

EFC Sermon Study Guide

#23: *Ephesians 3:1-2*

1. How does Paul describe himself in the following verses in Ephesians:
 - a. 1:1
 - b. 3:1 and 4:1
 - c. 3:7
 - d. 6:20
2. In 3:1 Paul says that he is “a prisoner of Christ Jesus”. What might that tell you about Paul’s perspective on his circumstances (he was under arrest by Rome at that time)?
3. What “was given” to Paul according to verse 2? What does he mean by that? (See 3:7-9; Acts 9:15-16; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11)
4. Look again at the verses from #3. What do you learn about the way God’s grace was expressed to Paul.
5. For whose “sake” was Paul suffering (v1, 2, and 13)?
 - a. As a Jew, Paul was supposed to hate Gentiles (2:11-16). But after Christ saved Paul and put him in His service Paul had a new attitude. He no longer hated Gentiles. He saw them the way the Savior saw them and he loved them the way the Savior loved them (Philippians 1:8). Jesus Christ enabled Paul to love people that Paul would never have loved on his own.
 - b. Is there someone in your life that you don’t love that you should? Jesus Christ can give you a heart of love for the most unlovable people.

- c. But notice the extent of Paul's new love for Gentiles: he was suffering for their sake. Love always brings sacrifice so that others can benefit. As Christians we have no grounds before the Lord to hate someone. If there is someone whom you are hating, or retaining bitterness towards, then confess that today (1 John 1:9). Ask the Lord to give you a new heart that you would love and not hate.
6. Paul received a commission from God to preach to the Gentiles (v2). As Paul carried out his commission he came under persecution and was arrested. His faithfulness to Christ was costing him, but benefiting others. As you follow Christ you will find that he leads you to people you never would have thought to go, to love people you never would have thought to love, and even into circumstances you never would have chosen.
- a. But remember this application: faithfulness to Him may cost you, and at the same time, benefit others.

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#24: Ephesians 3:3-4

7. Read through Ephesians and list every occurrence of the word “mystery”.
8. Write down what you see Paul says about “mystery” in chapter 3
9. How did Paul learn this mystery according to verse 3? (see also Galatians 1:11-12)
10. Describe why you think Paul had authority if he received revelation directly (2 Peter 1:21)
11. According to verse 4 what did Paul say his readers would “be able” to do?
12. In that same verse, how did Paul say they would be able to have this insight?
 - a. What does this tell you about the importance of the Scriptures?
 - b. How was Paul’s writings viewed by others (2 Peter 3:15-16)?
 - c. Is God’s Word enough? (Also, see Job 23:12; all of Psalm 119, Proverbs 2:6; Matthew 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:7; 2 Peter 1:3)
13. Notice a progression: God made Christ known to Paul (v3, and 5) and then Paul spent the rest of his life making Christ known to others (v4, and 9).
 - a. What should we do with what we know about Christ?
 - b. How are you making Jesus Christ known to others?

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#25: Ephesians 3:5-6

14. In verse 4 Paul is talking about the mystery of Christ. Then in verse 5 he says that this mystery was *not* made known to who?
- Who does he say this mystery *was* revealed to instead?
 - Who revealed it? (See also 2 Peter 1:21; Gal. 1:11-12)
15. In verse 6 Paul gives an explanation of what this mystery is. What 3 parts does he describe?
- How does someone become an heir according to Galatians 3:26?
 - Look at the following verses and write down some things that Christians will inherit with Israel (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 2:9; Titus 3:7; 1 Peter 1:3-4)
 - Write down the kind of attitude Christians should have towards other Christians as you review the following verses (Rom. 15:7; Gal. 3:26-29; Col. 3:11)
 - What do you learn about the promise in Christ from the following verses? (Eph. 2:12; Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:14, 18, 29)
16. In Ephesians 3:6 what does Paul say it is “through” that allows the Gentiles to be together with Israel in these 3 ways?

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#26: Ephesians 3:7-8a

17. How did Paul see himself according to verse 7?

18. How did Jesus see Himself according to Mth. 20:28 and Luke 22:27?

19. Do you see yourself the same way? Explain your answer.

*** *“The word for servant comes from the Greek word diakonos, and this is the word we get our English word “deacon” from. It is a very humble word. It means simply, “a servant” and it is often translated as such. But the word carries with it a great sense of humility because it was used to describe the work of waiting on tables. A diakonos is one who waits on others, who serves others. In the Bible we see diakonos pictured through Martha as she is busy in the kitchen serving Jesus and the others (Luke 10:38-42). It is the men in Acts 6 chosen to make sure the food was distributed to the Church in a fair manner. It is the 12 disciples distributing the bread and fish that Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 people with (John 6). It is John the Baptist saying he is not worthy enough to be the servant that unties Jesus’ sandals (John 1:27). It is the waiters at the wedding who served the water that Jesus turned into wine (John 2). It is Epaphroditus sent to Paul by the Philippians to take care of Paul’s needs (Phil. 2:25). It is Jesus on His knees washing the disciple’s feet (John 13).”*

20. What did Paul become a servant of according to verse 7?

a. Read through Ephesians and mark each occurrence of the word “gospel”

b. Write down what you learn about the gospel.

