

Outline

I. Introduction: The Revolutionary Message

- Jewish religious culture dominated by exclusivity
- Salvation historically limited to Jews (God's chosen people)
- Gentiles painted as idolaters and false worshipers
- Jesus changed everything - came for all people
- The concept of holding a big secret and waiting for the reveal

II. The Mystery Revealed (Ephesians 3:1-13)

- Paul's revelation of God's hidden plan
- The μυστήριον (mystērion) - God's mysterious plan
- The core mystery: Gentiles and Jews share equally in God's inheritance
- Both groups are part of the same body in Christ

III. First Point: Paul as Messenger of the Promise (Not Merely a Prisoner)

A. Paul's Identity and Calling

- "Prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles"
- Not seeking sympathy, but proclaiming his calling
- Bursting with good news for the Gentiles

B. The Message to Gentiles

- No longer lost, hopeless, abandoned
- No longer wandering in darkness
- Brought near by the blood of Jesus
- Connection to Ephesians 2:12-14

C. The Unveiling of God's Plan

- Mystery hidden from previous generations
- Now revealed to apostles and prophets by the Spirit
- Not unknowable, but previously hidden, now in spotlight
- Not an afterthought, but divine design

D. Application: Hardship as Opportunity

- Revelation often comes through hardship
- Chains serve greater purpose of Gospel
- Troubles as testimony to God's faithfulness
- Difficulty as divine assignment

IV. Second Point: Gentiles as Co-Heirs

A. The Plain Statement (Verse 6)

- Gentiles as fellow heirs (συγκληρονόμος - synkleronomos)
- Full, co-equal inheritance
- Not partial privilege but complete partnership

B. The Radical Nature of This Message

- Ancient world: inheritance predetermined by birth and bloodline
- Gospel tears down barriers
- Parable of the prodigal son as illustration

C. Biblical Support

- Galatians 3:28-29: No distinction in Christ

- Acts 10:34-35: God shows no partiality
- Grace as the great equalizer

D. Application: Unity in Diversity

- Equal ground before the cross
- Paul as servant (diakonos) by grace
- Cultural diversity without compromising Gospel
- Race, class, tribe, economics have no place as dividers

V. Third Point: Bold Access to the Father for Everyone

A. Paul's Humility (Verses 8-13)

- "Least deserving" (elachistoteros - least of the least)
- Entrusted with preaching unsearchable riches of Christ

B. The Purpose: Displaying God's Wisdom

- Through the church to heavenly rulers and authorities
- Church as cosmic theater of grace
- Angels observing God's wisdom unfold

C. Bold Confidence in Christ (Verses 12-13)

- παρρησία (parrēsia) - fearless openness, unrestricted confidence
- Citizens entering throne room without fear
- Hebrews 10:19-22: Confidence to enter holy place
- 1 Peter 2:9: Royal priesthood

D. Application to Prayer Life

- Realize the "bold access" we have been given
- Pray as beloved children, not beggars
- Push forward with confidence in trials
- Paul's tribulations as glory, not defeat

VI. Conclusion: The Mystery That Changes Everything

- Comfort in belonging through Christ
- Paul chained so we would know the Gospel
- Mystery now displayed in glorious light
- Call to live confidently, included, and prayerfully
- Share the Gospel of Grace
- Christ in you, the hope of glory