

THE MYSTERY OF GRACE TO GENTILES

Ephesians 3:2-6 BSB **SLIDES x 2**

*Surely you have heard about the stewardship of GOD'S GRACE that was given to me FOR YOU ³the **mystery** made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery of Christ** ⁵which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This **mystery** is that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.*

Can you see that Paul mentions the word '**Mystery**' 3 times in our text!

He is captivated ... besotted ... smitten by '**The Mystery**'.

THERE IS **A GREAT MYSTERY** BEING REVEALED HERE
THAT GOD WANTS US TO GRASP.
IT IS SOMETHING SO GREAT THAT PAUL'S WHOLE LIFE WAS
DEDICATED TO IT ...
HE WAS CALLED TO MAKE THIS **MYSTERY OF THE GRACE OF
GOD** KNOWN TO THE CHURCH.

THE MYSTERY WAS A REVELATION GIVEN TO PAUL FOR US

Ephesians 3:2 BSB **SLIDE**

Surely you have heard about the stewardship of GOD'S GRACE that was given to me for you.

THERE IS SOMETHING SO GREAT HERE THAT GOD WANTS US
TO SEE THAT HE RAISED UP PAUL FOR THIS SPECIFIC PURPOSE
... HE ASSIGNED HIM TO THIS TASK –
TO REVEAL THIS GREAT MYSTERY **TO US** WHO ARE IN CHRIST.

Have you heard about GOD'S GRACE –
SPECIFICALLY TO US AS GENTILES?

*When I started getting excited about this message,
I was very aware that I didn't really understand it.
I listened to Doctor Martyn Lloyd Jones and he was so excited
about the Glory of God's Grace to us ...*

I wanted to understand it like that too ...

In putting this together I am beginning to see more of the beauty and depth of the Gospel.

And I really want you to see it, also.

Our verse together with Galatians 1:11-12 tell us –
Paul was given this Mystery by THE SPECIAL REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST ...

Ephesians 3:3 BSB **SLIDE**

*... The **mystery** made known to me by revelation ...*

Revelation (apokalypsis) An unveiling, uncovering, revealing, disclosure.

IT IS LIKE PULLING BACK A VEIL

Like a bride's veil in countries where there were arranged marriages.

The veil was quite thick and hid the bride's good looks from the man she was marrying.

But at the crucial moment, the veil was lifted up for him to see the beautiful woman that would be his wife.

It's the same way with this **Mystery** that was hidden.

GOD IS UNVEILING IT TO US HERE & NOW.

GOD IS PULLING BACK THE VEIL ON THIS GREAT MYSTERY –

Ephesians 3:4 BSB **SLIDE**

*In reading this, then, you will be able to understand **my insight into the mystery** of Christ.*

SLIDE THIS MYSTERY IS SOMETHING THAT HAD NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE

NOBODY HAD SEEN WHAT WAS ABOUT TO BE REVEALED

No prophet in the Old Testament had seen this great mystery.

Not Moses, not Abraham, not David, nor Jeremiah, Elijah or Ezekiel.

The great men of the Old Testament had visions that caught a glimpse of Jesus coming.

But 1 Peter 1:10-12 tell us that the prophets and even the angels wanted to look into this Glorious Truth ...

BUT THEY NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT.

THIS MOST PRESCIOUS MYSTERY WAS KEPT PRESERVED IN THE VAULT OF HEAVEN UNTIL JESUS REVEALED IT TO PAUL.

AND NOW WE SEE GOD IS PULLING BACK THE VEIL OVER WHAT HAS BEEN SHROUDED IN DARKNESS ...

SO ... WHAT IS THIS MYSTERY?

**SLIDE THIS MYSTERY IS
THE GRACE OF GOD GIVEN TO US GENTILES**

SLIDE NB: A GENTILE IS ANYONE WHO IS NOT A JEW

- THAT MEANS YOU & ME ...

LET'S LOOK FOR A MOMENT ... AT THE BACKGROUND OF THIS.
Most of you know the story of the OT -

GOD MADE A NATION FOR HIMSELF.

They were **THE JEWS**, or **ISRAEL**, God's chosen people of The Old Testament.

THEY WERE PART OF GOD'S PLAN TO BRING SALVATION TO THE WORLD.

But Israel kept failing ...

GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE OF ISRAEL HIS LAW.

