

# Eph 3.1-7 The Mystery of Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your copies of the Word of God and turn to the book of Ephesians, continuing in our series through Ephesians. We are at Ephesians chapter 3.

And before we read the chapter, you'll notice that Ephesians chapter 3 starts off by saying, For this reason. So, what does that mean? For what reason?

Obviously, what he's about to say has to do with something that has previously been said. So, when we consider back to chapter 2 and the Gentile inclusion in a unified new creation, what he's speaking about when he says, For this reason, what he's about to go in to say, for this reason, is that of a unified new creation built together into a habitation of God through the Spirit.

If you remember the temple schematics, if you will, or the temple being built on the foundation of Christ. Consider the larger context of the covenant of grace as it works out towards dead sinners who are made alive in Christ.

And if you consider even the larger context, going back into Ephesians 1, starting specifically at verse 15, Paul explains how he prays for them.

[ 1 : 36 ] And he prays for them, saying that you may know. And the third thing that he lists that you may know is the exceeding greatness of God's power. So, it's a continuation of that thought, praying that they may know the exceeding greatness of God's power.

And then he explains the covenant of grace as it applies to Gentile inclusion as a unified new creation, Jew and Gentile together, without a dividing wall, into the spiritual temple being built on the foundation of Christ.

So, for what reason? A unified new creation built together into a habitation of God through the Spirit. He goes on to say, notice, For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner. Now, that's something that might not be expected in today's churches of an appeal for the gospel or an appeal for those who are not Christians to understand what being a Christian is.

But notice he says, For this reason, a prisoner. For that in itself, we can understand something at least about Paul and the Christian life.

And then the questions that follow is, first of all, that being a faithful servant of Christ does not mean comfort and ease. So, the questions that follow is, do you idolize and worship the comfort and ease of this world?

[ 2 : 59 ] Or have you counted the cost of following Christ? So, if you'll turn to Ephesians 3, we will read the whole chapter. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles.

If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to me for you, how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him.

Therefore, I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

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

[ 5 : 47 ] Amen. Lord, we thank you that you have provided us with your word and that we have it in our language, that we can read it. And as we seek to sit under your word this morning, we pray that you would open our eyes to the great truths within us.

And Lord, as I stand here to bring your word, I pray that it is not me that would be seen, but that the truths of your word is what would be on the forefront of the minds of the hearers today.

We pray that you would be glorified in all this. We pray that the saints would be edified. And we pray, Lord, that you would give us a spiritual understanding, that we may know the great truths about you and the exceeding riches of which are those in Christ and through Christ.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Our text this morning will be in chapter 3, verses 1 to 7, on the mystery of Christ.

And here in our text, what the text is saying is that the Apostle Paul is imprisoned for the advancement of Christ's kingdom as a unified new creation, a mystery now revealed.

[ 7 : 02 ] So primarily we will consider Paul's imprisonment, Paul's stewardship, and the mystery. So with the imprisonment, first of all, when we consider Paul and his ministry, Paul's life, Paul's calling, Paul's treatment within this world is not one of worldly fame, fortune, and vainglory.

It is not health, wealth, and prosperity. It is not a life of ease and comfort. Rather, imprisonment. This is, I, Paul, a prisoner.

Now this is interesting, particularly to the Ephesians, because of why Paul was imprisoned. Paul actually wrote this letter to the Ephesians while imprisoned at Rome.

And we know that Paul's imprisonment was that for the Lord. In Ephesians 4, it starts off by saying, being a faithful prisoner for the Lord. So he was being a faithful servant of Christ, which means, it does not mean that of comfort and ease.

So again, the initial question, do you idolize and worship the comfort and ease of this world, or have you counted the cost of following Christ? Have you been unknowingly influenced by the sporadic waves of doctrine of the prosperity gospel?

[ 8 : 32 ] So the question, will there be suffering and pain in this life for following Christ? Does being a follower of Christ mean that we are no longer to experience any suffering or pain?

Or, will there be suffering and pain in this life for following Christ? Of course, yes, there will. But, in this suffering pain, we have an objective peace.

Amongst such trials and tribulations, Christ is our peace. Christ made peace and Christ preached peace. This is why everything centers upon Christ.

