

Teachings From Ephesians 3

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[0 : 00] in his life. I appreciate any leader saying that, especially on the little stage. And I thought about it too right away, you know.

I can think about Peter who tried to kill a hyphurist, I believe. They came for Jesus, and God spared his life too by just, what did he do?

He chopped off his ears. And Jesus picked it up and put it back on, and it was healed instantly. All right. But anyway, that made me, you know, God in control. It could have been very different, and God would still be in control.

But God goes that way, so I trust that God will get glory through somehow. And you might think if you want to comment later about that.

I've been thinking lately about sin and what is sin. I preach a message on sin and the cure for sin, which I'll probably touch a little bit on that, but I'm going to go back to Ephesians chapter three.

[1 : 14] And I've been working through Ephesians some, looking at what Paul has to say to the church at Ephesus. I'm just going to start reading in verse one.

Ephesians chapter three, that's primarily where we'll be at today. For this cause I fall, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles. if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you, by revelation, he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in a few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ, which in the ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, 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.

What is Paul saying here? We'll stop here for a minute. What is he saying here? Who are the Gentiles?

What are the Gentiles? Are you, is anybody here this morning a Jew?

[3 : 00] I hope you know them. You're a Jew by blood. Probably not. I don't see any hands. If you are, you don't know. But a Gentile is simply somebody that's not a Jew.

Or often it's referred to as Gentile nations. But there are people that are not Jewish. People that in the Old Testament were a part of, they were not part of, if I can say it that way, of God's chosen people.

They were not part of Abraham's seed. They were not people of promise or with promise. In Jerusalem last year, this survey was taken or whatever you call it or they count people.

But in Jerusalem, on September 15th of last year, on the eve of the Jewish year, the number of Jews worldwide stands at approximately 15.7 million people.

So 15.7 million people, last thought, are Jews in the world. And that is only around 2% of the world's population are Jewish.

[4 : 25] And as we read through this, this chapter here, look at, or at least at this point, look at Gentiles, we ought to be glad if we're not.

We ought to be very thankful that Jesus died for the Gentiles too. Jesus died for us because nobody here raised their hand.

And so, if it was only for the Jews, that would mean only 2%. And how many of those don't even believe? How many of those 2% of the world population that are Jewish actually are still waiting for their Messiah?

In verse 6, it tells us how that we are also fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of this glorious gospel.

You know, the Jews were God's people. They were by blood, by the seed of Abraham. But today, we are also adopted into God's family.

[5 : 40] Many people that are from certain backgrounds and cultures sometimes think they are a special people. Have you ever thought that?

that we're somehow, because of our heritage, you know, people become proud and they don't realize, we don't realize that we're really nobody.

If we're not a, if we weren't one of the children of promise, we weren't of the Jews, we were really nobody until God adopted us into his family.

are you proud or think that somehow God has favoritism toward you because of who we are? I grew up thinking that as a, an Amish boy that I was in a group of people that was favored by God, that we were probably the closest thing on earth that was right.

it's just what I thought. Couldn't help it. I don't know how that thought entered my mind or if any of you experienced that, but just kind of growing up, you know, that was the thing that, you know, we're, we're still the salt of the earth.

[6 : 57] We're still right. We're still, you know, and, and yet my heart was far from God as I grew older.

I had a cold heart. I don't know why I thought somehow took comfort in that thought that I was in that kind of a group of people. You know, Paul was a Jew and he had the highest religious education that you could get.

He was supposed to be on the top. when it came to God's special people, the Jews. But you know, when he found Jesus, when he found the Savior, the one he was persecuting, after that, he labeled himself as the chief of sinners.

We see a change of heart. He wasn't arrogant anymore. His, in fact, his background and his upbringing really meant very, very little.

without Christ, he called it them. He called it nothing. Worthless. Without Christ, Paul acknowledged what he was.

[8 : 13] No, there's no room for pride in the kingdom of Christ. There's no room to be proud of who we are in the kingdom of Christ.

we'll, later on, we'll see where Paul said he was the least of all the saints. And yet, in his realm, as a Pharisee, he would have been the top of all the saints.

