

# Essential Information

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[ 0 : 00 ] most people know, and if you don't, you're getting to know, that the church, the letter to Ephesians is written to a church of Ephesus. And it's kind of a general letter. It's not written specifically to any ongoing specific issues, but almost a general letter that can be applied to most churches, even churches today. And Paul strategically writes this letter in two separate parts.

So the first part, and one of my pastors used this as an example, it's almost like a car manual. So the first chapters tells you all about how a car engine runs, all the things that you need to know about a car. And then the third, the second half of the book, or the last three verses, it's teaching you how to drive. And it's the same way with the church. These things that we're understanding are important to understand about God's desire for the church, how God built the church. And then we're going to be getting into the last three chapters, which we're going to be a lot more slower going. So the first part is this theoretical stuff we need to understand. And then we're going to be getting into some practical stuff. But it's important that you have to get the theoretical part before you get the practical. It's like getting into a car, you're ready to drive, but you don't even know how to start it. You don't even know how to put gas in it, right? What's the difference between a brake pedal and a gas pedal, right? Could be dangerous, right? Could lead to a lot of frustration. So I want us to understand there as we see this unfolding. Last week, we got into an aspect where Paul talked about this great miracle that happened. And he's encouraging the saints that at the end of chapter two, hey, you Gentiles are now one with the Jews. Remember at that time, there was only two people groups, Jews and non-Jews. Non-Jews were everybody else. In fact, the Old Testament and up to that time, the only way you could come to faith in God started with you becoming a Jew. Then you got to faith. You figure that? That was the whole step process. You actually had to become a Jew to be right with God, to have that ability to come into the temple and offer your sacrifices, your burnt offerings, and all that you had to God. So there was a lot, we read a lot of stories in the Old Testament of people who were non-Jew who come to faith. Remember Ruth, right?

The story of Ruth. She's actually a Moabite. And what happens is her son married her, who is Jew. They were living in the place of Moab. And she goes back with her mother-in-law, Naomi. And the book of Ruth is this beautiful story of a non-Jew coming to an understanding of God, the real true God. And part of that process is her becoming Jew, then right with God. You're following that pattern?

Now, Paul is absolutely destroying this paradigm here in chapter two. He addressed the Gentile believers who are saying, hey, once you were separated from God, you were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, you were strangers to the promise, and you had no hope. No hope at all. You were without God. Imagine how you'd feel by that, right? You've got no hope. And we witnessed this.

We witnessed this in the relationships of people that we know who scrounge after their idea of God, right? I feel horrible for some of my friends who believe there's a God and are trying to get right with God, and they're just making stuff up. Literally, that's what they're doing. Or they're reading a book of what some other guy, they don't even know much about that guy. But hey, if this is what it takes, because there's this desperate need in man to be right with God. So he wrote specifically, as a Gentile, you were far off, but now you are brought near. And how are you brought near?

[ 4 : 54 ] By the blood of Christ. This salvation was planned before time began. It was redeemed by Jesus. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, you could be reconciled to God. But not only are you reconciled to God, but you're reconciled with the Jews. That's an important thing to understand because they hated each other. Remember I told you that proverb that for a Jewish woman to help a Gentile woman give birth was a horrible thing because you were bringing another heathen into the

world.

That's how low they viewed themselves. The Samaritans wouldn't even go into their land. It was just this world of this hatred. So God not only reconciled you to God or Jesus, but he reconciled themselves to the Jews as well. In fact, Jesus' work on the cross for those who believe took two groups and made them one new people. Amen? This is a whole new citizenship.

Verse 15 of chapter 2 said, that he might create in himself one new man in place of two, so making peace.

And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And then we read in verse 17, and he came and he preached peace to you, those who were far off, and peace to those who were near. For through him we both, that's Paul talking, Jew and Gentile, now have access in one spirit to the Father together, Jew and Gentile. That's awesome.

We both have access the same. You need to understand at this time, this is mind-blowing.

[ 7 : 08 ] This is destroying every prejudicial impulse that you've ever had, every teaching you've had since birth. Paul is now introducing a new concept to have access with God. If you were Jew, it was the temple. But as we learned last week, we are now one holy temple. What do you do with that if you're a Jew, right? Do I follow the law? Do I not follow the law? Do I still offer sacrifices? Is it still important for me to circumcise my kid? All these questions are being bounced around in their heads. In verse 22 of last week, he said, in him, Jesus, you are also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. He's basically saying, hey, you Jews, you Gentiles are now one and God dwells in you.

