

A Prisoner's Prayer

Ephesians 3

Week of September 16-28

In this section, Paul again emphasizes the truth he brought up in chapter 2 – we are all one in Christ! He adds to this message his own role in sharing this truth. In this chapter we are given a glimpse into the heart and mind of Paul – the ways he feels blessed and the things he is passionate about.

As you have read these chapters so far, have you gotten the impression that Paul is in awe of what God has done through Christ? As you read this week, watch for phrases that communicate awe, wonder and amazement. You may want to go back and re-read chapters 1 and 2 as well.

Objective: Understand the “mystery” Paul feels called to share. Feel the passion Paul has for sharing this mystery and helping everyone to fully grasp what God has accomplished in Jesus Christ.

1. **Opening Discussion: What did you learn about God and yourself through your experience this week?** (The commitment you made last week.)

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

Paul begins this section by introducing himself as “the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles”. He then appears to interrupt himself to elaborate on this statement. It seems Paul fears that it would be easy for people to hear of his imprisonment and become discouraged or feel pity. As you read this section pay special attention to Paul’s attitude and the reasons that his imprisonment is NOT cause for discouragement.

2. **What does Paul see as his life mission or calling? How does he feel about this?**
3. **What is the “mystery” Paul mentions several times in this section? Look also at Ephesians 1:9-10, Romans 16:25-26 and Colossians 2:2-3.**

4. **Why does he refer to this as a mystery? Why is this mystery revealed now?**

5. **As you read this passage, what is your sense of God's plan for the world? Haphazard? "I hope this works"? Totally under control? What phrases lead you to this conclusion?**

6. **In Ephesians 3:13 Paul said, "I ask you therefore not to be discouraged". What reasons has he given to show they should not be discouraged?**

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

In these verses Paul picks up the prayer it seems he was about to start in 3:1 before he interrupted himself. This passionate prayer reveals to us the heart of Paul – the way he knew and experienced God and the way he wished for others to know God as well.

7. **The entire trinity (Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, God the Father) is referenced in this prayer. What does Paul request from each member of the trinity?**

8. **In your own words, what does Paul think is the most important thing(s) for growing in Christian maturity? What can you do to gain this? What role does God play?**

9. **What do you envision your life would look like if you were filled with "all the fullness of God"? (vs. 19)**

