

EPHESIANS 3:1–13

The Church: God's Display of His Wisdom

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

KEY PASSAGE • Ephesians 3:1–13

PURPOSE

Paul reveals that God's eternal plan has always been to unite diverse people in Christ and display His wisdom through the church. This study helps us see our place in that plan and consider how our relationships reflect His grace.

BIG IDEA The church is not merely an organization to manage. It is a living body through which God displays His wisdom, grace, and power.

SERMON OUTLINE

- **The Contrast of Leadership:** Secular projects can be managed toward efficiency, but the church is too spiritually complex to be reduced to a “well-oiled machine.”
- **Paul's Stewardship of Grace:** Paul was entrusted to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ and reveal that Gentiles are fellow heirs in one body through the gospel.
 - **The Unsearchable Riches:** Redemption, forgiveness, grace, the Holy Spirit, adoption, our seat in with Christ in the heavenlies, inheritance, and the union of heaven and earth can all be contemplated as the riches we have in Christ. But our riches are not limited to these; they are unsearchable . . . limitless.
- **The Mystery Revealed:** God's previously hidden plan is now revealed: Jew and Gentile are united in God's family, a purpose extending into the heavenly realm.
- **The Manifold Wisdom of God:** The church displays God's richly varied wisdom through individual disciples united and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

OPENING CONNECTION

Think about a group, team, or organization you have been part of. What made it effective? What made it difficult?

READ TOGETHER • EPHESIANS 3:1–13

As the passage is read aloud, listen for one word or phrase that stands out. Briefly share what caught your attention.

1 Paul's Stewardship of Grace | Ephesians 3:1–7

Paul understood his ministry as a gift of God's grace rather than a position of status or power.

- How is viewing service as a stewardship different from viewing it as a leadership position?
- What gift, responsibility, or opportunity has God entrusted to you?

2 The Mystery Revealed | Ephesians 3:4–6

The “mystery” is not a riddle to solve. It is God's previously hidden plan, now revealed: Jews and Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of one body, and participants in the promise through Christ.

- Why would this truth have been surprising or difficult to accept in Paul's day?
- Why does it matter that this unity was God's eternal plan rather than an afterthought?
- What barriers tend to divide Christians today?

3 The Unsearchable Riches of Christ | Ephesians 3:8–9

Paul devoted his life to proclaiming the immeasurable riches found in Christ and bringing God's revealed plan to light.

- What kinds of “riches” does our culture encourage people to pursue?
- What spiritual riches do believers possess in Christ?
- Where are you most tempted to value temporary treasures more than the riches of Christ?

4 Displaying God's Manifold Wisdom | Ephesians 3:10–13

Through the church, God makes His “manifold” or richly varied wisdom known even to rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

- What surprises you about the church's purpose in verse 10?
- How does this spiritual reality change the way we view everyday church relationships?
- What dangers arise when the church is treated primarily as an institution instead of a spiritual family?
- Where can efficiency serve the church, and where can it begin to replace dependence on God?
- What could our congregation or group do to better display God's manifold wisdom?

MAIN TAKEAWAY

God's eternal plan is displayed through a diverse people united in Christ.

“Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known ...” — Ephesians 3:10

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