God is no longer found in the temple, but he is found in you. As I said, what Paul is teaching here is it's radical. It's beyond their 1400 years of thinking. In fact, just because Paul teaches it here, we read in the other epistles, Galatians especially, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Colossians, the Jews, they call them Judaizers, are still following Paul trying to get the new Gentile converts to be circumcised and start following the law. They just can't get it out of their DNA. So there's this issue going on. And the question still persists that even in Acts 15, there's a Jerusalem council because this whole issue is being fought amongst the apostles themselves.

And they accept the teaching. God is making a new society. This new society, God rules and loves and lives in it. Paul is excited about this new society. How excited is Paul about this new society, this new creation? Pop quiz for you. Where is Paul writing this letter to the church of Ephesus? Prison. Prison. Why is he in prison? For teaching the Gentiles. All right? I want you to get to understand there's a weightiness to what we're going to be learning. And we need to understand this. Why is Paul in prison? It's because he preached this gospel message to the Jews and to the Gentiles as well.

This is why we read in Acts why he was arrested in Jerusalem. This is what led to his later imprisonment again and in Caesarea. There was the successive trials and subsequent appeals to Caesar. Paul, Roman citizen, being tried, appeals to Caesar as any Roman citizen had a right to. And now he's in Rome writing this letter waiting for the trial before Caesar to happen. Okay? So there's this new humanity that's been preaching and this is so important. So I want you to understand this is the context that Paul is writing this letter to. He's so excited about the Gentiles knowing Jesus Christ, he's actually suffering for their imprisonment. Why do I believe this? Okay, let's go back to the text.

[ 11 : 03 ] Chapter 1, call read to 1 to 6. We're actually going to go all the way to 13 today. So take a look at now how verse 1 begins. It begins with, for this reason. You're going to want your Bibles out for this entire sermon because we're going to be going back, working our way through this text. And I need you to see some important truths. Take a look at verse 1 and in verse 14. They actually begin in the same way. And if you notice in verse 14, Paul begins praying. We believe, scholars believe, that in verse 1, this is where Paul meant to begin this prayer. He has something to say. But he stops his prayer because he wants to explain something to these Ephesian saints in verses 1 to 12 that we will get to in a few minutes here.

But I believe Paul knows what's going on in the hearts of the saints. And he's concerned for them. Look at verse 13.

So, I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Think about this. You just got a letter from Paul. He's in prison. And he's in prison.

Because he shared the gospel with you. Do you get that? How would you feel? You'd probably feel pretty bad, right? Paul's there because of me. So, your whole heart's concern is on Paul. And you're

getting this letter.

[12:54] But he says, it's important that this happens. Don't worry about me. Because this message is for your glory.

He's saying, hey guys, I get that you love me. I get that you care that I'm in prison. And some of you might feel guilty or bad because I'm there.

But I want you people, those people who were so far off, you people who knew not God, who had no hope, but you have salvation now.

You now know God. You now have hope. And I have the greatest honor before the Lord to tell you about the greatest, bestest news that ever was.

And it's for your glory. That's the emotional intensity over these next 12 verses. You with me on that one?

[14:02] Can you feel that? There's a real relationship going on between these two people that love each other. So verse 1. He says, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles.

Now what made him on behalf of you Gentiles? If you're familiar with the story of Acts, Acts 21 and Acts 22, the apostles were coming together and they were talking with Peter and Paul and where should they go with the gospel next.

And Paul was kind of made the one who would minister to the Gentiles. Okay? Paul, that's going to be his primary focus is to reach the Gentiles on his missionary journey.

So let's keep going. Verse 2. Assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace.

That's what he's talking about. I've got this responsibility now.

This stewardship. Something's been given me that I have to take care of. And that taking care of is getting this gospel message to you. A stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you.

[15:22] So he's been given this message from God. He's got to do it and he's doing it for them. I'm not getting any accolades on this, right? There's nothing in this for me that's helping me.

In fact, what I'm doing is putting me in prison. But here I am. I'm doing this for you. It was given to me by God. So Paul has this responsibility given to him.

This wasn't something that Paul chose but was given to him by God. And he's going to see it through. I've got a question for you.

What is it that you are called to? Scripture tells us that we are all called to something in the church body.

1 Peter 4.10 says each of us has received a gift. Use this gift to serve one another.

[16:39] As good stewards of God's varied grace. Do you get that?

the same words that Paul is using to describe his stewardship, his responsibility before God, you and I have that exact same calling on our lives.

