



## EPHESIANS 3

# GOD'S SECRET CHRIST CENTRED PLAN

In Chapter 1, we read about God's eternal plan was to redeem and bless people in Christ. In Chapter 2, we saw how that plan involved reconciling Jews and Gentiles together to be a new humanity in Christ. In this chapter, Paul explains that he has a unique role to play in that plan.

**1.** What are your favourite movie twists?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Movies often weave a level of mystery that only makes sense once you know the ending. In this passage, Paul refers to God's plan as something of a mystery.

 Read Ephesians 3:1-13

2. V1 begins with the phrase 'For this reason'. What's the reason that Paul is referring to?

.....

.....

3. How was the revelation of this mystery made known to Paul?

.....

.....

4. What exactly is the mystery?

.....

.....

5. What was Paul's special role in revealing this mystery?

.....

.....

Paul's conversion and commission is described in Acts 9:1-22. Paul goes from persecutor of Christians to proclaimer of Christ after an experience of the risen Jesus.

*But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man (Paul) is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." **Acts 9:15-16***

This helps to explain why Paul encourages them not to be discouraged by his suffering. It was promised to him by God himself!

6. How is a multinational church an important part of God's plan?

.....

.....

Paul then turns from his proclamation of the gospel to his prayer for its sustenance in the church. Take a close look at his prayer.



## Read Ephesians 3:14-21

**7.** Paul invokes all three persons of the Trinity in his prayer. How does he pray in relation to Father, Son and Spirit?

---

---

**8.** More than anything, what does he desire that the church know?

---

---

### CHRIST CENTRED PRAYER

One of the responses we need to this series, is to take on Paul's attitude toward prayer. In light of God lavishing us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, we are to pray that we would know that God more and more! At Christ Central, that's why we pray several times every Sunday gathering and pray in our Growth Groups and OA groups. As a group, reflect on the prayer life of the group. Is prayer a tack on the end or does the study of God's word lead to an outpouring of praise and prayer in your group?

May we have the understanding of God to be able to say with Paul:

*"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." **Ephesians 3:20-21***

It's clear from these verses that Paul has a high view of God and his love. God's love isn't mere sentimental love – it's the love seen in Christ and all the glorious riches that are given to us in Him. Why wouldn't you pray to a God who approaches us with that kind of love!

**9.** What would you need to do to make prayer a constant part of your life? Write down the names of three people that you could pray for this week.

.....

.....

Spend some time praying together in light of this passage.

Here's a reminder of the 'ACTS' approach to prayer. It stands for:

A

adoration

We bring our praise to God for who He is and what He's graciously done for us.

C

confession

We don't confess sin as if it's our ritual towards absolution, but in the light of the cross where God's judgement and mercy meet, it's right to acknowledge our on-going sin that is graciously dealt with by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.

T

thanksgiving

We offer thanks for what God's done in our own life and in the lives of others in our church family.

S

supplication

This is a fancy word for the prayer of asking for specific things. God is our Father and He wants us to bring our concerns to Him. And as we've seen in Ephesians 1, it's right to ask that our brothers and sisters in Christ would know Him better.