

God's Eternal Purpose in Christ

(Discussion-Review)

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[0:00] Good morning again. Good morning. We come this morning to Ephesians 3 for the last time.

! This is what we call our discussion review. We do this after so many sections of Scripture. So we come to the end of chapter 3. We've spent, I don't know, six or seven weeks in here. So now we want to step back and not look at so much all the detail we've been looking at, all the trees of the forest, but step back and look at the forest.

So again, get the context of everything that we've been looking at so we understand truth in its context. And then we also want to not just kind of review those things, but discuss these things. So this is your turn. I want to hear from you today as we think through what we've been learning, what we've been challenged with, what you're discovering, what Jesus and the Spirit is leading you to understand in Paul's teaching here in chapter 3.

[1:22] So I want to start with reading the chapter. I'm going to read all of chapter 3 of Ephesians. I think you'll, if you have a pew Bible, you'll find it on 977. In the pew Bible, in your own Bibles, you'll find it wherever you find Ephesians chapter 3, which would be after chapter 2, usually, and before chapter 4, which is actually in Ephesians very, very important.

The order of this book is written very intentionally, very deliberately. Therefore, we come to, in chapter 4-1, the huge therefore.

4-1 is therefore. Because of all that I've said in those three chapters, therefore, walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called.

So, the first three chapters lay the foundation, the basis for that. So if you're able, please stand as I read from Ephesians chapter 3, the scripture that we'll be discussing today.

Ephesians 3, beginning of verse 1. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace, which was given to me for you, that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery of, excuse me, as I wrote before in brief.

[3:00] And by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of the Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

To be specific, the mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to me according to the working of his power. To me, the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery, which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things, in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in him.

Therefore, I ask you not to lose heart in my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

[5:01] For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know experientially the love

of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him is the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

Amen. So reads his word. Let us pray. Father, in these moments, Lord, grant us as a church, as fellow believers, to teach and admonish one another, to encourage one another by what we have learned, by what, Lord, you have taught us through your spirit.

Help us to express, Lord, what we understand about Jesus Christ and this mystery that's been revealed through him. We pray, oh Father, that we would see all the applications, all the implications that you desire to give to us this day.

So work among us, Lord, we pray, that it may be to your glory and it may be, Lord, according to your word, through the working of your spirit. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[7:16] Please be seated. So I have titled the series of Ephesians as the essentials for healthy Christianity.

That everything that Paul says in these six chapters are essentials. They are the basics. They are the core. They are the foundation. For healthy Christianity.

Not just basic Christianity, but a healthy, thriving, nourishing Christianity. So the first three chapters that we've just finished, he lays the foundation.

He lays down what is essential to understand, to believe, what God has done. Right? So the first three chapters really are about what God does, what God has done, what our position is.

In Christ. And then, starting with chapter four, the therefore, you know, therefore, I urge you to walk in a manner worthy. Right? Then it's all practical. Four, five, and six.

[8:23] Chapters four, five, and six are the practice. So you've got the position, chapters one through three, and you've got the practice, four through six. You've got the foundation, and one through three, you've got the fruit.

Right? How it works out. Therefore, work it out. Therefore, walk in a manner worthy. And he's going to show us in four, five, and six, what that walk looks like. Very specifically. Very detailed.

He's going to say, it's a worthy manner. Well, what does that mean? Well, it's going to start with certain ways that we treat one another. The very basis of our walk that is worthy of all that God has done for us.

Okay. So, that's our theme. So, the question becomes today, as we've just finished three chapters, what are those essentials for healthy Christianity?

What is it that we've discovered that is essential, that is foundational? What is it that supports and sustains and grounds our walk in Christ? What is the foundation of our faith?

[9:28] It is, chapters one through three, God's work, what God has done. And then, what more specifically is essential, the core, the primary source for healthy Christianity?

What is it that makes us whole and helps us grow and matures us and nourishes us throughout our walk? What is that? So, if it's God's work, what specifically about God's work is the most essential thing?

What is the very core of our faith? What is it that makes us Christian? As I was reviewing chapter three, just kind of walking through, walking through, walking through, kind of re-digging up, re-resurfacing, kind of looking at everything there.

I came across the word Christ eight times in this chapter. And that got me interested. Okay, okay. That's, that's, okay, Christ is central.