God has equipped us with a spiritual gift which isn't for ourselves. If our gift was for ourself, I would tell you right now I have the gift of giving.

I give stuff to myself all the time. See, it doesn't work that way, right? That gift is for others.

And we're a stewardship of that gift. I have to evaluate that gift. I have to think about that gift. I have to go before other brothers and sisters.

[17:46] How do I use this gift in this situation that we're talking about? Which is the church. In fact, all New Testament teachings in regards to a gift are to be used in the church.

Do you know that? It's not for at home or just with my friends. Some people say, hey, they have a gift of hospitality. You may be a really good host or hostess, but the gift of hospitality is actually welcoming in strangers and it's done in a church context.

So I want that there's a little bit of weight on this here. What Paul's teaching. To be a steward of this gift. This gift is to help people in the body of Christ mature.

My next obvious question, is that what you're doing with your gift? Are you indeed helping the saints mature?

Not talking about the universal church, but Paul's talking about here stewardship of a gift in a local body of believers. believers? Are you as diligent in the same way as Paul and if not, why?

[19:16] Let's get back to the text. Verse three. We're now going to learn about this word mystery. And he says, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation as I have written briefly.

We're going to see this word mystery happening three times. Verse three, verse four, verse five. And it's real important for us to understand what this word mystery is.

There's a deep theological issue at stake. First off, mystery isn't used in the context. You guys ever done those murder mystery games? Where you come over and there's a whole bunch of characters and you read certain clues and you try to figure out who killed who when.

It's like that game clue, right? For adults and you get to dress up. Anyway, it's not what he's talking about. He's not talking about mystery as some riddle of the pieces of the puzzles have already been known to you and you have to figure them out and put them in a place and now you understand the picture.

That's not what it's talking about. here. A mystery is something that was not previously known and the only reason you know it is by special revelation.

[ 20 : 34 ] All right? What he's saying is the only reason you know this is because God told you and he's telling you now. And guess what? He hasn't told anybody before. It's not like that, hey, this all of a sudden makes sense.

It means you had absolutely no clue what God was doing until God gave you a clue. You get that? You didn't know until he told you.

So verse 4, when you read this, you can receive my insight into the mystery of God, mystery of Christ, and this is it. verse 4, which was not made known to the sons of man in other generations as it has been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Verse 6, this mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

The mystery is the church. It's God expanding that church, this body, or not the church, but the people of God to include these Gentiles.

[ 22 : 00 ] Verse 7, of this gospel, I was made a minister according to my gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

What's amazing about this is that Paul doesn't just get to tell us what the mystery is. He's going to teach us how to apply this ministry and what the implications of this.

Notice it says the mystery was not made known to previous generations. This mystery, this oneness, cannot be overstated.

This should come as no news to us, right? Have you guys ever known someone that you didn't like who got saved later? I remember growing up, we had a long school bus, we lived in the country, so it was an hour and a half bus ride and we would stop by this family and nobody liked this family.

They selfishly, my immaturity, they were poorer than most people, they lived in a converted schoolhouse and never showered, you know, just that whole dynamic as kids, right?

[ 23 : 24 ] You know, the smelly, smelly sisters are getting on the bus kind of thing. It's cruel. As kids, you don't know it, but you just know that you don't want them to sit on the same seat as you or in your location because there was a smell.

You wouldn't talk to them. Imagine that day when that family shows up at my church and they're all saved. And guess who sits with me on the bus now?

because I'm a believer. I'm now a brother to them. And I got to get over the smell.

That's what I grew up with. God blows the doors off of our prejudices. Jew, Gentile, black, white, man, woman, slave, free.

Why do you think Rome wanted to destroy this Christian religion? It was bringing such a solidarity to so many different people groups who spoke so many different languages and who had so many cultures.

[ 24 : 43 ] Jesus preached this message that was so great that anybody from anywhere could understand it and now have peace with God and could enter and be a part of that temple.

All right. Before I go any further with the text, I need to wade into what I call some deep theological waters here.

And I debated whether or not I was going to do this, but I think it's important to. Hey, did you guys know it's Danielle's first year anniversary here?

Yeah, this is our first year of anniversary. What made me think about this is if I was just preaching somewhere just at the time, I wouldn't mention this. But I'm committing to a long ministry here, and it's important to have these foundational truths carry on.

Because what we're going to talk about now is going to affect later sermons and later thinkings.

