

Bible Study Ephesians 3:1-13

Introduction: Dressmaking story. What is one dream you've had that came to fruition?

What do you make of this part of the story: "I knew if I told you from the start you'd say I was daydreaming and then you'd have started daydreaming yourselves. We had to prove we could make dresses first. But his is what I planned all along"?

In what ways did God tell us from the start what He planned to do and in what way didn't He?

Why do you think God did not make "the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in Christ" more direct or blunt? Genesis 12, Genesis 15-17, and Abraham. "Trust me" exercise from camp.

Ephesians 3:1-13

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-13.
2. What is the "mystery" mentioned in verse 4 and 8? Mystery as identity transformation.
 - a. You are what you do. Deuteronomy 9:4-6. Romans 4:16. Pride and despair analysis.
 - b. Expressive individualism¹.
3. Do you think there's any relationship between "you are what you do" and expressive individualism and if so, what?
4. In verse 2, St. Paul writes of his "stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you..." What does your table think stewardship means in this verse? 1 Peter 4:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 4:1-2.

¹ See Carl Trueman, Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies, Grove City College, and author of *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*.

5. Read verses 1-2 and 7-8. What was Paul's attitude toward his ministry?
6. As we discussed earlier, mystery is mentioned in verses 4 and 8. What do you think is the relationship between mystery and revelation?
7. Read verse 5. Where else in the New Testament do we see this mystery being revealed? Acts 2:5-12; Luke 24:47; Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:34-48.
8. In verse 6, what three things do these two separate groups hold in common?
9. Read verses 7-10. What is St. Paul's goal according to these verses? Read Romans 10:11-15. What overlap do we see in these verses? What role does your table see preaching taking in the life of the church?
10. One author writes this about verse 10. "The heart of the present passage is verse 10, which is one of the New Testament's most powerful statements of the reason for the church's existence: the rulers and authorities must be confronted with God's wisdom, in all its rich variety, and this is to happen through the church!" How does this revealed mystery confront earthly authorities and their heavenly counterparts? Why does Paul say the church instead of the pastors or individuals?