

FOUNDATIONS

week 3

Read: Ephesians 3:1-21 (Use two different translations for fuller understanding.)

What do we learn about God in this passage? What parts of His character are on display?

Though Paul was a prisoner of Rome at the time, notice how he frames his captivity in the first verse. What does this tell us about his perspective?

What word is repeated 3 times in v6? What 3 group descriptions does this term refer to? What provides this unity?

What do you think verses 10-11 mean? How might God be using the church to teach beings, both good and evil, in realms we can't even see?

Paul tells us that those in Christ can approach God with freedom and confidence. Do these words characterize how you approach the Lord? Why or why not?

Look up "rooted" and "established" in the dictionary. How does this deepen your understanding of v17?

Paul prays that God's people would grasp how wide, long, deep, and high the love of Christ is, then immediately says that this love surpasses knowledge. How do you interpret this contradiction?

What does it mean to be "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God?" What could that actually look like in your life? What might change if the church as a whole lived out of that?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for your grace, for your power, and for your wisdom. Thank you that you unify your people through Jesus. May our unity stand out in the world, and may we be recognizable as your people, set apart, and bonded together despite our differences. May we walk through our lives, not looking for the world or other people to fill us, but as people already filled to overflowing in you, ready to pour out to those around us. In the name of Jesus, amen.

EPHESIANS 3 (NIV)

Made Alive in Christ

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which 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. ⁶ This 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.

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although 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, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His 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, ¹¹ according 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. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.