Now, some of you may disagree with me. That's okay. I will love you exact the same as I do now.

[ 25 : 58 ] And I might even increase my love for you. All right? So, whether you disagree or not agree with me, that's perfectly okay with this, right? But, there's, I'm going to bring us back to Ephesians 2.

22. It says, in him a new people also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. I believe that dwelling place is the church. I believe the church comes about in Acts chapter 1.

Holy Spirit comes down on God's people, and there is a change in the history of the church. The characteristics of church are, one, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

They are to be in Christ via the preaching of the gospel. This is my contention. church did not exist in the Old Testament. Okay? It does not exist in the Old Testament.

This is the new truth that Paul is preaching here. It did not exist as we stated before. This is a new truth that has never been understood until now.

[ 27 : 02 ] Now, this has implications on how we see church. So now that today, when people ask you what you did, you said you went to seminary for about 20 minutes. Okay? And this is why.

There's essentially two different views that exist in the evangelical church. I'm going to call these the two major preeminent views on interpreting scripture.

They're grids. They're man-made grids that men use to help us interpret different parts of scripture. scripture. The two views are one, covenant theology, and two, dispensational theology.

And in those camps, there's variations to those theologies. Some are extreme, some less extreme, on both sides.

Okay? And I want you to understand, these are man-made systems. You got that? These are just men theologians have designed. So I'm not trampling on God, men's feet here.

[ 28 : 07 ] I'm trampling on men's feet. If you're offended by whether I like the system or not like the system, that's okay. So there's, like I said, there's both extremes and there's offshoots.

But I'm going to give you the main ones. Just to let you know which camp I'm in, I'm in the dispensational camp. And I'll explain to you why. The text today is a big one, why I'm dispensational.

If you are a covenant theologian, generally this falls under the Presbyterian camp. Okay? Not all Presbyterians, but a great number of Presbyterians would call themselves covenant theologians. And they essentially believe that there's three covenants were created before Genesis 1. Okay? So the first covenant, it's called the covenant of redemption. redemption. You don't have to take notes, but you can. The covenant of redemption is essentially a covenant made amongst the Trinity that they're going to have a plan of salvation.

[ 29 : 11 ] Now we read in Ephesians chapter 1 what their roles were going to be. God's, the Father's purpose was to elect. Jesus Christ's role was to die on the cross and redeem.

And the Holy Spirit, it's to take that and make that personally true for us. Okay? So they had this covenant that they're going to do this. Some covenant theologians will say that's actually not really a covenant, but they understand that it is.

That's how divergent in the views. Now the second covenant, which they all agree on, is called the covenant of works. And basically that was an agreement between man and, or God and Adam.

Okay? Adam, you do these good things, you will be blessed. You eat fruit of this tree, I'm with you. If you eat the fruit of that tree, I'm kicking you out of the garden.

Right? You do this, so there's a relationship. Adam, if you do the things that I tell you, the more you will experience God's grace and goodness. You do that, there's going to be some consequences.

[ 30 : 19 ] We all know what happened there, right? And then that's when after Adam broke that, God instilled what's called a covenant of grace.

But Adam sinned and he broke the covenant and thereby subjected himself and all his descendants, us, to the penalty of covenant-breaking condemnation.

Because of what Adam did, we all deserve death. God in his mercy therefore instituted the covenant of grace, grace, which is the promise of redemption and eternal life to those who would believe in the coming redeemer.

So in the Old Testament, you could have salvation by faith. But you didn't know who that faith was, right? Because Jesus Christ hadn't come yet. But you knew the prophets had talked about someone.

We know from Isaiah, there's prophecies before that, there would be a coming redeemer. So you would put your faith. If you guys read Hebrews 11, you know, that's the chapter called the great hall of fame of faith.

[ 31 : 25 ] It tells you all the people, and it says they were saved by faith. We have no quarrels with that whatsoever. And he says the requirement of perfect obedience for eternal life is not annulled, but rather the covenant grace is Jesus Christ comes to this world and says, don't worry guys, I got it.

I'm going to live that perfect life so you get all the blessings of God. So that is the covenant of grace then does not set aside the covenant of works, but it fulfills it.

All right. So here's a few things, as it mentions. Covenant theology emphasizes that there is one covenant of grace and that all of the various redemptive covenants that we read in the scripture, we know there's the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, the Noahic covenant, there's the new covenant.

Those are all sub-covenants to the covenant of grace. Here's my major reason for not being a covenant theologian.

