

Ephesians week 5  
3:1-13  
Summary

**Summary of Text**

We started out by looking at Paul the Prisoner and the Importance that can be realized in the way which Paul describes his imprisonment, that he is a “prisoner of Christ Jesus”. Paul understands his imprisonment as being on behalf of Christ, as a part of his personal service for Christ. Paul doesn't place blame on the Romans or Jews or whomever it is that has locked him up, Paul views his imprisonment as necessary to accomplish the work that Christ has set for out for him to do. Therefore, Christ is the one who has placed him behind bars, and there is no need for retaliation or blame. Because of Paul's radical obedience, he has no problem with being in jail. Part of Paul's purpose and calling was to introduce obedience of faith among the Gentiles, and Paul as a great leader is a demonstrator of such obedience. In Romans 1:5 Paul further talks about how through Him (Christ) we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for His names sake.

We need to understand that we are just as Paul, we are weak and unfit, we walk with a limp, but because of our faith in Christ we are made strong. This is only possible through the great love and grace of our God who has been revealed through His son Jesus. And through Christ and the communities of Jesus disciple's we will be continually made strong as we further devote ourselves to Him and understanding His teachings. An important note to understand is that whatever victory we then accomplish belongs to God. He is the reason for our success. Our God delights to use us, His weak and unfit people to accomplish His victories and through Him we are given all that we need when we offer ourselves in surrender to Him.

Then we looked at Paul the steward of grace and servant of the gospel. “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of His power (Eph 3:7).” Paul describes a revelation that recruits the people who hear its message. The revelation that is preached and taught in the gospel is not only so that we will understand, but so that we will accept the call into the service of God, the Revealer! Paul has been made a servant because of the gift of God's grace, we are also obligated to become stewards of grace and servants of the gospel, just as Paul was. So it is through this grace that we are not only connected to God and to Christ but also to each other, and together we are enlisted to be a part of community and build each other up, to learn and teach. Within our community of Jesus disciple's we will be able to reach out and spread the truth that is heaven on earth.

Then in the remaining verses Paul speaks of two tasks that are required of him, these tasks are to “preach to the Gentiles” and to “make plain” or to “enlighten everyone” about the administration of the mystery (Eph 3:8-9). The enlightenment that Paul is talking about is built upon his preaching, so that enlightenment is the result of his preaching. Confusing, but remember the diagram, and if you weren't there, too bad.

What I was trying to explain with the aid of a diagram was that Paul, although a prisoner, was still able to preach and teach the good news of Christ while he was in prison. As Paul preached to the Gentiles, the church was called into being. As this happens all the powers of the heavenly realms were witness to the creation of the church, this is the enlightenment of God's wisdom and mystery. Paul is preaching to the Gentiles and enlightening the powers.

Paul then says, according to God's purpose that has been accomplished in Christ, it is through Jesus and our faith in Him that we are able to approach God with freedom and confidence. (V.12) Being that Christ has experienced temptation as a human, He stands ready and willing to help us when we call upon Him. Christ will be our guide and is our strength in the building up of community and in proving to all powers that Heaven does dwell on earth.

### **Application**

Paul shows us that through Christ we are given the things we need for life, and that as Christians we need to work to have our lives defined by Christ. Nothing should shape us or the things we do more than our attachment and union to Christ. From living with Him we learn to live for Him. Ephesians requires us as Disciples of Christ to change our inner being and our character in radical way. We can't just let life happen, in all of our activity and work we need to strive to have the truth and love as defined by Christ to be the guiding forces in all we do. Ephesians teaches us not to fear or to give up but instead encourages us to become learners, to become wise, and to act out our faith in Christ, we must be willing to exercise ourselves mentally and become constant learners of Christ. We will be made strong through Christ and we will be successful in taking His message to the world. We will continue to show the people and the powers of the world who is God, participating in His triumph.

### **Discussion (David)**

One point of discussion was around the necessity of unity within the church. It was realized that so much depends on it, yet in reality we, that is churches historically, fail to maintain that unity. So often we get focused on our differences and on the things which divide. Another aspect of our discussion was around Paul's situation as a prisoner. We noted that Paul, Jesus and other disciples went through much suffering for the sake of Christ and his gospel, yet we today tend to expect to live out our faith without incident. This raises the question of our witness and our discipleship. Finally, we talked about the powers being informed of God's manifold witness. Our tendency, as Evangelicals, is to understand God over all and all knowing it. Any denial of that truth is the purposeful embracing of a lie. However, just as all aspects of redemption are worked out, so is this. Just as the deliverance of Israel from Egypt declared to the powers of Pharaoh and the other Ancient Near Eastern peoples that YHWH is indeed God, so our Exodus demonstrates to all powers (in the heavens and on earth) that in Christ God is King.