That makes sense. And I go back to chapter one, ten times. Ten times. And, nine more times implied. So, nineteen times chapter one.

[10:40] Chapter two, eight times. Chapter three, eight times. Chapter four, six times. Chapter five, ten times. Chapter six, four times. How many times does the word Christ come up in the book of Ephesians? Specifically.

Forty-six times. By comparison, the church comes up nine times. The Holy Spirit comes up twelve times. The Father comes up eight times. Grace comes up twelve times.

Christ, forty-six times. What do you think is essential to our faith? And that's not including all the, that's just the definitive word Christ that's used.

How many times does Paul then say, in him? In whom? Right? Like I said, chapter one, nine more times. Wow. So, I didn't, I got a little, you know, okay, I'm not going to count all the in hymns, right?

Because then I've got to read the whole book and I'm too lazy for that. So, no. So, I already got the point. And the central verse in chapter three, when he's talking about the mysteries, verse six.

[11:39] What's the mystery? What is it that was never revealed before? What is it that just after Christ, God revealed to the holy apostles and prophets after Christ came?

What is it? Verse six. That the Gentiles were an essential part of his church. Yeah. And their fellow heirs. And they're, yeah, absolutely.

They're, they're central. Just like the Jews, they're on the same level. Their fellow Jews are equal heirs and equal or fellow members of the body and fellow or equal partakers of the promise.

Where's the promise found? In Christ Jesus. How does it come to us? Through the gospel. the mystery of the Christ, what Christ has done that no one saw.

People like Abraham, Moses, David, they saw it in shadow. They knew it was this one to come, this seed of Abraham, this seed of David.

[12:47] They knew, they knew there was one coming. And, and, you know, even in Genesis said he would be the ruler from Judah, right? The scepter would be with Judah.

Jesus is a descendant of Judah. But to what extent? We always knew the Gentiles would be included because to Abraham, the promise was given all the families of the earth, not just your descendants, but all the families of the earth will be blessed through your seed, your specific single descendant that would come.

Right? So we knew that. Isaiah made it clear. It wasn't enough that, that God was gave his light to the Jews. He must give his light to the Gentiles. Right?

So, so we knew the world would be included, just not how we did. Never had a clue. Not by the old Testament standards that the Jew, that the Gentiles would be on equal standing.

They could go into that Holy of Holies without any barriers, without any priest other than Jesus himself. Straight to the, as Paul says in verse 12, right?

[14:00] The boldness and confident access to go right to the father. We're spoiled. We, we, we don't have a clue how, how incredibly amazing that is.

Amen. Yeah. When you figure all those thousands of, thousands of years going through the tabernacle and the temple and, and the warning was stay out, stay alive.

Yep. Right? That's a class nine river. Class five is hard enough. Class nine, you're done. You're toast. You enter that Holy of Holies.

You are entering the presence of God and you're not worthy. Until one came. Until his son came.

And broke down that barrier wall. So, okay. So, um, today is discussion review. I want to hear from you. What is God teaching you?

[14:59] Uh, what are you discovering? Any surprises? Any challenges? Has God challenged you? Whether it, whether it's a, a theological thought or, or to apply these things, what difference does it make?

Maybe you have questions. What questions you have? So, you have an outline that says kind of where we've been, what we're doing. Um, chapter three has basically two main parts. Chapter three, verse one through 13 is about the mystery of Christ and the gospel.

And then chapter three, verses 14 to 21 is the prayer. All right. This is second, Paul's second prayer. All right. He had one at the end of chapter one.

Now he has a second prayer. The end of chapter three, a prayer for power and a prayer to grasp and, and experience the love of Christ, all its dimensions.

So that we might be filled to the fullness of God. You'd have the fullness of the Holy spirit. We're empowered through the spirit. Christ is settling down in our hearts and the father.

[16:09] I mean, that, that's an incredible concept as well. That God would, we'd have the fullness of Christ, fullness of God. Okay. So that's kind of the sections you, you have outlines, you have kind of, uh, uh, on your outline, kind of the structure that we went through.

We're not going to walk through all that stuff, uh, but just there for reminders. Um, okay. What are you thinking?

I think for me, when, I mean, I realized all along about how being able to go to the father, and then it, it, it sink in when you said that, uh, you know, it's now about talking about the class nine river. that I realize now every time that I pray, that I can, that I'm, I can pray right to the father.