Now, the narrow path or the holy way in this pilgrimage is not a matter of how to be a better you. It's not how to harness the strength within.

It's not to follow your heart. It's not ten steps to success. And it's not the latest self-help program. It's Christ. It's the exceeding greatness of God's power in Christ's resurrection and exaltation.

[ 9 : 44 ] And you, he made alive. The answer to life's trials and tribulations is not introspective looking at yourself or looking at yourself or looking to this world.

It is Christ. It is gazing upon the glory and majesty of the Lord. Of the Lord God Almighty and the finished work of redemption accomplished in Jesus Christ.

And as we, the redeemed, as we exist, we are on this earth, we are alive, not to introspectively look to ourselves, but to gaze upon the wisdom and power and honor and majesty and glory of Christ.

This will result in a life that will worship him and follow after him, come what may, and as vessels of mercy receiving the merits and mediation of Christ.

So, what is the end or what is the goal? Ephesians 1.6 says, to the praise of his glorious grace. So, the goal is to the praise of his glorious grace.

[10:58] Notice, it's of grace. It's not of merit, to the praise of his glorious grace. What is the end? Revelation 7.14-17 says, And he said to me, These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.

And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. The sun shall not strike them nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd and he will guide them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

So, there is a goal. There is an end to the trials and tribulations and persecutions which Christians and the church experience in this life. Back to Paul in our text.

[12:04] Paul did experience persecution and tribulation. He says, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And also, in Ephesians 4.1, it says, a prisoner for the Lord.

So, we have here a glimpse of the reason why he was a prisoner. I'm sure you can imagine we, of course, can look back and we can read, we know why he was imprisoned.

We know what happens. We know what comes of it. We know how God used it for his glory. But when you think about it, at that time, there must have been many questions. There must have been many people saying, what happened?

Why was Paul imprisoned? What did he do? A prisoner of Jesus Christ. So, it's not that Paul was a prisoner resulting from the due course of justice and also, just so happened, to be a follower of Christ.

He was a prisoner for following Christ. In 1 Peter 4.15-16, it says, but let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

[13:09] Yet, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. Paul was a prisoner for following Jesus Christ.

Paul was a prisoner not because of a spirit of disobedience, but because of a spirit of obedience to God, come what may. many of you perhaps have heard of the Tower of London during the Reformation.

The Tower of London had a great reputation to its name of dread. It was a place of imprisonment and torture during the Protestant Reformation where those who stood for the supremacy of Christ as head of the church and other reformed convictions where they were imprisoned awaiting execution.

Because this world hates Christ, so the world hates those who follow Christ, whereas if you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

Ask yourself, whose acceptance, whose approval, and whose love do you seek? Do you seek the acceptance, approval, and love from the world that hates Christ?

[14:25] Or, is your perspective set on the fact that you are on a narrow path towards a spiritual city of God and those who are not likewise on their way are enemies of the king and will labor to persuade you to follow the world?

And consequently, the prince of the power of the air, remembering back to Ephesians 2, 1-3. A prisoner for Christ and imprisonment serves to advance the gospel.

Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1-12 says, I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. So you see, in this instance, what in the moment at that time to some who are onlooking may have seemed to be the success of evil forces or the organization of the world against Christ succeeding or overcoming God's purpose.

But God's purpose behind all of that was the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the advancement of the spread of the gospel. When we are afflicted or persecuted for faithfulness to Christ, we may not see the eternal benefit of the providence of God in that situation.

[16:06] Consider about it. We can look back in history and we can see the outcome, whether you're reading the Bible or whether you're reading biographies or history books or biographies of missionaries or Protestant Reformation or Puritans or those who stood firm for Christ, we can look back and without the anxiety and the stress of the threats and the dangers involved, we can look back, read about it, and we can read the result.

We can see what came of it. We can see God's hand of providence through it and its purposes for the unfolding of God's plan of redemption.

As we look back, we can see it, but when you consider it, those people in those times, whether they be martyrs or those who were exiled or those who were persecuted, they in that moment couldn't see the future.

They couldn't see how God would providentially use those purposes for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ and the spread of the gospel. Where they were in that moment, of course, they couldn't see the future because it hadn't happened yet.

They were in that moment. So likewise today, we are in the moment that we're in. And a year from now, we will be in the moment that we're in. And we can't see the future just as they can't see the future, but we can look back in history and see how God has used those trials and tribulations and persecution for his purposes and for the good of his people.

