

Theme: **God's "Mystery" Revealed—to YOU!**

Text: Ephesians 3:2-12 (EHV)

² Surely you have heard of the administration of God's grace given to me for you, ³ namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation (as I have already written briefly). ⁴ When you read this, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. ⁵ This mystery was not made known to people in past generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and people who also share in the promise through the gospel. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel, in keeping with the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me—even though I am the very least of all the saints—was given this grace: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ⁹ and to enlighten everyone about the administration of this mystery. In past ages this mystery remained hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ He did this so that, through the church, the multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was done according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him we can freely approach God with confidence through faith in him.

A few weeks ago, many of us had a number of secrets to keep. We knew what was in the packages of Christmas gifts we had purchased, but those who would receive those gifts did not know. On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day (depending on your family tradition), the "secrets" of those gifts were revealed. As soon as the wrapping paper is ripped from a present and the box is opened, the gift is no longer a secret. The contents have been *revealed*.

God gave us, and all people throughout history, a great "Gift" on Christmas Day as well. It was a "Gift" that God had promised to all people for centuries—thousands of years, in fact—but wasn't fully revealed until Jesus was born on this earth. He was like a "Gift" waiting to be unwrapped and *revealed* on Christmas Day.

Well, this "Gift" concerning Jesus our Savior is described in our text, and in a number of places in the Bible, as a **"mystery"**—a secret. It is not a secret which God tried to keep from people. It is not a **mystery** in the sense of something that is unsolvable. Rather, the "mystery of Christ" is something that must be revealed by God in order for us to see it.

Today we celebrate Epiphany Sunday (Epiphany day is actually January 6th). During the Epiphany season we celebrate the epiphany—or, the "revealing"—of Jesus. So today we are celebrating the fact that **God's "Mystery" Has Been REVEALED** in Jesus Christ, and that it has been **REVEALED to YOU!**

As we consider this **"Mystery"** this morning, we need to remember how this word is used in the Bible. Again, like I said earlier, when God speaks of the **"Mystery"** of our salvation or the **"Mystery"** of Christ, it is not something God wanted to keep a secret, nor is it something unsolvable, but rather this **"Mystery"** is something we only know if God shows it to us. He has to reveal it to us.

We need to remember that we would know nothing of our Savior Jesus if God had not **REVEALED** Him to us in His Word. We would know nothing of how we can inherit eternal life if God had not shown us how He so loved us and sent Jesus to be our Savior.

In a number of places the Apostle Paul wrote about this “**mystery**” of God—the “**mystery**” of salvation that has been revealed in Jesus Christ. God revealed it to Paul and Paul, in turn, revealed it to his readers in a number of his letters. Our text from Ephesians today is one of those letters. Listen again to what Paul wrote to the Ephesians, who were Gentiles themselves:

“Surely you have heard of the administration of God’s grace given to me for you, ³ namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation (as I have already written briefly). ⁴ When you read this, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. ⁵ This mystery was not made known to people in past generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and people who also share in the promise through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:2-6).

Many of the Israelites—the Jews—(especially of Jesus’ day) believed that salvation in the Messiah was theirs only and did not belong to the Gentiles (non-Jews). This was never the case! God had chosen the Israelites to be the people *from whom* the Savior would come, but salvation was always there for **all**. Anyone who would put their trust in the Messiah for the forgiveness of sins would receive the forgiveness which Jesus would earn for **all** people. We read about this in our Old Testament reading for this morning from the book of the Prophet Isaiah, which was written 700 years before Jesus’ birth. He prophesied this about the coming Savior: **“But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:2b-3 NKJV).**

We, as Gentiles (non-Jews), can take great comfort from this truth. We have had that light and salvation also **revealed** to us, namely that our sins are forgiven and that we too live with Christ.

This revelation of salvation for us sinners comes out of God’s grace (undeserved love) and power. There was probably no one who understood this better than Paul. He writes in our text, **“I became a servant of this gospel, in keeping with the gift of God’s grace that was given to me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me—even though I am the very least of all the saints—was given this grace: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:7-8).**

Remember what Paul was early on in his life: he was a persecutor of the Christian Church. He did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior. He thought He was the enemy! He, just like us, was born dead in sin, and that sin and unbelief ruled his life. But God stepped in and rescued Paul out of his unbelief and made him His apostle, His missionary (especially to the Gentiles – **v. 8**). By the grace and power of God, salvation was **revealed** to Paul and Paul believed.

Each one of us could come up with a large list of reasons why we don’t deserve to have eternal life. Every sin we commit is a reason. We could come up with all sorts of blessings—both spiritual and physical—which we know we don’t deserve, but which God showers upon us. And that is the beauty of the revelation of the mystery of Christ. No, we don’t *deserve* that salvation, but God’s undeserved love—His grace—has brought salvation to us and His power has effected saving faith in us. We too can say, just like Paul, **“To me—even though I am the very least of all the saints—was given this grace” (Ephesians 3:8).**

Now, as Paul writes in the last verse of our text, because God has **revealed** Jesus to us, **“In him [Christ Jesus our Lord] we can freely approach God with confidence through faith in him” (Ephesians 3:12).** (Ephesians 3:12).

We have “**freedom**” and “**confidence**” because the revelation of the “**mystery**” of Christ has been given to us by God’s grace and power. We have “**confidence**” in going to the throne of God because we know that even though we are approaching the holy and almighty God, we are coming as His holy children because Jesus has washed those sins completely away. We have “**confidence**” in facing the trials and tribulations of this life because we know that Jesus is there with us. He has **revealed** His presence to us. He has pulled away the shades of darkness to show us that He is guiding us and controlling all things in this life for our blessing. We can live confidently and boldly because we have “**confidence**” through faith in Christ Jesus! The “**confidence**” you have is the result of God revealing the mystery of Christ to YOU by His grace and with His power.

Finally, let’s remind ourselves this morning that God **revealed** this “**Mystery**” of salvation to us by His grace and power, not just to save us, but also to save others!

This “**Mystery**” of God’s salvation through Jesus has been **revealed** to us so that it might be declared by us. Paul writes in our text, “**He [God] did this so that, through the church, the multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.**”¹¹ **This was done according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Paul was called specifically to preach to the Gentiles. We too, like Paul are called to declare this “**Mystery**,” to reveal the Light of Christ and the glory of our salvation to those who are still walking in darkness. The eternal purpose of God (even when it was still hidden to mankind) was that sinners would be saved. Step-by-step, generation-by-generation God **revealed** His plan to us. We have the full revelation—the wonderful news of salvation accomplished by God through Christ, His Son, our Savior written down for us right here in God’s Word, the Bible. We declare this “**Mystery**” to others in order to accomplish the purpose which God had established even before time began. We are truly blessed to have the greatest “**Mystery**” of life “solved” for us by God who **revealed** eternal salvation to us through His Son, Jesus.

Let’s appreciate and praise God for His “Epiphany”—His reavealing—of Jesus to us, and let’s **reveal** that “**Mystery**” to others. Amen.