And I, because of what Jesus did, yeah, I, I, I kind of knew that all along, but it never really sank in. It never really took effect of why or who, who it is that I'm talking to and why and how.

[17:25] So that was, that was very deep for me. Yeah. Spirit can teach us what we already know, but make it have a bigger impact.

Kind of get. Yeah. Thanks, Ron. Well, Ron, and to take it one step further, um, in preparation, when you talk about what Jesus did, I was reading Philippians in preparation.

And, um, I was drawn to the Philippians two, and it talks about how Paul was writing to them. And he talked about the humility of Christ. And with, in all that Christ, that Paul talks about in Ephesians two, it's not possible without him willing to leave the heavens.

Right. And leave God's presence. Yeah. And I was in, I mean, it's not that we, I haven't read it, or any of us haven't read it, but I was just in awe that Paul put down. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ, who being in the very nature, God did not consider equality with God, something to be grasped, but made himself nothing.

I'm like, I was, it really just struck me that he intentionally took on the very nature of a servant being made in human.

[18:46] And by doing that, we got everything in Ephesians. Yeah. And, um, it, like you said, it hit me in a whole different way that he intentionally said yes to that.

Yes. And he didn't have to, but he didn't consider himself so equal to the, father that he wasn't willing to take on that of a human.

Yeah. And it just, it was to the point that now we can come to the father because of that, of his humbleness. Yeah. Yeah.

No, really. Yeah. Yeah. Paul's consistent. Yeah. Well, what you just said, remind me of what the Holy Spirit's been working on me to get myself out of the way.

um, and, you know, Paul said, I have to die to myself daily. And I thought about that for, when I first read that the very first time in my life, a long time ago, I, I, I kept saying, die to myself.

[19:43] What does that really mean? You know, not be led by myself, not my will, but thy will. And, and then I, you know, so I tried to get into practice of just every morning before I even got out of bed saying, I thank you, Holy Spirit, for filling me with your presence, with your wisdom, with your guidance.

I want to be led only by you. Just get me out of the way. And you just, uh, and, and let me be your vessel. Just let me be your vessel. Be my hand. Um, I'll just be my hands in my mouth and my feet. We'll just, you know, try to be led by you instead of by me, uh, today. And after a while, uh, I was, it was just amazing how God put people in my path and, and opened doors for me and just, you know, it was just so much more delightful than being led by myself.

It was, it was such a blessing to be led by the Holy Spirit instead of me. Such a relief, really. And, um, uh, well, anyway, that's, I kind of got away from that knife.

I've, this week with this study, I've, I've been, uh, realizing I got to get myself out of the way again. I'm being led by myself every day. What I need to get done, what I need to do, what has to be done.

[20:53] And God will let me get those things done a lot more easily that when I'm being led by him than by myself. It's not like he doesn't want you to have a life, you know, that he knows you still have to do the dishes and all this stuff, you know, but he makes it easier.

Thank you. Who else? Aaron, right here. I think, uh, um, chapter, chapter 3, 19, where, where he says, um, and, and to know, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

And then you added, um, the power that's working in us is the same power that raised Christ from the dead. Right. And to realize that that power is in us.

And if we know it's there and we have faith in it, that that power is, is working through us. And it's just, it's a great power. It's, it's, again, hard to, hard to know, right?

It surpasses knowledge. And there's a lot of things that surpass knowledge, I think. Yeah. In Ephesians that, that are being explained. Right. Right. But even Paul says that one's, kind of beyond him, how the depth and height and length of Christ's love, you could, you could ponder that forever.

[22:14] Yeah. Yeah. Thanks. I think it's interesting that he was really speaking to the Gentiles and not the Jews. Yes. Yeah. And that he made them. You get the impression that maybe Ephesians is primarily Gentile.

It is. But, that the Jews, but the Lord came for the Jews. Yes. Right. But the mystery is the Gentiles. And then he focused the whole thing on the Gentiles, which is all of us.

Yes. And yet, had he not done that, would we recognize that the Lord came for us? Mm. Or would we always think that he came for the Jews? Like, would we have missed our place?

I wonder. Yeah. Well, Jesus certainly gave clues in his ministry. He did say he was for the children first. Right. And then even Paul, when he preached, he always went to the Jews first.

But Jesus included Gentiles. Yeah. Yeah. That centurion. Right. That just mystified him, the kind of faith that that man had. And then that woman from the Syrophoenician woman that wouldn't quit.

