

Ephesians 3

Extra Questions

Paul's Calling and ministry (3:1)

- How did the Lord refer to Paul in Acts 9:15?
 - When did the Lord choose Paul? Galatians 1:15
 - Why did God choose Paul? 1 Timothy 1:15,16

The mystery (3:4)

"A. T. Pierson was a powerful preacher, educator, and missionary statesman at the turn of the 20th Century. He once tried to preach on God's blessings as described in Ephesians 1-3, a section of Scripture that continually talks about our unsearchable wealth and riches in Christ. Pierson said:

In the words of the text, "**the unsearchable riches of Christ**," "unsearchable" literally means riches that can never be explored. You not only cannot count or measure them, but you can form no estimate of them; and you not only can form no estimate of them, but you never can get to the end of your investigation. There is a boundless continent, a world, a universe of riches, that still lies before you, when you have carried your search to the limits of possibility. I feel as though I had a theme, about which no man ought to speak. An archangel's tongue could do no justice to it.

Pierson nevertheless tried to point out the truths about the believer's wealth as described in these three chapters.

Then he told his congregation:

"I sink back exhausted, in the vain attempt to set before this congregation the greatest mystery of grace that I ever grappled with. I cannot remember, in thirty years of Gospel preaching, ever to have been confronted with a theme that more baffled every outreach of thought and every possibility of utterance than the theme that I have now attempted in the name of God to present."

- source unknown

- How does the mystery compare to the hope that had previously been revealed to the Gentiles?
 - Genesis 12:3
 - Isaiah 49:6
 - Matthew 12:17-21

"To the rulers and authorities" (3:10)

- Interestingly, with what high accountability did Paul "charge" Timothy? 1 Timothy 5:21

"Do not lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf" (3:13)

- Read through the following verses that describe Paul's heart and zeal for ministering to believers.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

3 For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed - God is witness -- 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. 8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. NASU

Philippians 2:16-17 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. NASU

Colossians 2:1-2 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, NASU

- What does this add to your understanding of Paul and his ministry?

- From I Corinthians 4:11-13 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, list some of the difficulties that Paul endured for the sake of those to whom he ministered.

"rooted and grounded" (3:17)

- Compare the "rooted and grounded" Ephesians 3:17 to the metaphor in 2:20-22.
- What other expressions are given in Colossians 1:23 and 2:7. (See also Col. 2:2)

"to know the love of Christ" (3:18-19)

FYI: "The love of Christ is thus four-dimensional, with 'depth and height' considered as separate dimensions. Since the height of the universe is infinite (Isaiah 55:9), this suggests the time dimension too. 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love,' (Jeremiah 31:3)."

"Inexhaustible love begins and ends this section of the prayer. It forms the ground and root of our spiritual life and stretches out in a limitless expanse before us...Here is no sentimental thing." - Allen (68)

"The love of Jesus has **width**. You can see how wide a river is by noticing how much it covers over. God's river of love is so wide that it covers over my sin, and it covers over every circumstance of my life, so that all things work together for good. When I doubt His forgiveness or His providence, I am narrowing the mighty river of God's love. His love is as wide as the world: *For God so loved the world* ([John 3:16](#))
The love of Jesus has **length**. When considering the length of God's love, ask yourself, "When did the love of God start towards me? How long will it continue?" These truths measure the *length* of God's love. *Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love* ([Jeremiah 31:3](#)).

The love of Jesus has **depth**. [Philippians 2:7-8](#) tell us how deep the love of Jesus goes: *but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.* You can't go lower than *the death of the cross*, and that is how deep the love of Jesus is for us.

The love of Jesus has **height**. To see the height of God's love, ask yourself, "How high does it lift me?" It lifts me to heavenly places where I am seated with Christ. He has *raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* ([Ephesians 2:6](#))."

"The Holy Spirit takes hearts that are hard and softens them toward God (Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:25-27). The Spirit changes our priorities, our affections, our cravings - and gives us a love for God that is greater than a love for the things of the world that attack us even as they attract us.

Hearts formerly cold toward God do not become warm toward His people and purposes by a mere act of willpower. While we can will a change in behavior, we do not by an act of will change what we find attractive, appealing, and lovely. The Spirit accomplishes what willpower cannot in reconstructing the affections of our hearts. This is a supernatural work...We pray in the Spirit because we believe that the Spirit alone can so radically change the heart as to make it truly desire the things of God...

The human will is engaged in spiritual warfare, but it is not human willpower that defeats the forces of Satan. Rather it is the supernatural process by which the Spirit makes his will our will by renewing with us a consuming, overwhelming, compelling love of God." - Bryan Chapell (152)