[17:37] Consider how we can look back in history and see the outcome. At the time, they did not know the outcome.

Trust God. Obey God. God is faithful. Next in our text, we see that Paul is a prisoner on behalf of you Gentiles.

Now, this has some significance to it. This has some significance to it because the Ephesians, reading this letter, knew why Paul was imprisoned.

It says, a prisoner for the sake of or on behalf of you Gentiles. Paul wrote this letter from prison. Why was he arrested? What did he do that caused him to be imprisoned?

Paul was arrested and imprisoned as a result of his Gentile ministry. He was charged with defiling the sanctity of the temple by bringing a Gentile into it.

[18:42] Acts 21, 17 to 36 and Romans 15, 14 to 32. So he was a prisoner on behalf of you Gentiles being imprisoned for ministry towards the Gentiles.

So it was for the sake of or on behalf of the Gentiles but also for the utility of the church. A prisoner on behalf of you Gentiles for the utility of the church. that no longer being a mosaic system ceremonial law dividing wall excluding Gentiles.

Remember Gentile inclusion and a unified new creation? No longer that mosaic system ceremonial law which divided and excluded Gentiles from temple worship.

Rather now a unified new creation. Jew and Gentile together as one entity. Paul's imprisonment was in opposition to or Paul's imprisonment was because of opposition to the inclusion of Gentiles as a unified new creation.

Therefore Paul, a prisoner on behalf of you Gentiles was for their exhortation and salvation. 2 Corinthians 2 1-6 says for as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

[20:02] If we are afflicted it is for your comfort and salvation. It's Ephesians sorry 2 Corinthians 1-6 and furthermore as we see in verse 14 Paul also through this prays for this cause of a unified new creation.

How do people think about Paul and what he went through his persecutions and affliction when we think about the persecuted church throughout history when we think about those who stand on the word of God and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom how do those people throughout history withstand such suffering torture persecution tribulation and execution how do they endure it for the advancement of the kingdom of God and the edification of the body of Christ how do they do it such extreme persecution such extreme torture that they experience they're just men how do such men endure it a couple of illustrations Paul who wrote this letter to the Ephesians in 2nd Corinthians Paul lists in quick manner afflictions and persecutions that he experienced for following Christ was imprisonments countless beatings often near death five times

I received at the hand of the Jews the forty lashes less one three times I was beaten with rods once I was stoned three times I was shipwrecked a night and a day I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys in danger from rivers danger from robbers danger from my own people danger from Gentiles danger in the city danger in the wilderness danger at sea danger from false brothers and toil and hardship through many a sleepless night and hunger and thirst often without food and cold and exposure and apart from other things there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches how did Paul endure all this Paul was a mere man how did he endure all this tribulation second illustration shortly after in the year 107 so very shortly after the apostolic era Ignatius was martyred because of his faith and devotion to Christ he was martyred as a spectacle at the

Roman Colosseum and he was thrown to lions to be torn apart and devoured and on his journey to Rome knowing what was coming knowing what he was going to have to face and endure he considered his journey to Rome not a death march but a victory how did Ignatius endure how did he have the strength how did these men who are mere men endure such tribulations and sufferings Ephesians 4 speaks of Christ's gifting and gifting the church and equipping men for the ministry and it says by grace sorry but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift grace granted us in God's gifts calling and enduring the subsequent response of the world so it is grace that is given to each of us for the particular calling and giftings which God has for each individual person and that grace is not just the gifting for the task but the grace is also for the the the fitting and that which and the furnishing and enduring the subsequent response from the world for the use of that fitting and equipping of the gift and that's what's going on here with Paul Paul who's a mere man read Romans 7 he's a Romans 7 afflicted man so it's not man's strength but it is the grace of God that's what's going on here with Paul is the grace of God 2nd Timothy 1.8 says therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord nor of me his prisoner but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God there's the grace of God by the power of God so what about you how do you suffer for Christ or does the world approve of you as its own and not an ambassador of Christ Paul was a prisoner and Paul's imprisonment resulted from his stewardship of God's grace for the proclamation of Gentile inclusion and the unified new creation and the covenant of grace so Paul's stewardship broken down into two parts the first being his responsibility to extend the gospel of grace to the