21. How did Paul serve the gospel? (Eph. 3:8-9)

22. Your identity is who you are. As a Christian, you, like Paul, have “been made a servant” by Jesus for Jesus.

a. What is the difference between being a servant and doing acts of service?

b. Explain what it means to serve out of your identity.

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#27: Ephesians 3:8b

23. How do you know if someone is rich in this world?
24. In what ways are the riches of Christ different from the riches of this world?
 - a. Ephesians 1:3
 - b. Ephesians 1:7-8
 - c. Ephesians 2:7
 - d. Colossians 1:27
 - e. Colossians 2:3-4
25. Read Philippians 3:7-9, Psalm 16:2 and Psalm 3:25 and write down what riches you think are more valuable.
26. How do you see yourself as rich in Christ?
27. More verses worth reviewing: 2 Cor. 8:9; 12:9; Matthew 13:44; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:4-5, 12, 21; Phil. 4:6-7, 13, 19; 1 Pet. 1:3-4, 7; 2 Pet. 1:2, 10-11; 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19. Write down any thoughts that you have after reading these verses.

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#28: Ephesians 3:9-11

28. Think about all the ways that we are watched in society. Write down as many as you can.
29. According to verse 10, what is God making known about Himself?

Note: "Manifold" means "many-sided", or, "many varied colors". The Greek version of the OT used this word for Joseph's coat (Gen. 37:3, 23). "Just when you thought you were getting your mind around the wisdom of God more of His wisdom is displayed in even greater variety than before. It is like you keep walking around corners of God's wisdom only to find another side that is more brilliant, more complex, more astounding, and more awe-inspiring than what you just saw before. And when you turn the corner again with His wisdom yet there you find another side. It has as many sides as an infinite diamond. See His wisdom in creation. See it in the cross (1 Cor. 1:18-25). You cannot exhaust God's wisdom. You cannot trace it out (Rom. 11:33). You cannot be bored with it (Luke 24:32). You cannot find anything more valuable (Pvb. 4:7; 8:11). The angels are watching." (excerpt from sermon, "The Watching Worlds")

30. Who is He making His wisdom known to?
- Look at Ephesians 1:19-21 and 6:12. Write down what you learn about this audience.
31. Through *whom* is He making His wisdom known?
- In what ways is God's wisdom at work in the Church? (1 Cor. 1:18-25; Col. 1:25-27; 2:2-3)
 - How is God's wisdom working in your life? How are you personally displaying God's wisdom for the watching worlds?

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#29: Ephesians 3:12

32. Read through chapter 3. What do you notice about prayer in this chapter?
33. Do you think God wants you to approach Him? Read (Heb. 4:16; 10:22; James 4:8)
34. According to Ephesians 2:13, 18 and 3:12 who gives us access to God? (See also John 14:6)
- a. Is there any other way to God? (See Pvbs 14:12)
35. What 2 things does v.12 say we may approach God “with”?

***Note: Freedom is the Greek word “parresia”, and it means to have “freedom of speech”, or, “to be unreserved in speech”. Confidence is a Greek word, pepoithesis and it means to have a deep conviction about someone or something – so much so that you have no problem relying on them. It means to be so persuaded of their reliability that you are confident when you have to rely on them that they won’t let you down. When you approach God with this kind of confidence and are persuaded that you can rely on Him then you come with no reservations when you pray to Him. You come as someone who speaks boldly. There is no hesitancy, no reluctance, no fear, no doubt.” (excerpt from sermon, “Approaching God”)*

36. Think about what Christ has done to give you access to God. How does that make you feel towards Him?
37. What should you approach God for? (Php. 4:6-7, 13; Eph. 1:15-16; Heb. 4:16; 13:15; Jas. 1:5-8)