But he, we'll get to that later. What is your view of others that maybe don't worship the same as we do? Or others that don't interpret each scripture exactly the way we do?

What is our view of them? Do we commit them to the Lord? Or do we perhaps partially judge them? Sometimes I'm, I believe that in our zeal for truth, our zeal to, to walk right with God and to be living a pure life and a holy life and, you know, we have the scriptures that guide us and the Holy Spirit that guides us into all truth and in that zeal, sometimes we become too judgmental and we forget.

[9 : 35] We need to remember, like Paul did, that we're bought with a price. We're purchased by the blood of the land, the perfect land. Do we think that we are better than others?

How is it that people are so quick and myself included, we're so quick to see the needs in others, right? We see the faults and the failures and the needs of others.

It's so easy to see sometimes, isn't it? And you're going, yeah, it is. You're talking about me. I'm sure it's easy.

But why are we so slow, so slow to see what it needs? Making quick judgments without even hearing the whole matter sometimes.

We quickly judge something many times, but we defend ourselves and our own family and our own, you know, the ones we're responsible for. we defend that.

[10 : 44] We don't want that exposed. You know, I think it's human nature to be like that. It's, you know, we don't want to be embarrassed or we don't want to be looked at, whatever.

but I believe God wants to change that in us. You know, if we want the blessing of God in our lives, we will allow him, we will want to allow him to remove any critical spirit and replace it with a spirit that is kind and loving and long suffer and have the character of Christ in us.

Long suffering. That does not mean that we sacrifice truth or godly principles that are precious to the faith.

It just means that we trust less in ourselves and we put our trust in God. You know, God takes spirit of his own truth. We just need to walk it and be humble about it.

It's not complicated. We make it complicated. We think we have to defend on it. Defend his truth. And in one way that's true. But do we trust God?

[12:11] To just live it out by faith and with joy. In spite of what others might do. Let's turn to Luke chapter 18.

I want to just read a few verses here in Luke 18 that Jesus said. Very familiar scripture. In Luke 18 verse 9.

Jesus speaking here. He spoke this parable unto his disciples I'm sorry this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

This is what we're talking about. People that trusted in themselves that they were righteous and they what they despised others.

So Jesus saw that as a great needy. you know he's still speaking this parable to us today. Here's what he said.

[13:31] Two men went up into the temple to pray the one Pharisee and the other Republican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself God I thank thee that I am not as other men are extortioners unjust adulterers or even as this publican over here.

I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar would not lift so much his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner. And then Jesus said this I tell you this man the last one went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone that exalted himself shall be abased and he that humbled himself shall be exalted.

I just wanted to bring that in that we look at that verse nine. Jesus was around people and it just says he spoke it to people that trusted in themselves that they were righteous.

They had their own righteousness. Maybe they thought well I'm a Jew. I mean sometimes at one point they said we are of Abraham's seed.

[15:03] Remember that? Remember that? maybe they were trusting in their background or trusting in what they believe or what they were taught.

I don't know. It doesn't say it. It says they trusted in themselves that they were righteous and they despised others. If that's our condition this morning Jesus is speaking this parable to us.

Amen. Let's go back to Ephesians 8. I'm sorry Ephesians 3 verse 8.

Before we back on we'll keep going. Now here's where Paul and we see the humility coming out of Paul unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace hidden that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

You know Paul was he had learned at the feet of what was his name and yeah and and he was very light up but then he met Jesus and then Jesus used him he transformed his life and as we know today Paul wrote probably most of the New Testament and God used him in a mighty way you know he you'd almost think he'd have a reason to be proud of him right like God is really using me now that I'm a Christian but look at what he says who am the least than all or am less rather than all the least of the saints so pick a saint that you think is the least in the kingdom of God and Paul saying I'm like in that why did he like that change

[17:06] I just want to say this you know in the political world I was going to say this at the end but Trump will probably be and is to many people a hero and you know after being slightly injured very easily buried easily lost in a watch he raised the fist he did his thing that he does right and people are just that's my hero and in the political realm we'll just leave that probably you know I'm not commenting on that necessarily good or bad but who's your hero who are your heroes which kingdom are we who are some of your heroes let's hear some do you have any

