



Pastor Doug Wilson · BETHANY - A PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS
February 11, 2024 · Ninth in a series of messages

Ephesians 3 (TNIV)

¹For this reason I, Paul, **THE PRISONER OF CHRIST JESUS** for the sake of you Gentiles—

²Surely you have heard about the administration of **God's grace that was given to me for you**, ³that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into **the mystery of Christ**, ⁵which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been **revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets**. ⁶This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are **heirs together** with Israel, **members together** of one body, and **sharers together** in the promise **in Christ Jesus**.

⁷I became **A SERVANT OF THIS GOSPEL** by the gift of **God's grace** given me through the working of his **power**. ⁸Although I am **LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL THE LORD'S PEOPLE**, **this grace was given me**: to preach to the Gentiles **the boundless riches of Christ**, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, **who created all things**.

¹⁰His intent was that now, **THROUGH THE CHURCH**, the **manifold wisdom of God** should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished **in Christ Jesus our Lord**. ¹²**In him** and through faith **in him** we may **APPROACH GOD** with freedom and confidence. ¹³I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of **my sufferings for you**, which are your glory.

What is the letter about?

a. Its **tone**: "**Ephesians is intercession.**" (John Stott; Markus Barth)

b. Its **theme**: "**The Wonder of Being Alive in Christ**"

* DARRELL W. JOHNSON, *Ephesians: The Wonder & Walk of Being Alive 'In Christ'* (2022)

"The expression "in Christ" and its parallels occur thirty-six times in the Book of Ephesians, and if the other similar expressions...are included, the total is thirty-nine times."

HAROLD W. HOEHNER, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (2002, Baker Academic)

1. Look how Paul describes _____.

a. **God's** _____ — 3 times! (3:2, 7, 8 — but see also 1:2, 6-7; 2:5, 7-8; 4:7; 6:24)

b. **God's** _____ (3:2-6, 9)

c. **God's good** _____ ("**gospel**") (3:6, 7)

d. **God's** _____ of all things (3:9)

e. **God's** _____ (3:10)

f. **God's** _____ (3:12)

2. Look how Paul describes _____.

a. The _____ of Christ Jesus (3:1)

b. **God's grace was given to me** — for _____ (3:2)

c. **I became a** _____ of this gospel by the gift of **God's grace given me through the working of His power** (3:7)

d. **I am less than the** _____ of all the Lord's people (3:8)

e. **God's grace was given me to** _____ the boundless riches of Christ (3:8)

f. **My** _____ [are] for you...and are your glory (3:13)

3. Look how Paul describes the _____.

a. **God's Church is multi-**_____, **multi-**_____ (3:2-6)

b. **God's Church demonstrates God's "manifold"** _____ (3:10)

"The word for 'manifold' (*polupozkilos*) means 'many-coloured', and was used to describe flowers, crowns, embroidered cloth and woven carpets. The simpler word *pozkilos* was used in the LXX of the 'coat of many colours' (AV) or 'richly ornamented robe' (NIV) which Jacob gave to his youngest son Joseph (Gn. 37:3,23,32). The church as a multi-racial, multi-cultural community is like a beautiful tapestry. Its members come from a wide range of colourful backgrounds. No other human community resembles it. Its diversity and harmony are unique. It is God's new society. And the many-coloured fellowship of the church is a reflection of the many-coloured (or 'many-splendoured', to use Francis Thompson's word) wisdom of God."

JOHN R.W. STOTT, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians* [BST] (1979, InterVarsity Press) 123

c. **God's multi-variegated Church displays "His eternal** _____ **that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (3:11)