[23:17] Wouldn't quit yelling and crying and being messy in front of everybody. Right. For her daughter. And he said, that's, that's just, that's great faith. None of his disciples, he ever said, had great faith.

Here's a Gentile. And they said, sure, and same thing. Wow. I've never seen anybody in Israel with this kind of faith. He just tells me to go. I don't even need to, or say the word.

That's right. He just said, say the word. That's the kind of faith that guy had. You don't need to touch or anything. Yeah. Where'd that guy come from? Right. The woman at the well, Yeah.

to me, is an amazing Yeah. example, a powerful vision. Yeah. And both visually, and as you read it out loud to yourself, read it out loud.

She was a Samaritan, and hated by the Jews, despised by the Jews. And she, sorry, it's always an emotional time, because I'm the Samaritan woman, and many, many days.

[24:25] Right. And he, that was a divine appointment with that woman, and a result of that, the whole Samaritan village became believers through her testimony.

Through a despicable person. So those were pictures that that's still coming. You know, Christ came for the Jews first, but all these little, you know, in the gospel, these little meetings.

She knew, give me your water. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, he wanted her, he wanted a confession from her first. He did. And he does from us too.

Yes. So, but anyway, so to me, it is this whole thing of Jesus' mission to reach out to the most despicable, the most unworthy, and I'm one of them, and I'm thankful.

And there's Paul, we just read, Paul, a Jew, and one advancing in Judaism, right? He's going to be the top dog probably. And he says, I'm the least.

[25:29] Because he persecuted Christ, the church. He considered himself the worst of all the saints, the most undeserved. But I think that's every Christian's, true Christian's view themselves, right?

I think we all think, well, they don't know what I'm really like, you know? Only God knows what I'm really like, and he still accepts me. My deepest shame he takes away.

By grace. Yeah. By grace. Amen. By grace. By grace. And searchable riches of Christ. Who else? Jeannie?

What struck me today was the unfathomable riches. Yeah. And I think that the way I see that is like, there's a treasure.

You know, like a treasure chest, and like all this light's coming out from it. It was kind of, we're getting the light from that, right? But opening it up is like this unfathomable amount of gold.

[26:39] gold. Where's the bottom of this chest, right? Yeah. And it just like, I mean, I can just feel what it feels like, you know? It's like, incredible. And that's our light, right?

It's coming from that. That's a great, that's a great picture, Jeannie, because, you know, we think of the unfathomable riches, but you put it in a, in a kind of a, in a concrete for us.

Right? So I open that thing and I can, I can start on the surface, I get to know the love cry, oh man, the love of Christ, the love of Christ. And I go deeper, oh man, that love's even deeper. You know, Philippians 2, man, oh my gosh, how loving he is.

And then I go deeper and it's unfathomable, it's unsearchable. It doesn't mean I can't search it, but I can't reach the end of it. Yeah, that's just, too good to be true?

Infinite. It's infinite. Not too good. Not too good to be true, because it's God. It's not some man's promise. Yeah, thank you, Bart.

[27:42] What else? Who else? Thoughts, questions? Yes, Donna, right here. No, right here. Hang on, Jenny. We're going to let our visitor go first.

I am a visitor. I hope you don't mind me sharing. No, no, no. I'm sitting here and I was just struck by the fact that God has very deliberately spoken to the Gentiles and it just reminded me of something that I had read just this week.

When Jesus stood up in the synagogue, this was the very beginning. They didn't know he was Messiah yet. And he stood up and this is what he said. I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heavens were shut up for three years and six months and a great famine came over the land and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, to the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow and there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha and none of them were cleansed but only Naaman, the Syrian.

And when they heard these things, the synagogue was filled with wrath. It just struck me in the very beginning before they knew anything about him, he was speaking about Gentiles and how God sent his servants to the Gentiles and I must love that.

It just struck me as I sat here and never thought of it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So thank you. Yeah, he laid the gauntlet down early. Yeah, yeah. He was not afraid to speak the truth and challenge those bias, prejudice, self-righteous.

[29 : 37] Jenny, yes? On C, you have aspect 2, he clarifies the purpose for God's hidden mystery. Would you explain that because verse 10 seems like it that God wants it to make known in the heavenly places like they didn't know either?