Paul that's what you know Paul had this he said this he said many good things to us for us today but you know like fighting the good fight of faith you know Trump said fight what was he referring to he wasn't referring to the spirit necessarily he was referring to his nation fight for the nation but Paul said fight a good fight and he has he has fought a good fight he's finished the race run a course you know the verse verse verses there and he tells us to press on for the mark keep going keep fighting yeah Paul it's okay to say yeah he's my hero it's one of you what about Peter what about Joseph any others the father oh your father your earthly father praise God must have been a godly man amen amen

Jesus Joseph so many that have gone on before us and and I I just that thought hit me as I watched the front thing unfold and what people were saying I'm sure it's there's a big hero this morning on

social media I'm sure but who's your hero let's keep reading verse 9 and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hidden God who created all things by Jesus Christ ultimately who's our hero isn't it Jesus to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by faith of him do we have this kind of boldness which is not the kind of selfish or arrogant boldness that we sometimes think about but a boldness that is full confidence full assurance yes to come bold with to the throne of grace it says and to have access I love that word access access to what we have access to come boldly to our Lord Jesus and to the holy of holies access to God you know what would we do without this what would we do without access some of you have experienced a time in your life and you felt you didn't have that access right you didn't know how to come to God you couldn't that is a very hopeless feeling that is a very lost condition we need to thank God that he made a way that we have access to him wherefore I desire that you faint not at my tribulations for you which is your glory this is

Paul speaking for this pause I bow my knees unto the father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named that he would grant you according to the richest of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man want to encourage us this morning that we are committed to being strengthened in our inner man are we as strong spiritually let me ask you this way are we as are you as strong spiritually as you should be what was it a few weeks ago when Bill was here that he preached about Israel and how that Israel only possesses what part of the land was it 15% or so of the promised land that they were promised only 15% there was a lot more available to them but because they didn't believe how is it with us this morning how much do we possess of God's promise is there more

[23 : 34] I'm sure we would all say yeah there's more are you as strong spiritually as you should be we would not say no maybe not even close the father of our lord jesus christ give us according to his riches not according to how great we are but according to his riches do we realize that this morning how rich is God how great is he you know these riches are unlimited he is limitless what are God's limitations if you think you have them what are what is God that is that the inner man be strengthened he has everything that we need we sang that song this morning all I need he is all I need verse 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that he being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and the length and the depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that he might be filled with all the fullness of God dear ones

I believe that God wants us to be rooted rooted deep and grounded in his love is there anything that can shake us and can take us away from the love of God Paul said in Romans there's nothing that thing of height and depth remember I think it's in Romans 8 maybe for nothing can separate us from the love of God is there anything that can separate you this morning from God's love will we allow me to are we rooted and grounded do we know if it could believe God wants us to know him the believers to know him above all else and to know to know how wide how long how high how tall and how deep is Christ's love he wants us to be filled with the fullness of all that God is do we believe God will we come with fullness and full confidence to him again and again and find God in a deeper way experience this great love that is what we need that is what we need two more verses now unto him that is able to do exceedingly or exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that work in us unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end amen here we see again what a mighty God that we serve appreciated that song this morning what a mighty God we serve you and

I cannot even ask or think about asking of what all God is capable of according to these verses he is able to do exceeding abundantly more than we know more than we our human mind can't comprehend or even imagine the love of our God by faith we can believe it but Paul said that he can do so much more than we can ask or think sometimes we think something about wonder if God could do this he can do those things but he can do more than we can even think and that just as I think about that I just wonder why my faith is so small is my life proving that I have faith in a great God or is my life showing that I serve a rather small God how do the people around you see the God that you serve is he powerful is he mighty does he change lives does he change you or does it look like the God you serve must be rather small too difficult to really help you and maybe he has not a whole lot of power or very little interest in my problem how do I portray God with how I live I

mean we can say one thing but words are cheap right I know what it feels like to carry heavy burdens that are hard to bear and sometimes we think that we have to bear our burdens alone and that's pride many times when we carry a burden that we're just too proud and let somebody else know we want others to think that always well and we need this time that's pride that God has provided a way and he certainly wants us to come to him with full confidence that he can so that he can help us in Matthew 11 verse 28 29 where Jesus said to come unto him all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest on this new place come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light how many times do we carry burdens alone unnecessary

