

The Majestic Mystery of the Church

Lean In

If someone asked you to define “church,” what would you say? What is your overall impression of the Church? Do you have powerful feelings either positive or negative about the Church?

Look Down

“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,” Ephesians 3:10

Who is “the church” in this passage? What does “manifold wisdom of God” mean? Who are the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,” and how are they being taught about God through this process?

Look Out

Why is it important for people to focus on “the church” from God’s perspective, as Paul has been describing in Ephesians, as opposed to the personal perspective of the smaller corporate worship center in individual lives? What is the difference?

Look In

These are the questions Pete asked at the end of the sermon:

1. Am I using my past as an excuse not to step into the gift of ministry He has prepared for me?
2. How am I diving into the unsearchable mystery of Christ? Have I gotten sidetracked?
3. Do I have a low view or high view of the Church?
4. Do I approach God with freedom and confidence...like I belong in His presence?

Leaning In: Who or what do you think is essential to a good mystery?

Looking Down: Why do you think Paul calls this (the Gentiles as co-heirs in Christ) a mystery? Do you find that God sometimes provides clues rather than answers?

Looking Out: Although we may not divide over lines of ancestry, like the Jews and Gentiles did, we often divide over lines of rigid moralism, (good works) vs. “do nothing-ism” (because you can’t earn it.) How does the mystery of grace encompass every “category” of Christian?

Looking In: God doesn’t always answer why or tell what He is doing. How do you think both certainty and uncertainty grow your faith in Him?

Are there mysteries of the faith that seem to keep you from growing?

In what ways has God provided some clues that can help you have evidence that His good plan will also come to a good conclusion?

Leaning In: In what ways do you feel unqualified for your present life situation? How does it require you to develop new wisdom and skills?

Looking Down:

- What does this passage teach us about God's intent for the church?
- Who will learn about God's manifold wisdom?
- What can you infer about God's eternal purpose?
- What or who is it that allows us to approach God?
- With what attitudes are we invited to approach Him?
- Why does Paul urge the other believers not to be discouraged because of his suffering?
- Why do you think his sufferings are their glory?

Looking Out: If we were to act together with freedom and confidence to display God's wisdom, what kinds of things do you think the church might begin doing? What changes would we see? How does sharing our beliefs and experience together work toward building our collective faith and purpose?

Looking In: Do freedom and confidence usually describe what you have experienced in your own relationship with God? What would you do as a member of God's church if you knew you wouldn't fail? If you had 100% freedom and 100% confidence in the Lord? In other words, what would you like to experience as a member of God's church?