This set them apart from all other nations as **GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE.**

THE LAW was A Revelation of God ...

The Law showed the beauty of God's Holiness ...

His Glorious Standards ...

And Revealed the Very Character of God.

ISRAEL HAD THE TABERNACLE, & LATER THE TEMPLE, WHERE THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD ... CAME AMONG THEM.

ISRAEL HAD THE FEASTS OF GOD

- to remind them of what God had taught them
- to show them His Plan of Salvation in symbols –
e.g. the Passover, which pointed to Jesus Death ...
and the Day of Atonement, which pointed forward to when **Jesus' Blood** would take away the sin of the world.

ISRAEL WERE CHOSEN BY GOD TO DISPLAY **HIM** TO THE NATIONS BY LIVING GODLY LIVES. WHAT A TREMENDOUS PRIVILEGE THEY HAD TO HAVE ALL THIS **REVELATION OF GOD** ... TO BE GOD'S PEOPLE ON THE EARTH ... HIS OWN NATION...

SLIDE YOU WOULD THINK – THAT IF GOD WAS GOING TO REVEAL HIS AMAZING GRACE TO ANYONE **IT WOULD BE TO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE ISRAEL**

BUT GOD COULD NOT ...

HE BYPASSED ISRAEL WITH THIS **MEGA-REVELATION OF GRACE** AND **WENT TO THE GENTILES** – THE NON JEWS – THE HEATHEN NATIONS **SLIDE**

SLIDE THIS MYSTERY REVEALS THAT **GOD'S GRACE** WAS GIVEN TO **THE GENTILES**.

BECAUSE OF **GOD'S GRACE**, ALL THE HEATHEN ... GODLESS ... DEPRAVED ... UNDESERVING PEOPLE OF THE WORLD – IF THEY BELIEVED – COULD BE SAVED ... AND MADE AS RIGHTEOUS AS GOD HIMSELF.

THIS GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S GRACE TO ALL PEOPLE IS THE MOST GLORIOUS WONDERFUL NEWS EVER!

BEFORE THIS GENTILES WERE FAR AWAY FROM BEING GOD'S PEOPLE. THEY WERE AFAR OFF ...

Ephesians 2:11-12 NKJV

Therefore remember that formerly you who are Gentiles in the flesh and called uncircumcised by the so-called circumcision (that done in the body by human hands)—¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Before Christ came ... we Gentiles were filthy and putrid! We were ignorant of God. Our attitude was that of an enemy of God. We actually hated God and were intent on ourselves and our own ways ...

**WE WERE FOREIGNERS & STRANGERS ... AFAR OFF FROM GOD.
WE HAD NO PROMISE OF HELP ... NO HOPE ... AND NO
SAVIOUR.**

You say, 'But I'm not that bad ...'

**But we don't realise that each person without Christ is really a
Gentile and a lost soul ...
'Gentiles' is who we were before we came to Christ.
This is where we came from ...**

**We don't see how awful sin really is in God's sight ...
We think our sins aren't that bad ... they don't really matter.
We are so used to the sin and darkness around us that we don't
see it anymore.**

**And in Australia, we have grown up in a Christian society,
And so we don't do dreadful and terrible things.
But our sin is still there.
We just mask it well.
We may not have idols of wood and stone that we worship,
But we make other things idols ...**

**WE MAY LOOK GOOD ON THE OUTSIDE ...
But underneath our flesh ISN'T HOLY ... our flesh ISN'T PRETTY.
OUR FLESH IS UGLY & PUTRID.**

**And God knows that without Jesus, we are the putrid and filthy
pagan Gentiles we are reading about .**

**IT'S HARD FOR US TO GRASP HOW BAD WE WERE WITHOUT
CHRIST ... HOW FAR OFF WE WERE.**

**BUT THE SAYING IS TRUE -
'BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, THERE GO I'**

*Even putting this together I had a struggle to think of myself just
like the Gentiles of Paul's day.*

My flesh didn't want to think about that ...

But thanks be to God I have now begun to grasp this truth.

YOU SEE –

**IN ORDER FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THE GOOD NEWS OF LIGHT
WE MUST FIRST SEE THE BAD NEWS OF DARKNESS**

**SLIDE THE DARKER THE BACKDROP
THE BRIGHTER THE LIGHT SHINES AGAINST IT**

I heard a story of a man who changed water into wine ... last century ...