Yeah, isn't that fascinating? I don't get the clarification part. You don't get the clarification part? Who clarified? Who said they clarified it? You did. He clarifies the purpose.

Oh, okay. Oops, okay. God's hidden mystery. Oh, the outline. I'm with you now. Yeah. Okay. You're actually using... Jenny's using facts against me here.

That's right. The soul says he's made known to the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Yeah. So it was a mystery to everybody, obviously. Yeah, and he's clarifying that the purpose was to actually make it known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies. to the angels and the rebellious angels. Right? To the godly or to the faithful and to the demonic.

[30 : 48] For what purpose? Huh? For what purpose? His purpose. He doesn't always explain his purpose now, does he? No. Like he doesn't always explain his will to us.

Yeah, I have to confess that's a hard... You know, I had a hard... I remember preaching that verse and thinking, I don't know, probably not making any sense at all because I don't even understand it. So, yeah, it's... But Paul calls it manifold wisdom. Right? That he now makes it known through the church. So the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places are watching the church. They're learning from us. What God is doing in us mystifies them. Now, Peter talks about how the angels long to look.

Yep. They didn't understand, you know, they're messengers but they don't necessarily understand. Especially what Christ was going to do. That surprised everybody.

[31 : 49] Father, Son, and Spirit, they knew it from the beginning. Right? Their plan was plan A and that was going to be carried out. Through all these mysterious things like the law, covenants.

So, yeah, sorry, Jenny, I can't... I just take it as his word that he makes it known through the church to the rulers and the authorities. That's not what we expect.

We expect that he's going to make it known to the church. But instead, he's going to use the church to make it known to the heavenly beings. To what end?

Maybe they've been complaining before the throne. We don't get it. What you doing? Come on, give us an answer. All right, watch the church. I don't know other than that.

Paul doesn't explain that. That's in accordance with the eternal purpose which he carried out. Verse 11. The eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[32 : 50] which makes sense. Yeah, it all happened in Christ. There's Christ again. Right? He's... If you trace the word Christ all the way through verse chapter 3, he's central to everything.

He's central to the mystery. He's central to God's eternal will. He's central, right, to the gospel, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Yeah, Don. Don. Could that be related to Colossians 2?

Starting in 13, and it says, when you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us.

He took it away, nailing it to the cross and having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Is that related to that verses 10 and 11?

As far as the powers and authorities? Well, yeah, in a parallel way because here in Ephesians, it's through the church he's doing this.

[34:02] In Colossians, it's through Christ. So Christ's death surprisingly disarmed them. He takes their weapons away.

The demons, so the rulers and authorities again, same group of folks, can't touch us. can't control us. They can tempt us.

They can try to trick us. Right? It's all deception. So we have that shield of faith. Right? He throws the darts. We have the shield of faith. We extinct. If we trust God, right, we have all the weapons. We have the sword. Right? So, you know, Peter and James both say, you know, when the devil comes, what do you do? Do you name it and claim it?

Submit. Submit. Yes. Put on your, well, both Peter, they just said resist them and it'll flee. Yeah. Resist them and it'll flee. Now, how do I resist? Armor. Armor.

[34:57] Faith. I don't have to do anything spectacular. I don't have to wage war with them or anything. It's not like, unfortunately, Bunyan's dangerous journey or the code of progress where he's doing, working with Apollyon.

It's not like that. Well, sort of. There is a sword. We use. The sword is also just called on the name of Jesus. Right.

So, so Paul said when we're saved, right, we're made alive in Ephesians 2, 5, made alive together with Christ. We are seed. We are raised up together with Christ and we are seated together with Christ in the heavenlies.

So wait a minute. I'm right here. How am I seated? Well, because I'm connected to Christ, I'm seated with him. I don't have that power, but he has that power. I don't say, I resist you, Satan. I say, the Lord rebuke you. That's what Michael did to Lucifer, right? Michael didn't take his own power, didn't claim his own authority.

[36:05] He said, the Lord rebuke you. That's how he defeated Lucifer, Satan. Because he claimed the Lord, not his own strength.

Lucifer was at a disadvantage because he's claiming his own strength. He doesn't even have a, you know, Jesus just goes, you know, it's not a fight. Lucifer's not like the world likes to claim he has some kind of power.

Yeah, he can deceive us. He has incredible power, but not to be a Christian, unless he can deceive you. Bill, I have a question over here. Who's who? Oh, hi.

