



## Ephesians 6

# God's Mysterious Plan Revealed



### **TEXT: EPHESIANS 3:1-13**

God's MYSTERY → Though there are many CLUES hidden in the OT, what Jesus came to accomplish was a SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT.

For Paul, the STEWARDSHIP of the message of GRACE is his CALLING, MINISTRY, LIFE PURPOSE. (v8-9).

→ *What were the big clues left? Why did God leave those clues? Why were the developments surprising?*

### **1. PAUL'S STATUS / PERSPECTIVE / MISSION**

A prisoner in their own eyes, is either

- a) A VICTIM of CIRCUMSTANCES serving a PENANCE.
- b) A CHAMPION with the PRIVILEGE of suffering for worthy CAUSE.

Paul sees himself as the LATTER.

→ *Why is this passage so personal to Paul? Why is he such a conundrum to those looking on? Why does he call himself a prisoner of Christ?*

→ *How do you see your sufferings, tests, struggles? Are they for you or against you? What role does God have in them? Should we expect a little of that?*

What's our PERSPECTIVE?

- \* Are we INDEBTED SLAVES or JOYFUL SERVANTS?
- \* Is what we do for Jesus INCONVENIENCE or PASSIONATE, PLEASURABLE, PURPOSEFUL?
- \* Is it to APPEASE Him or to PLEASE Him?
- \* Do we live from the standpoint of immeasurably GRATITUDE or is it ENTITLEMENT?

Do we see our lives as a RESPONSE to the love + goodness of the suffering, sacrificing Saviour who's captured, conquered + melted our hearts?

→ *How do you see your ministry in church? Workplace? In your community? Do you have time + headspace to do what He's called you to do? Do you have surrendered attitudes + motives? Given current life-stage / responsibilities / circumstances, what are you called to do / focus on / prioritise?*

Part of this is Paul's HUMBLE recognition of WHERE HE CAME FROM.

His commission could easily have made him PROUD but instead he remained intensely HUMBLE.

- \* HUMILITY is crucial as we are to be AGENTS of GRACE.
- \* The more HUMBLE we are, the more ROOM there is for JESUS.
- \* Paul had been REFINED, MOULDED + MATURED to the point where God could really, powerfully WORK THROUGH him.
- \* God's target is to CHANGE your HEART, CLARIFY your PERSPECTIVE and CEMENT your PURPOSE.

→ *What does it mean to be an 'agent of grace'? Are you? Why is humility so important in that? How does God develop humility in us?*

→ *How does arrogance get squeezed out of us? How do we become arrogant? How does it reflect in our attitudes? How are you doing with that?*

→ *Why is it that the more humble you are the more room there is for Jesus? What did John the Baptist mean when he said 'I must decrease; He must increase?' Has God succeeded in changing your heart, clarifying your perspective and cementing your purpose?*

### **2. WHAT WAS THIS 'MYSTERY' & WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?**

What was the MYSTERY? = That God would come to earth in HUMAN FORM ... be CRUCIFIED ... RISE from the grave ... ASCEND back to heaven and then pour out His SPIRIT upon ALL FLESH.

i.e. JEWS & GENTILES: Unified into ONE body / family + unleashed as this new thing called CHURCH.

What is a MYSTERY? = A SECRET which was once HIDDEN but has now been UNVEILED, REVEALED, MADE CLEAR

- \* On the road to Damascus, Paul's NATURAL eyes were BLINDED, while his SPIRITUAL eyes were OPENED.
- \* He could now see that the GOSPEL message had been there all along, HIDDEN in PLAIN SIGHT.
- \* All those TYPES & SHADOWS ... All those UNANSWERED questions .... All those PROMISES & PROPHECIES now find their fulfilment IN CHRIST.

→ *What was so mysterious to the Jews? Why would it have been mysterious to Paul before his conversion? What about the Gentiles? What do you think each of those groups struggled with the most?*

### **3 THOUGHTS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE & POWER OF REVELATION**

1. There is MUCH STILL to be revealed to us (1 Cor 13:12)

- \* There are BOUNDLESS RICHES + MANIFOLD WISDOM available to us in Christ
- \* The Holy Spirit is the REVEALER whose role is to unfold those things that remain to us a MYSTERY.

→ *What did Paul mean by 'boundless riches' and 'manifold wisdom'?*

→ *What's still somewhat mysterious to you? What questions would you love to ask Jesus? What issues completely baffle your unsaved friends and family? What would you say to them if you could?*

→ *What areas do we still struggle in as Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Where could we really do with some Holy Spirit revelation / clarification / insight?*

2. Revelation becomes our ANCHOR

- \* This I KNOW, really KNOW, becomes my ROCK + FOUNDATION.
- \* Once we REALLY GET IT, everything CHANGES.

→ *What revelations have you received that have become for you an anchor? Can you give example of when you saw something in a new light + everything changed*

3. Out of revelation comes COMMISSION

- \* We become CHAMPIONS of what God has really deeply powerfully SHOWN us

→ *What commission have you been given? What do you feel called to 'champion' and why?*