in God's plan?

How do we as a church make God's manifold wisdom known? Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds. Since God displays His wisdom through the church, our theology of the church is important. If we have a good understanding of God's design for the church, the better we can display His manifold wisdom together with His help. Do you understand God's design, purpose and mission of the church?

We can also make God's wisdom known by making the church central in our lives. Be here on Sunday. Check in on each other. Pray for each other. Reach out to those who are hurting. Do practical things for each other. Since Satan and his fallen angels are watching, don't be surprised by hindrances to this commitment. Have you decided to make the church central in your life and your family's life?

Because the church is made up of people, there will be misunderstandings. Sometimes people want to come to church, but they are side-lined by hurt. If that is you and you are having a difficult time re-engaging, talk to one of your pastors. We are not a perfect church. We want you to flourish in your Christian life, so in some cases, our shepherding may mean helping you find another church. Don't stay on the sidelines.

The church is God's eternal plan. After hearing today's sermon, how would you answer this question - How important is the church on a scale of 1 - 10?

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to <u>Ephesians 3:14-21</u> " Strength for Weak Saints "