[30 : 44] God don't pretend us maybe to carry that burden or at least not alone but to bring our burdens to him and he will give us rest this is a promise to us for today a promise why not come to him why not give him our burdens God has also provided a body here on earth that will help with the burden and struggles the bible says that we're to bear one another's burdens but so often like I said we have too much pride to ask for them you know we ask for prayer for other people in other nations missions those are easy prayer requests the hardest ones which is great for me I have to leave I'll believe you that it's okay to pray for other people but what about me what about us pride and touching sneaky vile sin and will always stand between us and God it will keep us from walking in nature it will keep us in bondage and defeat will you and I today come to

Jesus and have faith in his ability or we like the Pharisee that had everything under control and was thanking God how he was in control and what a good person he was yes pride is a sin it is perhaps the root of all sins sin that separates us from the holy God what is the remedy of sin I want to look at that just a little bit here one of the I don't know is it just meditating or what made me think of this but one of the thoughts I've had the last week or so is you know how easy it is for us to come to the mindset that the way that I get rid of my sins is by being sorry the way that I deal with the sin in my life is just be sorry and you know be broken about it and repent or whatever you want to call that remorse maybe but being sorry never takes your sin away forget that you're looking at your son being sorry is right it doesn't cleanse us it takes blood to cleanse sin you know how in the old testament they had a lot of bulls and goats all kinds of rituals they had to go through with blood to try to cover their sin it has always taken blood maybe

God wants us to keep in our understanding of what it takes to be free from our sin some people they just repenting and repenting and sorry and sorry I used to do that I remember I think I was 17 maybe when I started asking God to forgive me when I was 25 years old I was still asking God to forgive and that save him until one day I realized that I don't have to bring that up in God he doesn't know if I had my faith in his blood it's gone the blood is what washes away it's him it's his blood his sacrifice it's not me being sorry anymore but having faith in that blood never put your trust in your repentance or your remorse there's many religions that try to do that remorse and so on but they don't believe in the lamb so let us worship the perfect lamb of

God that shed his blood that we can be right again and our sins are gone as far as the east is from the west the bible says he remembers them no more do we praise him like we should is our heart full of gratitude and worship to him you know through this blood the blood of christ we too are the children of promise we are blood family if you will family of god we are no longer out past strangers but part of god's family now let's pray for each other let's pray that god will increase our faith and as we press on toward the market to hide all in christ jesus one of our heroes wrote that let's do that let's remember who our heroes are and who jesus is through the blood i've just i don't know in the last week really been thinking about the blood of christ and and what it means to me personally friday i think it was i had a visitor at the shop and somebody i know over the last couple years he grew up catholic he was an altar boy he was a good catholic at least when he was young and we just we have some of the sweetest fellowship that's what he was there i think he came the other day just just loves jesus just and i gave him my story and my upbringing he asked so many questions and then he gave his story and you know there's similarities how that we thought we were good and we just agreed it's the blood it's just the blood jesus and i don't know just having that conversation again just refreshing like i was so encouraged it was fine and just the fact that you know this man my brother he's my brother he doesn't go to i don't know what kind of church i don't even know what his denomination means but he believes in the blood of jesus and he's excited about that he's witnessing the people about that his testimony i was inspired even just by that why don't we stand

and we're closed and you know if god is tugging something at your heart and you're you've not been rejoicing in the blood of jesus and the love of god like you should have been i'm with you i know that sometimes we go through time it's kind of a dry season maybe it's kind of you know god seems a little further away than what he did maybe a month ago but we can come to him that's my heart this morning is that we just come to him and as we pray here that we all together just commit ourselves to him that song that we sang this morning nothing but the blood nothing can for sin atone nothing but the blood of jesus not a good that i have done nothing but the blood of jesus this is all my hope and peace nothing but the blood that's true