*The Lord spoke to him to get water from a nearby stream ...
But when he got there, the Stream was stagnant and putrid.*

SLIDE *It wasn't clear or clean water.*

The man said, 'Lord, I can't use this water! It's filthy!'

But the Lord spoke to him saying, 'Why? Can't I change putrid water into beautiful wine just as easily as clear water?'

The man listened and filled the vessel with this filthy water.

He returned to the village and served pure, beautiful wine to the headman of this place.

This is just how God sees us Gentiles.

Though we were so filthy in our sins, He sees us as the pure new wine of the New Covenant of Grace.

We see the filth and impurities, but God sees the Truth – how filthy Gentiles are changed into shining sons of God.

If you feel filthy and not good enough for God, I pray that this message will give you heart to know that you can be a new person in Jesus Christ.

**LET'S NOW LOOK AT
THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S INCREDIBLE GRACE**

Ephesians 3:6 BSB SLIDE

*This **mystery** is that through the gospel the **Gentiles are fellow heirs [with the Faithful of Israel], fellow members of the body [of Christ], and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.***

GOD CAME TO US WHO WERE BELOW GROUND ZERO.

**WE WERE THE LOWEST OF THE LOW,
NOT EVEN CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL.**

**BUT GOD CAME AND PLUNGED INTO THE SEWER OF OUR
GENTILE HUMANITY TO CHANGE US TO BE LIKE HIS SON.**

THROUGH THE **GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS**

WE ARE MADE TOTALLY NEW.

WHAT INCREDIBLE PRIVILEGE THIS IS.

*We could liken it to being in jail ... having been enticed into sin.
You didn't really want to do it ... but now you've got a record ...*

and have lost so much in social standing ...

BUT THEN SOMEONE GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY OF A FRESH START.

WHAT JOY ... WHAT A RELIEF THAT WOULD BE.

The privileged Gentiles of Ephesus to whom Paul writes these things ... and the churches around them ... though they were so deep in sin and darkness ... **saw this Gospel of Grace for the first time.**

GOD PULLED BACK THE VEIL & THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT?

COMING FROM SUCH DARKNESS,

AND SEEING ALL THAT GRACE HAS DONE FOR YOU!

YOUR LIFE COULD NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

THIS IS THE REVELATION OF GOD'S ABUNDANT GRACE ...

EXCEEDING GRACE ... BEYOND ANYTHING WE CAN EVER FULLY GRASP ...

ILLUSTRATION OF SEEING THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Chris once had a client he did work for, that sold Colourview lenses. These lenses correct colour-blindness ... so that people who are colour-blind can come to see Colour.

Imagine a black and white world ... like the old black and white movies ...

Colour just brings life into things, doesn't it?

They say that many men are colour-blind.

*Well Chris saw a demonstration of someone trying these glasses for the first time. **SLIDE***

This man had NEVER seen colour before.

When he put the glasses on he was just stunned in amazement at seeing what he'd never been able to see.

He couldn't talk ... he was so amazed ...

Chris's client told him that some men actually weep for joy at seeing colours for the first time. Others go outside and just keep looking and looking in wonder at the beauty of colour.

Colour had been hidden from these men.

Colour was a **mystery to them.**

They had no idea what it was like.

They'd never experienced anything like it.
They had no idea how dull their world was.

So it is with us when we See for the first time God's amazing Grace to us.

*Like John Newton who wrote Amazing Grace.
He said, 'I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see.'*

**THROUGH GRACE WE ARE NO LONGER WHO WE WERE ...
WE ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD ...
NOW YOU ARE WASHED & CLEANSED**

1 Peter 2:10 BSB **SLIDE**

*Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received
mercy.*

WE HAVE BECOME SONS OF THE LIVING GOD ...