Those covenants are not named in the Bible. Nowhere does God call those covenants. I understand the reasoning, I understand the inferences, but I follow under an idea that one of my other pastors simply said, I don't feel calling something a covenant that God doesn't call a covenant.

[ 33 : 00 ] Okay? But they're not bad things. I get that they're using this framework. So then there's the view of dispensationalism. first, and there's whack jobs on both sides, right?

Like my other buddies who are covenant theologians mock me all the time. When something comes on the Babylon Bee or some other theological framework that's making fun of disbies, I get those. Okay? And I understand those jokes that they make in us. But first of all, dispensationalism sees God as structuring, his relationship with mankind through several revelations.

So, what I mean by that, there's essentially seven dispensations. And different guys use different names. I really believe there's seven. Some say four.

Some say twelve. I would say seven. Basically, God interacted with man differently from Genesis to the fall, right? He does. God doesn't interact with us anymore like that.

[ 34 : 07 ] Then God interacted with Abraham or Adam to Noah very differently than he does to now. Then there's the time from Noah to the Tower of Babel.

Then there's from Abraham to Moses. Moses. And then we go from Moses to Christ. So they call these dispensations or administrations. There's different economies where God, not saying he acted differently, but he did interact differently during those times.

Then we come into the time of grace, which is the church to believe the time of second coming and the millennial kingdom. Okay, that's the first view of what I believe.

There's these sections where I recognize that God dealt with people differently. Two, dispensations hold to a literal interpretation of scripture.

I actually believe what the Bible says when it says 10,000 years. I believe 10,000 years. It says 1,000 years. It means 1,000 years. Okay, so that by as much makes me what I am because I believe that is literally what the Bible is teaching.

[ 35 : 19 ] I don't believe in figures. I believe in figures of speech and there's non-literal language, but we have to take that and understand it in its context. But there's generally a literal meaning behind figurative passages.

And third, as a result of literal interpretation of scripture, I hold that there's a distinction between Israel and the church. Okay?

There's two different people groups there. people. I can argue that God elected Israel to be his people. God's never going to abandon them.

When he pulls them back, I don't know. I actually believe it'll be during the end times. But he is not going to forget them. To a covenant theologian, the church begins either with Adam or Abraham, depending which scholar you talk on.

So, at that point, the church and Israel are one going back to Genesis. I completely deny that.

[ 36 : 23 ] I believe the church begins in Acts with the Holy Spirit coming and that's the distinction. Because we are different than Israel.

Okay? You with me on that one? Okay. I believe we're completely separate. Like when my Jewish friends get saved, get rid of all that Jewish stuff. It doesn't matter.

You're a new people now. You don't have to toe that line between the two because a lot of them still want to incorporate, even to this day, a lot of those Jewish things. It's not like God said those were any better.

Those were the things that he set up for that time. Are you with me on this one so far, guys? The heads aren't blowing out. If you have any questions, you can please ask me.

But I'm going to tell you how to how this comes into play and why it means so much today. All right. I've covered that.

[ 37 : 26 ] This is where it comes in. It says, a covenant theologian would argue that everyone's salvation is of the same through scripture, which we would agree. But for the Gentile, the road was through the Jews, the law, and the temple, which we believe.

But where's this biggest difference seen today? Baptism. Baptism. And I'll tell you why. For us Baptists, we give those in the New Testament where we find the church being instituted through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Those are the people we give the sign of the covenant to. All right? We believe the sign of the new covenant is only given to those who are of the new covenant, which is the indwelling spirit.

Do you get that? We only give the sign of the covenant, the faith, baptism, to people who believe. Because that's who we are now.

You get that? Okay? So that is why when you hear that there are covenantal in the theology talk about infant baptism, they're equating it with circumcision was being a sign of that old covenant.

[ 38 : 41 ] Okay? Because that was one of the signs. You were circumcised on the eighth day and then you lived by the law. That's been completely done away with. In fact, Jeremiah 31, 31 talks about a new covenant.

He doesn't talk about a renewed covenant. He actually, the word new actually means completely different. And this is where I believe my covenant brothers, and we talk about this stuff on baptism all the time, they still think they're a specific people group by virtue of their birth.

Because they're born into a Christian family. That has no bearing anymore. The only way you are one with Christ is how? Born of the Holy Spirit.

And only that individual is to receive the sign of that covenant. All right? So that's what we're talking about. It's a new people group.