[ 25 : 19 ] Gentiles and his stewardship as being made a minister so you'll see in our text it says the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you that the mystery was made known to me by revelation as I have written briefly when you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit note a couple of things in this text now some today will try to say that the words of Christ in the bible have higher authority than the words of the apostle in the bible but our understanding of the inspiration of the word of god and the books that are canon and our understanding of divine inspiration is that all the words contained in the bible are the word of god they're the words of christ not one word has more authority than the other word so some will use the argument well where where paul is contradicts the words of christ we must remember that all of the word of god is inspired by god and god does not lie and god does not contradict himself so if we come across contradictory passages then we must pause and step back and realize that something about our interpretation is not correct and we use texts which are clearer to understand the texts which are less clear but god does not contradict himself and the words of the apostle paul are inspired by god who does not lie and there was no a couple of phrases within this text as it pertains to paul and his responsibility or stewardship god's grace that was given to me the mystery was made known to me my insight into the mystery of christ not made known to the sons of men in other generations now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets prophets by the spirit so the apostles received the mystery more clearly and particularly than the old testament prophets and fathers so a couple of questions to kind of flesh that out were the old testament authors inspired yes they were did they the old testament authors did they understand the full and entire consummation specific details of promise fulfillment that was in shadow in their writings it's kind of a long sentence i'll read it again did they understand the full and entire consummation specific details of promise fulfillment that was in shadow in their writings no they didn't although they had inspired judgment they did not know the exact details that were to be in the fulfillment of consummation third question did god who inspired the authors understand the full and entire meaning yes he did a couple of quotes here augustine said that in the old testament the new is concealed and the new the old is revealed so all of scripture speaks of one truth which finds its climax the christ namely his suffering and his resurrection all of scripture points to christ all of scripture speaks towards christ and finds its climax christ so that truth that all that truth that all of scripture speaks to augustine says in the old testament the new is concealed and the new

the old is revealed so that truth is concealed in the old testament it's there but it's concealed and it's revealed what is concealed in the old testament becomes revealed in the new testament this mystery was not made known in generations past romans 16 25 to 27 says according to my gospel and the preaching of jesus christ according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but now has been disclosed and through the prophetic writings have been made known

to all nations according to the command of the eternal god to bring about the obedience of faith to the only wise god be glory forevermore through jesus christ amen so while the details of this mystery were concealed the premise of the incorporation of the nations was very much attested to now there are multiple texts we can look at which we don't have time to but there's multiple texts throughout scripture to see the premise there of the incorporation of the nations but we'll look at three in particular two of them we've already looked at in previous sermons first one genesis 9 27 when noah says may god enlarge japheth and let him dwell in the tents of shem now if you read over that pretty quickly you don't catch it but when you understand the genealogy of it and think about it more specifically may god enlarge japheth who are the descendants of japheth the gentiles the families of the nations may god enlarge japheth and let him dwell in the tents of shem who are the descendants of shem israelites god's covenant people so may god enlarge the gentiles and the families of the nations and let them dwell with god's covenant people without a dividing wall a unified new creation genesis 12 3 in you of course abraham in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed so you see here the premise of the incorporation of the nations and finally isaiah 11 10 in that day the root of jesse who shall stand as a signal for the peoples of him shall the nations inquire and his resting place shall be glorious so what was attested to implicitly in the old testament is now made known to all nations by the preaching of the gospel to the whole world that is the world without distinction this is why there is such an emphasis in the new testament about God saving the whole world when it says God will save the whole world it's not every single individual person within the whole world will be saved that's universalism so it is not universalism it is not the salvation of all people without exception but all people without distinction secondly under Paul's stewardship Paul made a minister now in Acts 9 15 speaks about Paul and it says but the Lord said to him go for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel so you see this is not Paul's being made a minister is not according to his own ability or power in fact unworthy to be called an apostle as he persecuted the church of God so it was not by merit but by the grace of God he is a chosen instrument 1st Corinthians 15 10 says I worked harder than any of them though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me again we see here the grace of God is by the grace of God Paul's stewardship being made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God and the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me so from this portion of our text we see that his stewardship of the mystery of Christ was first of all granted by grace and second of all assisted by the power of God Paul has been commissioned to make known this mystery to make known Christ as the hope and glory of all believers Jew and Gentile grace enabling him for the task to which he has been called the grace of God that is with me in Philippians 2 13 it says for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure it is God who works both to will and to do for his good pleasure so you see the qualification the fitting and furnishing of the gifts God gives for the ministry of the word are gifts of the grace of God it's not man's strength they're gifts those gifts are not by merit the gifts are the grace of God so it is not self sufficiency there's not man's confidence but it is divine empowerment further in our text in regards to Paul's stewardship being made a minister it says of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of his power remember the greater context of what we're reading here in chapter 3 verses 1 to 7 the greater context reaches all the way back into [ 35 : 48 ] Ephesians 1 Ephesians 1 verse 15 he starts to explain how he prays for them and as he prays for them he prays that you may know the exceeding greatness of God's power and then there's a continuation of thought as he starts to unfold all of these things that you may know the exceeding greatness of God's power as it's displayed in Christ's resurrection and ascension and you he made alive that you may know the exceeding greatness of God's almighty power and being made alive experientially the exceeding greatness of God's power as he powerfully raised Christ from the dead as he powerfully exalted Christ as he powerfully made you alive the exceeding greatness of God's almighty power in the unfolding of the covenant of grace according to the eternal covenant of redemption looking back at Ephesians 1 by an eternal covenant keeping triune God the father purposing redemption the son accomplishing redemption the spirit applying redemption and that being worked out in time that you may know the exceeding greatness of God's power next this unified new creation in Christ was once concealed but is now revealed so that brings us to the mystery our text it says the mystery of Christ now in Ephesians 1 particularly verses 3 to 14 we see the covenant of redemption we see how God purposes in eternity the triune

