

Ephesians

3:9-13

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7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. (Ephesians 3:8-13)

Importance of the Lord's Churches

- And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)
- Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21)
- Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (Ephesians 5:25)

WHY PREACH?

1. SO THAT ALL MEN (including the Gentiles) MIGHT KNOW - To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery
 - TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE
 - To help men see their condition and plight
 - WHAT IS THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY
 - To help all men see their “fellowship” or involvement in this world
 - Why are we here?
 - What is God doing?
 - WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD
 - God has everything in control
 - God has a plan and purpose for everything
 - It all goes back to Jesus Christ
 - WHO CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST
 - It is God's world – not ours!
 - The problems in this world are not God's fault, but ours
 - In everything – we should turn to God in humility and repentance
 - Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:6)
 - Illustration (Stephen Cole)
 - There is a story of three men who were working on a stone pile at a construction site. A curious passerby was eager to discover what was going on. He asked the first worker, “What are you doing?” “Chiseling stone,” was the reply. Trying for a better answer, he asked the second worker, “What are you doing?” “Earning a living.” Another washout. He had one more hope. He asked the third worker, “Sir, what are you doing?” He dropped his sledgehammer, stood erect, and with a gleam in his eye exclaimed, “I'm building a great cathedral!” All three men were doing the same job, but only one of them saw how his role fit into a larger, more important vision. Paul wants us to see how our lives fit into God's glorious eternal purpose for His church. When we see this, it will help us very practically to deal with life's difficult trials.
2. SO THAT ANGELS MIGHT KNOW - That principalities and powers in heavenly places might know
 - Bring glory to God by wowing the angels of God's great plan and purpose!
 - 10 ¶ Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

- DO WE DESIRE TO LOOK INTO GOD’S GREAT SALVATION?
- Head coverings were a way in first century culture to show submissiveness by her hair.
 - For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels. (1 Cor 11:10) – Submission brings glory to God as the angels observe our behavior.
 - 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. (1 Cor 11:15-16)
 - I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. (1 Timothy 5:21)
- Angels
 - In God’s presence
 - 1 ¶ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:1-3)
 - Will praise him for eternity (Rev 7:9-12, many other scriptures)
 - At war with the fallen angels
 - But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. (Daniel 10:13)
 - Present at the birth of Christ
 - 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:13-14)
 - Special indeed, but NOTHING compared to Jesus Christ
 - 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 ¶ Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (Hebrews 1:2-6)
 - Rejoice over the repentance of sinners
 - Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. (Luke 15:10)

KNOW WHAT?

1. The manifold wisdom of God

- One of the great characteristics of God is wisdom
- What is wisdom?
 - Merriam-Webster
 - 1a : accumulated philosophic or scientific learning : knowledge
 - 1b : ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : insight
 - 1c : good sense : judgment
 - 1d : generally accepted belief <challenges what has become accepted wisdom among many historians — Robert Darnton>
 - 2 wise attitude, belief, or course of action
 - 3 the teachings of the ancient wise men

- Bible
 - The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)
 - And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15)
 - 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people. 7 For what nation *is there so* great, who *hath* God *so* nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for*? 8 And what nation *is there so* great, that hath statutes and judgments *so* righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? 9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; (Deuteronomy 4:5-9)
- God's Greatest Problem
 - D Martin Lloyd Jones – “Here is the problem – man in sin! I say with reverence, here was the greatest problem God ever had faced or ever will face; there is nothing beyond this! So the greatest wisdom is needed to solve this problem.”
- 2. The purpose in Christ Jesus Our Lord
 - In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him
 - *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15)
 - open shew or open shame

V 12

M. Lloyd-Jones – “Of all the blessings of Christian salvation, none is greater than this, that we have access to God in prayer.”

Stephen Cole – “Boldness means that we can come before God without fear of rejection or penalty. Confidence implies familiarity.”