What you just were talking about, I was taught that to just say in the name of Jesus, or I rebuke you in the name of Jesus.

And what you're saying is to say the Lord rebuke you? Well, that's what Michael did. Okay. Archangel Michael, strongest angel in heaven. So, when something's going on.

[37:07] Jude uses that as an example. Okay. So, you read the book of Jude, the one chapter of Jude, right? He talks about that. Okay. That there are people who try to name it and claim it over the angels, and they get defeated.

Okay. Because they don't know what they're doing. They think they have authority. And he's saying, these folks are not faithful with the faith. And then Jude gives the example, I think it's Jude, or 2 Peter, but I think it's Jude, gives the example of Michael.

When they're disputing over the body of Moses. Kind of weird. So, from this point on, spiritually, if there's something going on, I should say, the Lord rebuke you, not I rebuke you in the name of Jesus.

I think that's safer. I don't think there's anything, there's nothing wrong saying I rebuke you in the name of Jesus. I just think it's interesting. You're still claiming Jesus. Yeah. So, I don't think the technicality. I mean, if it's a step up, I'm going for it, right?

Yeah. That's where I'm at. That's where I'm at. I think, well, if Jude gives that example, that's probably pretty good. And we have so little in the Bible about demonic warfare.

[38:13] We just don't. And Paul, in his, what we're going to find in chapter 6 in Ephesians, the armor of God is, okay, that's all about God, not me.

It's God's breastplate. It's God's sword. It's God's shoes. All of that's God's. The helmet's God's. It's not my righteousness. So, the shield of righteousness, I mean, the breastplate of righteousness, right?

I used to think that was supposed to be mine. That my righteousness is what defends me. Well, I'm in trouble. Yeah. I mean, if I'm honest, I'm in trouble.

Every once in a while, I think I'm quote, unquote, righteous. Right? Because I've had a good day and I've started with Jesus. Right? So, that's good. But I'm not going to depend on that. I've got to, every moment, wait on Him, look to Him, lean on Him. When the war comes, I've got to immediately, Jesus! Right? Okay, help me, help me, help me.

[39:15] So, I'm not so bold as, oh, rebuke you. You know, like, what if He catches me like Peter got caught not prepared? You know, what if He catches me when I'm walking in my own flesh and thinking my, you know, doing my stuff, checking off my boxes, not being, not leaning on the Lord at all, just leaning on my own strength.

I'm doing what's natural. That's just natural. It's unnatural to walk in faith. It's not natural. Like, I have to discipline myself. I have to intentionally do that. Right? I've got to activate my faith. My faith isn't active if I'm not, if I'm just walking in the flesh. I'm just walking and doing what I'm naturally doing.

I have to practice. Yeah, it takes a while to learn that. Because everything else in life, I learn to depend on me. I go to school, it's up to me.

I've got to earn the grades. I've got to pass. I always say, what am I going to do today? And I go, oh, what are we going to do today? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, you've got to catch yourself. Yeah, that's where Paul starts in chapter 4 that we have to renew our minds.

[40:27] We have to put off the old, put on the new, but the key to that is renewing our mind. Not renewing my soul, my feelings, not renewing my heart because my heart can be deceptive. I have to renew my mind.

So, yeah. It is basic Christianity, but we need constant reminders. Because all my, you know, I had to depend on myself to get the grades, not that I worked at that.

I get a job. Well, I've got to earn a paycheck. I'm earning. I'm earning grades, I'm earning paycheck, right? I'm earning respect, I'm earning, and then I meet Christ and it's not me earning anymore.

So how do I do that? When I've got a lifetime of learning to depend on myself, right? It's, you know, God helps those who help themselves, right? That American gospel, by the way, I'm saying that sarcastically, if you didn't get it.

Because that's the American gospel. God helps those who help themselves. So it's me and God and mostly me. No, Jesus helps those who can't help themselves. He helps the woman at the well.

[41:43] Right? The desperate woman. Right? He helps Paul. He didn't even know he was desperate. He was a doer, right?

He's an accountant, right? Paul's a type A, go get them and win the world. All good, good motives. He helps you. Huh? He helps me.

You saying you can't help yourself? Yeah. Yeah. Well, yeah, no, I know that's what you mean.

Yeah. Yeah, he helps me. I'm desperate enough to ask him.