work the economy of redemption so God's cosmic plan and eternal purpose which we see in Ephesians 1 his cosmic plan and eternal purpose was not known fully prior to the death resurrection and ascension of Christ and the subsequent pouring out of his Holy Spirit notice is not known fully Christ and his kingdom was partially revealed beforehand although kept secret it was his plan from the beginning again looking back to

Ephesians 1 3 to 6 and verses 9 to 10 what was made known before Christ's incarnation we should say what was partially revealed or what was partially made known before Christ's incarnation we see starting all the way in Genesis 3 15 don't we the promised skull crusher the seed of the woman who would crush the skull of the serpent the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman so this is partially revealed in Genesis 3 15 and then it is revealed by farther steps Genesis 3 15 the promise of the covenant of grace and then components of that promise of the covenant of grace is echoed throughout scripture and gains more and more detail and finds its fulfillment in Christ now as we've worked through this series in Ephesians we've looked at a couple of these things and I'm now going to bring them together and very quickly review them all to see how it was partially revealed but finds its but concealed but finds its full revelation full fulfillment full consummation in

Christ Genesis 3 15 the Noahic covenant with Noah through the ark God stabilized and preserved creation through judgment of sin into a new creation account with dominion over creation and preserved for the fulfillment of God's promises this points to and looks forward to safe passage through judgment which is fulfilled in Christ into a new creation account and then Genesis 9 24 to 27 which we looked at already today Noah said blessed be the Lord the God of Shem and may Canaan be his servant may God enlarge Japheth and may he dwell in the tents of Shem this looks forward to this points to Gentile inclusion and a unified new creation and finds its fulfillment in Christ the Abrahamic covenant will give the land of Canaan to his offspring and a promised seed singular seed promised seed through which all the nations of the earth will be blessed this points forward to and is fulfilled in

Christ next we have the mosaic covenant which is how to live in the promised land first of all Canaan and governs an ethnic people as a geopolitical theocratic nation so that's a lot of words what it means is how to live in the it governs an earthly kingdom living under God in the land of Canaan which is temporal and geographical blessings for their obedience temporal national blessings of I will be your God and you will be my people that demonstrate blessings for righteousness and remission of sins exclusively by the shedding of blood by high priestly sacrifice this points to foreshadows as a type of looks forward to and is fulfilled in Christ God dwelling and communing with a unified new creation in a spiritual temple built upon