Ephesians 2:18 BSB

*For through Him [Jesus] **we both have access to the Father** by one Spirit.*

Ephesians 2:13 ? **SLIDE**

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been **BROUGHT NEAR through the blood of Christ.***

***WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR LIKE THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST
WHO CAME RIGHT INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.
WE GENTILES WHO HAD NOTHING & NO IDEA – WHO WERE
ENEMIES OF GOD – ARE NOW BROUGHT NEAR ... LIKE A
DEDICATED HIGH-PRIEST.***

Hebrews 4:16 tells us –

**WE CAN COME RIGHT INTO THE VERY PRESENCE OF ALMIGHTY
GOD
WHAT A PRIVILEGE**

***WE ARE BLESSED WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING
(Ephesians 1:3)***

- *Having been REDEEMED BACK TO GOD (Ephesians 1:7)*
- *WE ARE FORGIVEN ALL SIN – past, present and future
(Ephesians 1:7)*

- **WE ARE HOLY & BLAMELESS** before Him (Ephesians 1:4)
- **And given ALL WISDOM & INSIGHT** (Ephesians 1:8)
**AND WE ARE SEATED WITH CHRIST IN HEAVENLY PLACES AT
GOD'S RIGHT HAND (Ephesians 2:6)**

**SUCH AMAZING LOVE ... SUCH AMAZING GRACE!
OH THE DEPTH OF THE MERCY AND GRACE OF GOD.**

SLIDE THE MYSTERY OF **GOD'S GRACE TO US GENTILES**
MOST CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES
THE WONDER & GLORY OF THE GRACE OF GOD
IN THAT WE AS GODLESS GENTILES COULD BE SAVED

As we have seen, **the Gentiles** of Paul's day were heathens doing
evil things against God in their worship of idols.
And this is just as we are without Christ.

**YET, FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME ... GOD IN HIS
UNFATHOMABLE GRACE ... LOVED US GENTILES WITH TENDER
COMPASSION ... AND PLANNED HIS PLAN ... TO BRING US TO
HIMSELF ... TO BE HIS BELOVED CHILDREN.**

Ephesians 1:5 NKJV **SLIDE**
*Having predestined us to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ TO
HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL.*

Or we can read – 'ACCORDING TO HIS DELIGHT'

Do you see here how much God loves Us Gentiles?
He's adopted us TO HIMSELF ... AND IT GAVE HIM GREAT
DELIGHT

Even though we all lived in so much ignorance and depravity,
FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME GOD HAD CHOSEN US AS HIS
OWN.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S AMAZING GRACE IS CLEARLY SEEN in
the CONTRAST of the depravity of sin in us Gentiles alongside all
God has done for us in His Great Love and GRACE.

SLIDE The darker the backdrop, the brighter the light shines
against it.

THE WONDER OF GOD'S GRACE IS MOSTLY CLEARLY SEEN FOR ALL THAT IT IS IN US GENTILES COMING TO GOD ... BECAUSE IT IS EVIDENT THAT WE COME –

SLIDE TOTALLY BY JESUS' WORK ON OUR BEHALF
AND ABSOLUTELY NOTHING OF WHAT WE DID.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S GRACE TO US GENTILES
GIVES US THE CLEAR PICTURE THAT –
GOD'S GRACE IS ALL OF GOD AND NONE OF US

WE SEE WHAT **INCREDIBLE GRACE** IS EXTENDED TO US WHEN WE SEE THE DEPTHS OF DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

AND WHAT WONDER IS OURS AT THE ENORMITY OF GOD OFFERING SALVATION TO US FALLEN SINNERS ...

THE MYSTERY OF THIS **GRACE TO GENTILES** IS MORE THAN JUST WORDS ...
IT'S A REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

NOT ONLY DO WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BRING US TO SALVATION ... BUT IT TAKES GOD'S SPIRIT TO CHANGE OUR HEARTS.

THERE IS SO MUCH MORE GRACE TO SEE & LEARN,
UNDERSTAND & GROW INTO ...

Like all the blessings that are ours as we mentioned above.

Unless we keep growing in this Grace, we can be like a boy who went to the zoo to see monkeys.

He just wanted to see monkeys ... And there ... just inside the gate were the monkeys he'd longed to see.

He spent half an hour admiring and enjoying the antics of the monkeys. And then he turned around and went home ...

His friend said to him, 'Did you go to the zoo and see the animals?'

'Oh yes,' he said, 'I saw the monkeys.'

'But what about the lions and zebras and giraffes?' his friend said.

But the boy had seen what he wanted ... and didn't care about the rest ...

Let's not be like the boy and only appreciate the Grace that saves us.

There is so much more to See and Grow into in Grace ...

LET'S OPEN OUR HEARTS TO THIS WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS MYSTERY IS POWERFUL.

**THIS REVELATION OF GOD'S GRACE TO US WILL CHANGE YOUR
LIFE FOREVER.**

THIS IS AMAZING GRACE ...