



Meeting Notes: Ephesians 3 (January 11, 2017)

These notes capture our January 11, 2017 meeting. We opened our meeting in prayer and then began our evening. Topic notes may not be in the order discussed during group, and they are not intended to cover everything. They are intended as highlights to capture the essence of our evening. General notes follow each discussion topic. Documents used or created during this meeting are attached.

Current Vision: “2017 – The Year of Learning how to Walk: Putting on our Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace”

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are of God’s making, created in union with the Messiah Yeshua for a life of good actions already prepared by God for us to do” (CJB).

Discussion Topic: Ephesians 3. We resumed our study in Ephesians

- **Our approach to our study:** Since Ephesians is a letter, we are approaching it as a form of communication, which means, there’s a **messenger** (the apostle Paul), a **message** (what we’re seeking to discover), and an **audience** (the believers in Ephesus). Thus, we are looking at “What did the apostle Paul say?” and not “What does it mean to me?” This approach helps us put Scripture back into its proper context
- **Brief Review:** Ephesians 1 teaches us our identity in Christ and contains a wonderful prayer for the believers in Ephesus. Ephesians 2 introduces us to the difference in our old and new nature, describes what Christ has done for us, and describes what it looks like to be with and without Christ.
- **Examining the verses.** Since the apostle Paul’s key point in this chapter appears to be “the mystery,” I’m going to use the three categories in the NKJV to divide the discussion:
 - **The Mystery Revealed (v1-7):** The mystery is revealed in v6. Summing it up, the Jews and Gentiles are now part of one body—the body of Christ. Other things we noted in this section:
 - This part felt like an introduction, as in “I’m going to tell you what I’m about to tell you, even though I told you some of it already, because it’s just that important!”
 - Paul shares how he came to be a messenger to the Gentiles. It is through God’s grace and His power working in the apostle’s life. He also shares how his work benefits the Gentiles.

- Man did not always know this mystery in the same way as the Holy Spirit had now revealed it to the apostles and the prophets.
- **The Purpose of the Mystery (v8-13).** The purpose of the mystery is in v10. In short, the church is to make the principalities and powers in the heavens aware of God's "many-sided" (CJB) wisdom. Here's what we captured:
 - The mystery is connected to the wisdom being revealed in heaven AND is connected to the eternal purpose which the Father accomplished in Christ Jesus.
 - We likened the Father's "many-sided wisdom" to having different filters. Our visual image is the many sides of a diamond, with each side presenting a different view of the diamond.
 - Apparently, even though man did not always know this mystery of bringing the Jews and Gentiles together, it was always a part of God's plan, and it was accomplished through Christ Jesus (v11).
 - When we are united with Christ, it is through HIS faithfulness that "we have boldness and confidence when we approach God" (v12).
 - He closes out this section by encouraging the Gentiles "not to be discouraged by the troubles [he] endures on [their] behalf."
- **The Appreciation of the Mystery (v14-19).** The apostle Paul starts out by saying, "For this reason," and then launches into a powerful prayer. It seems like his prayer is in response to his desire for them to understand God's plan to bring Jews and Gentiles together. His petition to the Father is that:
 - Through His Spirit, the Father would give them inner strength.
 - Through their faith, Christ would dwell in their hearts
 - They would be rooted and grounded in love so, along with all the saints, they have the strength they need to grasp the width, length, depth, and height to know Christ's love which passes knowledge
 - They may be filled with all the fullness of God
- **Conclusion (v20-21).** We really didn't discuss these verses much except to note the power mentioned in this verse is the same power that works in us, along with the knowledge that we are a part of "all generations."
Takeaway. The Father's power is at work in us just as it was at work in the Ephesians!

- **Summary.** The apostle Paul's message came by revelation and it is to the Gentiles. As a result of his message, he was currently in tribulation. The message was a mystery, and the mystery was God's plan to unite the Jews and the Gentiles, which is now a done deal in Christ! IF we understand v10 correctly, we are also to be united with the angels in Heaven. And for good measure, the apostle Paul petitioned the Father on behalf of the Ephesians and glorified Him in his closing!

- **Other discussion.**

- **Comprehending Christ's love.** If we can't comprehend the width, length, depth, and height of Christ's love, how can we be filled to the fullest? We noticed everything worked backwards. In order to be filled to the fullest, we first need to understand Christ's love. But, to understand His love, we need to have faith in Him so He will live in our heart. However, for Christ to live in our hearts, the Father's Spirit has to give us strength in our inner man! **Takeaway.** Being filled with the fullness of God depends on our understanding Christ's love, which is dependent upon our faith in Christ, which is dependent upon the Father giving us the inner strength we need!
- **One family.** The concept of "the whole family in heaven and earth" (v15) perplexed us a bit. We believe this may be referring to angels in heaven and the body of Christ on earth being joined together by God's plan. Since part of our journey on earth is about us looking more like Jesus, this concept of "whole family" seems to imply we'll be at home with the angels once we are in Heaven with Jesus. This conclusion, however, is purely speculation on our part. **Takeaway.** We're not sure what this verse is actually saying, but we think it has to do with uniting those in heaven and on earth as one family.
- **Looking at life through the filter of love.** We comprehend Christ's love better and we gain knowledge when we can stay focused in our faith to be rooted and grounded in love. **Takeaway.** We have to be purposeful to stay rooted and grounded in love.
- **Value.** We went back and discussed the importance of Ephesians 2:21, "in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord." I didn't fully understand this verse until I began reviewing for this meeting. In my review, I clearly saw how we are all connected and dependent upon other, each with our own specific value in the body of Christ. As with any building, if any stone is out of place, every stone that is dependent upon that stone will also be out of place! Therefore, it matters that we know our value. Not so we can be prideful, but to help us grasp the strength and the power the Lord gives us to do what He wants us to do, because if we don't think we are valuable, we will not have the

power to complete the “good works” the Father has already prepared for us. **Takeaway.** Because we are all connected, when we don’t fulfill our purpose, it really does impact others!

Next Meeting: We will do a deep dive into the breadth, length, height, and depth of Christ’s love.

Closing: We closed our meeting in with a time of worship and need-specific prayer for the challenges that were lifted up, for the group overall, and as the Holy Spirit led.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about information contained in this document, or would like to be added to or removed from the email distribution for the meeting notes, please email us at wow2@wow2women.com or complete a Contact Form on our site, www.wow2women.com.