[ 41 : 30 ] Christ the sure foundation the blessings righteousness and the shedding of blood for remission of sins! in Christ Christ is the perfect and final agent of peace who single-handedly once for all delivered his people Christ is the Genesis 315 fulfillment the promised skull crusher who brought deliverance peace and peace you see the figures in the book of Judges who act as agents in deliverance for Israel and peace point forward to and find fulfillment in Christ next is the Davidic covenant which focus its focus the Davidic covenant is singularized into one person namely a king and it promises a king who will reign forever the messianic

Davidic monarchy ruling forever is fulfilled in Christ so what was concealed in shadow form in the old testament is a triumphant messianic king from Davidic monarchy from the line of Judah being the seed of Abraham he is the seed of the woman having crushed the head of the serpent a divine! messianic king ruling a glorious eternal kingdom a kingdom better than Canaan better than temples and tabernacles better than the post flood renewed creation better than the garden of Eden is an eternal heavenly unshakable kingdom of righteousness where God's people will dwell with a covenant keeping God all the elect through all the ages are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone the old testament saints look forward to Christ the new testament saints look back to Christ all the elect throughout all ages are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone Christ and his kingdom are the realization of the promises of salvation concealed in the old testament revealed in the new in Christ suffering and subsequent!

glory if there's only one thing you remember from the sermon if there's only one thing you take away from it! be what you remember and take away I'll read it again Christ and his kingdom are the realization of the promises of salvation concealed in the old testament revealed in the new in Christ's sufferings and subsequent glory!

mystery in the gospel and implicit in the gospel is the incorporation of Gentiles with the Jews as one unified entity the people of God and that by grace through faith Gentile inclusion and a unified new creation Gentile inclusion and the covenant of grace next in our text in regards to this mystery it says this mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs members of the same body and partakers the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel this we see partially revealed but yet concealed in the old testament and now fully revealed by faith the Gentiles receive the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places and then it lists some of those spiritual blessings fellow heirs members of the same body partakers of the promise fellow heirs in the heavenly inheritance members of the same body being one body one head one flock one shepherd one kingdom and one king and they are partakers of the promise and this is through the gospel as our text says the gospel being the external means or instrument by which

[ 45 : 47 ] God works faith and they are made partakers of the promise so the external means being the proclamation the preaching of the gospel and the internal means is the holy spirit illuminating that word shining light in darkness and causing light to shine in darkness now how is this acquired in Christ Jesus through the gospel also in John 1 17 the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through Jesus Christ and revelation 1 16 for I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek what is the power of God for salvation is the gospel in Christ Jesus through the gospel now in conclusion Paul explains that he prayed for the saints that they may know the exceeding greatness of

God's power which is displayed in the resurrection and ascension of Christ and you he made alive by the exceeding greatness of his power made known personally and experientially to the praise of his glorious grace that is unmerited favor just as God granted you the grace unto salvation so also he gives grace according to the specific and individual calling and consequent affliction and persecution trust God look to God believe God and his promises obey God the gospel it is not about health wealth and prosperity it's not about worldly fame fortune and vainglory the gospel is not a person's feelings experience or story the gospel is the good news of salvation in Christ alone specifically his suffering and dying to pay the redemption price of the elect his resurrection and ascension victorious over sin and death and his reigning with all authority and power as mediator between fallen sinful mankind and the one eternal unchangeable

God who is holy holy holy and a consuming fire as God makes dead sinners alive in Christ calling them out of darkness into marvelous light the elect are effectually made alive and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ to the glory of God's grace if you are still lost in sin and darkness turn to Christ alone who is our only hope let's pray Lord we thank you that the mystery which was concealed in ages past has been revealed and we find its fulfillment in Christ who is the promised and prophesied Messiah we thank you for your work of redemption which you purchased in purposed in eternity and which is being carried out in time that we whom are your creatures and whom are the elect who have been called out of darkness into marvelous light that we are personally and experientially having understanding and knowing of the exceeding greatness of your power you are almighty you are eternal you are infinite and Lord we praise you and adore you and I pray that you would cause us to further behold your majesty and your glory and that we would be filled and overwhelmed with love and gratitude and thanksgiving and worship that you have caused us to be made alive that you have saved us we thank you for the unified new creation which is a spiritual community and citizenship of an eternal kingdom the kingdom of Christ which cannot be shaken we pray these things in Jesus name amen