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#30: Ephesians 3:13

38. Think about the many different kinds of problems people can have in life. Write down as many as you can come up with.
- Describe a trial you have been or are going through.
 - Write down all the different ways you can think of that someone today might suffer directly for their faith in Jesus
39. What reasons might God use trials in our lives? (see Pvb. 17:3; 1 Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2-4; Job 23:10)
40. In Ephesians 3:13 what does Paul ask of the Ephesians?
41. Why is Paul suffering? (3:1; 4:1; Acts 9:15; 2 Tim. 1:11-12)
- Do you think suffering was something that was expected or unexpected by the Apostle? (2 Tim. 3:12)
42. Was Paul one for self-pity? (6:19-20; Acts 21:13; 2 Tim. 2:8-10)
- How did Paul want others to respond to his sufferings?
 - How do you want others to respond to your sufferings? Do you see your trials – and how you go through them – as opportunities to tell how good and faithful God is?

****”Others have a particular attentiveness toward us because of sympathy and concern. Suffering gives a greater degree of credibility to the one who suffers. When the one who suffers speaks, his words carry greater weight. Because of this, there is probably no better opportunity to faithfully proclaim the goodness of God than when we are undergoing trials. When it is expected that we would crumble beneath the weight of what we’re going through,*

but instead we stand in God's strength, it is a sermon to all who are watching. Now, the question is: What are we preaching to others about God by the way we go through our trials? What am I preaching from my pulpit of suffering? What am I saying about God on the stage of my pain? What do they hear from me about my God when I am propped up in the pulpit of my distress? It is quite possible, that just like Paul, the sufferings we go through are for the strengthening of others. What are you going through? Now ask yourself, Who is watching me go through this? Your Pain is a Pulpit whereby you preach something about God. What are you preaching?" (Excerpt from sermon, *The Pulpit of Pain*)

43. Paul says that *his* sufferings are *their* glory. This seems strange for him to say. His pain is something they should rejoice in? We can understand Paul saying that his sufferings are for Christ's glory (Jn. 21:19; Php. 1:29). We might understand Paul saying his sufferings are for his own glory (Rom. 8:18). But to say that others would have glory because of his suffering is almost incomprehensible.
 - a. Why did Paul suffer (2 Tim. 2:10; Col. 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:2)?
 - b. If people believed the gospel he was preaching then they became children of God and heirs with Christ. What does Romans 8:17 say they would then "share in"?
 - c. So Paul's task was to preach the message that saved people and would lead them to glory and in doing so he was going to endure suffering. In that way, his sufferings are for their glory.
44. How might someone's strong faith in the midst of a trial compel your own faithfulness to the Lord?

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#31: Ephesians 3:14-19

45. Describe a time when you have ever been full of a strong emotion like anger or fear or happiness. How did you think and act?

*** To be full of something means to be controlled by that something. *“To be full of God means we are not full of “Self”. The controlling influence in my life is not Self, but God. This is why self-denial is integral to growing as a Christian. **“If any man would come after Me he must deny himself, take up his cross and then follow me.”** This idea of fullness, being totally dominated by God, also carries the idea of submission. I am submitted to the Lord. It is the picture of the servant, the bond-slave of Christ. Here we have the portrait of a person who has divested themselves of any self-ambition, and has committed themselves as servants to the purposes of the Lord. Every want, word, action is brought into submission to the Lord. (Excerpt from Sermon, “Filled Full”)*

46. Read through Ephesians and mark every occurrence of “fill”, “filled”, “full”, “fullness”.

47. List everything that Paul prays for in verses 16-19

48. How many times does Paul mention “**power**”? As you look at each occurrence of “power” in these verses, what do you see “power” helps the Christian to do?

49. What is the relationship between the “love” Paul mentions in verse 19 and the “fullness” he also mentions?

50. Compare the following verses and describe their similarities as well as differences:

a. Ephesians 3:19b

b. Ephesians 4:13b

c. Ephesians 5:18b

51. Notice again 3:19b. To be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God seems to indicate the idea of development. What are we developing into? (See 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19)

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#32: Ephesians 3:20-21

52. What is the biggest example of God's power you can think of in Scripture?
53. When you pray are you actually convinced God is capable of answering your prayer?
54. What does verse 20 say about God's ability?
55. Why is He so "able", according to verse 20?
56. Where does verse 20 say specifically God's power is working?
57. What else do you learn about God's power in these verses:
 - a. Ephesians 3:16
 - b. Ephesians 3:18
 - c. Ephesians 1:18-20
 - d. Ephesians 6:10
58. What do you learn about God's "glory" in verse 21?
59. What do you see could be the relationship between God's power in us (v20) and His glory in us (v21)?

60. First Corinthians 10:31 says, “***So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.***” Describe specifically ways you are living to God’s glory. And ways you are not.