

# The Mystery of God

Ephesians 3:1-13

## Moving Towards Pentecost

- Last week the need for hope
- Today the reality of mystery

## Mystery on the Damascus Road

Ephesians 3:1-4

## From Jail

- Paul writing to the church in Ephesus (v1) – which is associated with Timothy
- A prisoner both in reality and metaphorically to Christ

## The Commission

- The mandate given to Paul from Jesus – Acts 9:1-9 – his encounter with Jesus

## Mystery for Paul

- Paul refers to his experience and his understanding of the Gospel as a mystery (2x – v3,4)
- A reference to God's saving work in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7-9) – the life/ death/ resurrection of Jesus

# Mystery

## A New Creation

Ephesians 3:5-7

### It's New

- The 'mystery' had not been known previously (v5)
- But is now being revealed through the apostles and prophets

### A New People

- The word 'mystery' now refers to the new people of God
- a great diversity of people from all over the world - Jew and Gentile alike

### Co-sharers

- Paul claims that all believers share as 'heirs with', 'members with', 'sharers with'
- No longer restricted to the people of Israel

### No Walls

- An invitation to break down barriers/dividing walls – to seek reconciliation with all peoples & the planet



## Mystery The Church

Ephesians 3:8-10

### Grace Gift

- We receive God's grace as a gift (v7) - similar emphasis to 2 Timothy 1:6 "rekindle the gift of God"
- The boundless riches of Christ (v8)
  - his work is unsearchable, beyond report

### Why Church?

- It is essential that we do not give up on the church
- In spite of its weaknesses it reveals the 'rich variety of God's wisdom' (v10)

If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty;

if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



## Mystery Living in Christ

Ephesians 3:11-13

## Direct Access to the Father

- A people who approach God in boldness and confidence
- Access to the gods was a major theme in the first century

## 'that you may not lose heart'

- Why this statement?  
Because we often do lose heart!
- We are overcome and distracted by the concerns of life
- We do not understand everything so we become angry or disgruntled in our faith journey

## Mystery and Our Faith Journey

- Paradox, mystery is part of the faith equation – we have to hold our questions in the midst of trusting in Jesus
- We keep leaning on Jesus through the Holy Spirit - as Abraham went out into the unknown with only a promise

As a belief system, the Christian religion is subject to the many ills of all belief systems; as an encounter with God, it transforms individual lives and human history.

God does not give us primarily a belief system; he gives us Himself, most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ, so that truth and meaning can be ours through a commitment to that love with which He first loved us. The risk is great, but the reward is infinite.

Daniel Taylor