

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Called: Living as Children of the Light

5. Immeasurably More

Ephesians 3:1–21 (NLT)

¹ When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . . ² assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. ³ As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. ⁴ As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. ⁵ God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

⁶ And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. ⁷ By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

⁸ Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. ⁹ I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

¹⁰ God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹² Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. ¹³ So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

October 13, 2024

"When I think of all this..."

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago... So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. *Ephesians 2:8-10, 19 (NIV)*

1. The mystery of God's plan.

God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me... the endless treasures available to them in Christ.

Then [the Lord] said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' *Acts 22:14–16 (NIV)*

2. The vastness of God's love.

unlimited resources he will empower you ... Understand how wide, long, high and deep his love is

3. The glory of God through the church.

Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations

Next Steps: If God is calling us become one people who understand and experience his love, moving from hostility to hospitality to household by his grace (Eph 2), then we can take steps alone and together to understand and live God's plan in our daily lives. In your time alone with God this week practice the rhythm of "reflect and write."

Day 1: Look with faith. Reflect: Who are the "strangers" in my life? How do I see others the way God sees them? How can I communicate a smile, greeting or blessing? Write: A prayer list of those who you think of as "strangers" in your life—especially those who are vulnerable, lonely, isolated, or without resources.

Day 2: Listen with empathy. Reflect: How can I pay attention to another person's story without judgment or preconceptions? Imagine what it would be like to be them—walk in their shoes, live their lives, have their experience? Write a prayer for open ears to listen well to my neighbor's story.

Day 3: Learn with humility. Reflect: What have I learned this week about **the** foreigner or stranger who is also an immigrant? Write a prayer for an open heart and humility to learn.

Day 4: Lament with prayer. Reflect: What was it like for me to be a spiritual stranger from God—my age, circumstances, stage in life? What was I thinking, feeling about God? Write a prayer of lament for those who are far from God.

Day 5: Love with sacrifice. Reflect: What does it feel like to be loved by **God** and to belong to Christ; to be loved by others and belong to one another in Christ? Write a prayer of thanks for the love you have experienced from God and from others in Christ.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Check in with one another about your daily alone time with God or with an icebreaker question.

CONNECT WITH GOD (Use one of the below practices or choose a practice from a previous week.)

- **Practice of Gratitude:** Select and Play a song from the Message Series Music Playlist (found on Quicklinks). <https://solanabeach.church/called-music-playlist>
 - **As the song plays:**
 - Listen. Breathe. Attend to the presence of God in your life at this moment.
 - You may journal, draw, doodle, or simply close your eyes and breathe deeply. Let gratitude define the next few minutes.
- **The Practice of Confession** This historic practice is part of the liturgical rhythms of worship. In our daily life, though, we often lose sight of its restorative and reconciling power. When we first turn inward and “pay attention to the plank in our own eye before trying to remove the speck in our neighbor’s eye,” we encounter our own fragile humanity and cultivate grace for others. A practice of confession is a declaration of holy trust in the God of grace who is at work in us, and in others.

*This practice of confession can be done once individually and then together as a group.

- Take a few minutes to slow down and name those things that need to be confessed in your own life. After a time of personal examination, pray this prayer:

Holy and merciful God, in your presence we confess our failure to be what you created us to be. You alone know how often we have sinned in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love. By your loving mercy, help us to live in your light and abide in your ways, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior.
- Pause and receive the mercy of God. Pray:

*Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.*
- In confidence, pray:

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. In the name of Jesus Christ we have been forgiven.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Pray:** Before digging into the scripture and message more, pray together. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.
- **Together:** Read Ephesians 3:1-21 as a group.
- **Alone:** Read Ephesians 3:1-21 again. Spend a few minutes journaling and reflecting on the following prompt:
 - What are the themes that run through this passage?
 - How do those themes connect to your own encounter of God?
- **Together:** In pairs or as a whole group, share with one another your reflections from the prompts above. If there is time, consider the following prompt together:
 - What questions or uncertainties do you have about the passage?
(Do your best to *hold* the answers to those questions, and return to them later in conversation).

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- Reflecting on the main points of the message, what has been most impactful or challenging for you?
- What does this “mysterious plan” reveal about the character of God?
- Imagine together what it looks like in our own context to have the privilege to spread the good news (7) and for Christ to make a home in our hearts (17)?
- How does Paul describe both power and love in this passage?
- What big ideas or questions will you continue to wrestle with this week?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with Ephesians 3:1–21 and the message on Sunday, October 13th.

“We aren’t disciples in midair without bodies, histories, personalities, relationships and much more. We begin to follow by responding to Jesus’ invitation where we are.”

- Mark Labberton, Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today

PRAYER

Like Paul, spend time in awe and gratitude for what God has accomplished in Christ Jesus. Give glory and honor to the God whose power is at work in us, through this new body and household called the church. How can you pray for one another to grow in God’s love this week beyond what we could even imagine?