Yeah. This reminds me of when Jesus was with his disciples in Acts.

It was before he was ready to ascend to his father and they said, well, you know, who's going to cast out the demons and who's going to, you know, heal the sick and who's going to do all this and he said, when two or more of you were gathered in my name, anything you agree upon in my name shall be done.

[42:53] Of course, he was assuming they were going to be led by the spirit, not by self, you know, like not praying for a Mercedes or something. I'm just saying that when you're led by the spirit and we all see it, you know, we all see somebody sick and we all agree together like we are for Christy's sister that in your precious name and by your power, Holy Spirit, may Christy's sister be healed.

he said, you know, my spirit's going to still work through you. I'm going to ascend to my father but I'm here for you and you pray in my name and if it's according to God's will, it shall be done.

It wasn't maybe but it shall be done and so if we could just grow to have that kind of confidence but that's what I was trying to answer, Christy, that I was taught the same way, pray in the name of Jesus, you know, not my will but thy will just so we know the difference that the power is Christ, not ours and it's God's will not our will.

Anyone else? Is that?

Yeah, Dan. You know, the mystery, when you think about that, I'm such a chronological guy and I need that structure to understand things but Paul's conversion happened in 35 and Galatians wasn't written until 4950.

[44:25] Right, okay. So Paul, this zealot and studied probably and I think after his conversion he did leave for a while studied the scrolls and then came back 14 years something like that 14, 15 years before he writes Galatians so this mystery you can see Paul pondering this for a decade trying to understand it himself so it's a lifetime of learning and even though it was an instant conversion to Paul it still took this lifetime lifetime lifetime of learning and studying and I think that's so important to us because a lot of times you fall in a trap thinking okay I'm going to say the words and be converted but still it requires this discipline and this understanding which is difficult and it is that true mystery.

Yeah, where did Paul learn in the Old Testament when he did that study where did he learn about justification by faith? Genesis 15 Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness Genesis not just Isaiah you know when Paul went and studied the scrolls it wasn't just Isaiah 53 he started in Genesis because that's where God started and that's where God gave his promises that could only be fulfilled in Christ God's promise who is God's promise to Abraham make his name great make of him a great nation bless all the families of the earth through his seed and that was slowly revealed

Genesis 49 oh let's see the scepter's going to be in which tribe Judah Judah what did Judah do? Judah slept with prostitutes you'd think it would be Joseph nope God likes to work through the Jacobs and the Judas the deceivers and the immoral Judah's the one that brought Joseph to his senses remember when he's holding Benjamin hostage I'll get back to these guys these guys who abandoned me and tortured me and hated me I hate them too ever think about Joseph not so righteous he had a huge grudge yeah and it wasn't until Judah offered himself in the place of Benjamin he did the Christ act he was Christ like he offered himself for his father's sake right for his father's sake that's when

Joseph broke down that's when he lost it before then he's just hardest and I never recognized that until I read until we studied Genesis years ago and like man he's in power seven years he doesn't go see daddy next to the most powerful man all I'm saying is he works through the ones undeserving and the ones undeserving can have a moment of great faith where they act Christ like and that's what God uses not our great displays of power great displays of righteousness maybe just a moment of surrender faith okay I'm leaving this and I know this is right I'm going to give up my life here humility that's like

[48:39] Philippians 2 the humility of Christ give up she didn't have to do that he's number four in the family anyway gotten sidetracked one of my favorite stories I don't even know how I got there Bart how did we get there no Jimmy did too good to be true huh too good to be true yeah alright anybody anybody else that kind of brings back what what what Jenny was talking about about making known to the rulers and authorities I mean he could have used the rulers and authorities to make it known to us but he uses the undeserving and the broken to show people and apparently the authorities as well yeah guess what guess what the devil and his angels learn every time we resist him every time we just hold the shield of faith anytime we take out the sword and remind him what

God has said no it is written I mean we defeat the Satan just same way Jesus did we take out the sword and we quote the word so that's even the better better I quote the word what is he trying to deceive me with right mine is immorality so the temptation to lust so what I do is I say no it is written flee immorality and maybe I have to do that again twice maybe even three times and then I'm done with it I'm done with it not because I got over power spiritual I just remembered that promise no just like Jesus said it no it is written flee immorality or do not be anxious no it is written do not be anxious or I don't know what are you struggling with right turn away wrath I don't know whatever you're struggling with if there's something you regularly struggle with that the devil is often shooting darts at find a scripture that you can quote immediately that makes the battle so much easier no it is written in other words

