

## Small Group Guide: God's Big Reveal

**\*\*Ephesians 3:1-13 | The Prison Epistles Week 7\*\***

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### ## Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

**\*\*Icebreaker Question:\*\*** Have you ever had to keep a big secret and were bursting to tell someone? What was it like when you finally got to reveal it? How does that feeling compare to sharing the good news of the Gospel?

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### ## Sermon Summary

Paul reveals God's long-hidden mystery: that Gentiles and Jews are co-heirs in Christ, sharing equally in God's family. What was once exclusive has become inclusive through Jesus. Paul, though imprisoned, saw himself not as a victim but as a messenger of this revolutionary promise. Through the church, God displays His wisdom to the entire cosmos, and because of Christ, we all have bold access to the Father.

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### ## Key Takeaways

1. **\*\*Paul was a messenger, not just a prisoner\*\*** - Our circumstances don't define our calling; they become the platform for ministry.
2. **\*\*Gentiles are co-heirs, not second-class citizens\*\*** - Grace is the great equalizer; everyone stands on level ground at the cross.
3. **\*\*We have bold access to God\*\*** - We can approach God with confidence as beloved children, not as beggars at the door.

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### ## Discussion Questions

**### Understanding the Mystery (15-20 minutes)**

1. **What was the "mystery" that Paul reveals in this passage? Why would this have been so revolutionary to the Jewish believers of Paul's time?**

2. **Read verse 6 together. What three things does Paul say Gentiles and Jews share equally? Why is each significant?**

3. **How does understanding this mystery change the way we view other believers from different backgrounds, cultures, or denominations?**

### ### Paul's Perspective on Suffering (15-20 minutes)

4. **Paul calls himself "a prisoner of Christ Jesus" rather than a prisoner of Rome. What does this perspective reveal about how he viewed his circumstances?**

5. **In verse 13, Paul asks the Ephesians not to lose heart over his suffering. Why might his imprisonment have caused them to lose heart? How does Paul reframe his suffering?**

6. **Share a time when you experienced difficulty or hardship. Looking back, can you see how God used it for a greater purpose? How does Paul's example encourage us to view our own trials differently?**

### ### Co-Heirs in Christ (15-20 minutes)

7. **What does it mean practically that we are "co-heirs" with Christ? How should this truth impact our daily lives and relationships?**

8. **The sermon mentioned that "grace is the great equalizer." Where do you see divisions in the modern church that contradict this truth? What can we do about it?**

9. **\*\*Read Galatians 3:28-29.\*\*** How does this passage reinforce what Paul is teaching in Ephesians 3? What barriers does the Gospel break down?

### Bold Access to the Father (15-20 minutes)

10. **\*\*Verse 12 says we can approach God "boldly and confidently."\*\*** On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current confidence in approaching God? What affects that confidence?

11. **\*\*The sermon states: "We wouldn't pray like beggars at a door; we would pray like beloved children with full entry rights."\*\*** What's the difference between these two approaches to prayer? Which one better describes your prayer life?

12. **\*\*Read Hebrews 10:19-22.\*\*** What does it mean that the veil has been torn? How should this change the way we pray and approach God?

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## Personal Reflection (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes of silence for personal reflection. Consider these questions:

- Do I truly believe I have equal standing with all other believers in Christ?
- Am I approaching God with the boldness of a beloved child, or the timidity of an outsider?
- How can I be a messenger of this mystery in my own sphere of influence?
- What "chains" in my life could actually be opportunities to display God's grace?

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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge (Choose one or more):

1. **Prayer Practice:** This week, before you pray, remind yourself of your bold access to the Father. Begin your prayers with "Dear Father" or "Abba" to reinforce your identity as a beloved child with full access.
2. **Bridge Building:** Intentionally reach out to someone from a different background, culture, or denomination. Have a conversation about your shared faith in Christ and what unites you.
3. **Perspective Shift:** Identify one current difficulty in your life. Journal about how God might use this circumstance as a platform for ministry or as a testimony to His faithfulness.
4. **Share the Mystery:** Share with one person this week how the Gospel includes everyone and offers equal access to God through Christ. This could be a believer who needs encouragement or a non-believer who needs to hear the good news.
5. **Study Co-Heirs:** Do a personal study on what it means to be a co-heir with Christ. Look up related passages (Romans 8:17, Galatians 4:7, Titus 3:7) and write down what inheritance you have in Christ.

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## Closing Discussion

**How does understanding this "mystery" change the way we should function as a small group? What would it look like for our group to truly live as co-heirs who have bold access to God?**

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## Prayer Focus

- Thank God for revealing His mystery and including us in His family
- Pray for boldness in approaching God and sharing the Gospel
- Ask God to help us see our trials as opportunities for ministry
- Pray for unity in the body of Christ across all backgrounds and cultures
- Lift up any specific needs or struggles shared by group members

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### ## For Next Week

- Read Ephesians 3:14-21 (next week's passage)
- Continue practicing one of the practical applications
- Come prepared to share how God worked through this week's challenge

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### ## Additional Resources

#### \*\*Recommended Reading:\*\*

- "The Mystery of the Gospel" by John Piper
- Commentary on Ephesians by David Guzik (available free online)

#### \*\*Memory Verse for the Week:\*\*

"Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence."\* - Ephesians 3:12 (NLT)