It's a new covenant. And this new covenant has a new sign, which is baptism. It has been given to those who have personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 39 : 48 ] I believe why this is so important, because we've been studying salvation. Notice the order that Paul is teaching us in Ephesians. Salvation first, then us as a church.

If we don't understand the theological implications of our salvation and the theological implications of our church, we're not going to be able to do chapters 4 to 6.

You know that? We might morally be able to carry on with certain things, but if we're not in the Spirit, joined the Spirit, powered by the Spirit, brought in by you guys helping one another through our gifts, helping us mature and grow stable, it won't happen.

So that's why Paul is teaching the way he's teaching here. So just as I said, this is why I believe the order that he's teaching.

Now, Paul has a, I'm just going to read from Colossians, Colossians, written at the same time as Ephesians. Paul is saying the same thing, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God again that was given to me for you to make the word of God fully known.

[ 41 : 12 ] The mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to the saints. To them, God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this ministry, mystery which is in Christ in you, the hope of glory.

This church thing is big. It is big. Okay? Interesting in how the church operates versus the people of Israel.

The people of Israel were to function almost like a beacon to bring people, people could see God by observing. Even the Gentile court in a temple was made so you can invite your Gentile friends to look in on how that function.

All right? Christian church, totally different. We're to penetrate. If that was a lamp, we're spotlights. We are now meant to penetrate the culture of where we go with the gospel and good news.

That's what the apostles did. Amen? Started with the apostles and we talked about this last week. You could say, BK, what about this word? It's talking about apostles and prophets. Notice the order. [ 42 : 27 ] We talked about that. There's three different times. Apostles, prophets. Apostles, prophets mentioned in Ephesians. It's talking about New Testament prophets. Agabus would be one of those prophets.

Silas would be one of those prophets. That they heard the news from the apostles and they prophesied because they did not have the word of God at that time. And God was using that for the spreading out of the church.

So now we're going to get to these. There's three things we're going to go from verse 8 to the end of verse 13. First focus that Paul has in his teaching.

It says, notice, to me, though I am the very least of all the saints. Remember, this is a man who persecuted the church. Does not have a high position of himself.

This grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. We could probably do multi-sermon series on just what the riches of Christ are.

[ 43 : 38 ] They're immense. They're great. Okay? That is his job. So one, to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Notice his second focus.

Verse 9. And to bring the light for everyone, what is the plan of the mystery, the church, hidden for ages in God and created all things.

Right? It's to bring the church, right? To inform the world what's going on here. There is now a new third race, a new people. We are to see a harmony of relationships.

This speaks loudly to the world. This church, how we have a, how we worship together is a testimony.

One of my favorite conversions I've ever seen a part of my ministry, which I love, is we used to offer an ESL class and one of the Muslim, we didn't make it requirement to come and sit into the church service.

[ 44 : 44 ] But one time the ESL class was canceled and he came in and just watching us worship led him to salvation in Jesus Christ. Right? How we worship, how we love, how we interact.

When I was with Campus Crusade, I lived in residence and I would bring a lot of my guys to a lot of different events. And I wanted them to meet other Christians so relationships could happen with them because it wasn't just going to be me able to reach them for Christ.

And one of the things that I always got to them is my church would drive a bus near my campus to pick all of us up because no one had enough cars. We're poor, starving students. Right? So kind of like it was the version of the Dirks.

Right? At Western. And we would, and they would take us to church. And I used to always be amazed how many of the different families would just invite my friends in and they would be coming to the Lord through them.

Right? All these different other people in the churches. And a lot of times I was just the stepping stone that organized the Dirks to come and pick us up. But it was someone else who had the blessing of actually being able to walk them through from old life to new life.

[ 46 : 00 ] That's a great thing about the church. And it was great for me that I knew people at my church would love my guys just as much as I would and sometimes even more. That is a testimony to who we are.

Now check out this third purpose. Verse 10. This isn't talked about very often.

But the implications are immense. Verse 10. So that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities of the heavenly places.

Guess who he's talking about? Angels and demons. How a church functions when it functions as God intended it to communicate God's manifold wisdom to angels and demons.

Think about that for a second. The implications of that are immense. One, they're watching. They're watching this church function. Two, they know this church.

[ 47 : 23 ] Right? It's interesting. 1 Peter 1, 10-12 says, Concerning the salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them as indicated when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

Notice there again, word prophet not talking about Old Testament prophet, but talking about New Testament prophet. But check out verse 12. It was revealed to them that they were serving not