God has said I mean Jesus made toast of Satan in the wilderness no it is written shall not live by bread alone no it is written you shall not test the Lord your God get away you're bugging me not that easy we know the garden was really hard for Jesus right wasn't easy for Jesus but that's what makes Jesus love for us so much more deeper because he understands when I find it hard right of the of the Trinity only Jesus has sympathy for what we go through father's never been tempted so he doesn't get it he understands but he doesn't get it Holy Spirit hasn't been touched by temptation but Jesus has that's why Hebrew writer says therefore

Jesus can sympathize with our he gets it I want to talk to Jesus when I'm weak because he gets it not that I don't let the father hear not that I'm doing that as if no okay anything else I'm going off yeah Richard yeah I think it might be appropriate for us to end at the beginning here so the first thing that we read in 3 1 is Paul is in prison and it just reminds me of how we need to adopt God's understanding of things and not our own because we look at infinite riches and we think oh man stuff I can get stuff ease and I'm sure Paul was convinced that he wanted to reach out to others and wanted to reach out to the Gentiles but

I think in our culture a lot of times you think great when I go home and I see this first class ticket to Detroit and this guy that just wrote me that I need to go to Detroit and proclaim the gospel to the folks there man that's it Paul's answer was you're going to jail you're going to be chained to a wall and because you're chained to a wall because you're in this place that I God have put you even though it's uncomfortable for you you're there for reason you're there for my reason in that book that Mark Harber talked about you know a year or so ago I am not but I know I am reminds us that it's not about us pursuing our big story it's about us being playing a part in God's enormous story and it's a gut check for me am

[53 : 59] I really willing to embrace the difficulties that I'm going through today for the opportunities that God is preparing me for am I willing to be in prison because maybe the whole reason I'm in prison is there's one person there that God wants to reach out to and he's using me to do that that I think is a really important thing with Ephesians 3 to remind us it's not about our comfort it's not about our success it's about our willingness to play our tiny part in God's story we know one of the purposes of Paul's imprisonment in Rome was to write to the Galatians to the Ephesians to the Philippians and the Colossians those four that's why those four letters epistles are grouped together because they are all written at the same time

Paul's imprisonment so when he's in literally he said I'm in bonds so he's bonded in the dungeon deep in the earth of Rome not some nice Annie Griffith jail he's in bonds in a dungeon and he's writing and I'm sure yeah how tempting to just forget it well gee the Lord's not working for me he didn't look at it that way he said no everything that happens to me is God's will so it wasn't my will to be in prison but it certainly was the Lord's will yeah so he said well Jesus wants me here what am I going to be doing I'm starting every day what am I going to be doing today Lord twiddle my thumbs no he had no idea what kind of impact those four letters would make he was only thinking about those four congregations well

Ephesians was written to a whole bunch of churches but Ephesians being the main one he had no idea it's still making an impact 2,000 years later how many lives has that changed his words all things happen for good to those who love God and called according to his purpose what's his purpose to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ so all things are good while I'm being conformed or going through hardship right going through long waiting periods some people would say my life was better before Christ because he had this authority and this opportunity and he lived in riches and he was a birthright of and now he's living in this poverty and yet he continued to count it good yeah

Philippians I'm happy to call all that trash that was trash compared to the surpassing value of knowing just knowing Jesus Christ and he put that to paper I think that for me he put that to think it! when you put it paper it makes it real because like you said others get to benefit from reading it and then we too can say I get what he says I get that I can understand that how how many high powered up and movers can do what Paul are able to humble themselves like Paul only the ones the Holy Spirit grabs that's for sure if gotta be knocked off their horse and blinded by the light okay okay we could go on all day this is fun let me close and we'll close and then we'll eat and then we'll talk Paul thank you for our time together I thank you Lord that you bring our body together we learn from one another we're moved by one another to think and ponder more I thank you Lord how you teach each member different ways at different times

[58 : 35] Lord and thank you that we're like the rocks on the wall we're not all like bricks that are uniform! we're different and you work and it's different and that shows the manifold grace and love of the Lord Jesus so help us as a church to continue to show that continue to be what you call us to do we pray in Christ's name amen