

The words that you want to look at here are the words “*For this reason...*” (Ephesians 3:1), and then you have to ask what he's talking about. For what reason? What's the “this”? And it's very difficult to figure out what “this” is. Is it His eternal purpose, or is it for the building? Is it for salvation? Is it for the church? Why don't you just spend a little time on the word “this”, would you? Anybody got some spare time today? *For this reason*, Chapter 3.

*For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles.* Now, before I read any further on, I want you to know that what we're about to read doesn't make sense and is incredibly beautiful. Remember, he's never seen these people. How can I say that Paul feels so connected to a church that even though he is a non-local worker and he travels, he feels that what happens to them happens to him, and what happens to him happens to them? This is so beautiful, saints. And when I was in Denver two weeks ago, I said to them, I want you to look at the romance between church and church planter. There's not as much of that in Ephesians as there is in Colossians, but there is a romance going on between church and church planter. It's beautiful. Their care for one another, their thoughtfulness for one another, and their failures toward one another, and they do both fail. Paul had to apologize to Corinth several times because he felt he had not kept his word with them, although he had defended himself. I'd like to go a little further and say this to you. You need me. Except I'm using words now (Paul's), accept me into your heart as part of your life. You need me. There are only a few of us, and we are literally the spice of your life.

You would marry, you would have children, you would have a job, you would get fired, get another job, you would save some money to retire, you would live, and then you would die. We don't do that. We just get fired and fired and fired and fired, or we have to work solo for a living because we don't fit in. Some of you have gone with me to England, some of you went with me to Scotland, and some of you went with me to Albania. You've gone with me to Romania, and you've gone with me to Hungary, and you've gone with me to other churches and other places and pioneer situations, and you just had so much fun you would have never had if you'd not met me. I am a spice to your life. I'm keeping you from living a mundane vanilla life.

Now, then, the brothers and sisters in Philadelphia poked fun about this one time, and I really enjoyed that, but they have a song that they sang to brother Tim that went something like this: And why are you running around with that old man, and between the two of you, you're spending all our money? Doesn't it go something like that? You're getting it right because we are the spice of your life. We get in trouble; you get to pray for us. We do something wrong; you get to have fun. We get blasted somewhere; you get to giggle. You get to have a vicarious experience of fun with us, and you get to go with us. You get to hear our wild tales. Yes, you get to help us, and we, in turn, rejoice in you, and we watch some of the crises you get into and just go through the ceiling when we see that you, with the Lord, have worked your way through her.

It is so exciting, and the church is exciting. It's far more fun to be in the church than it is to just have two neighbors you gossip about all the time but be with once or twice a month, you know,

and you really love them, and then you get home and say Mary and John are about to get a divorce. Did you see that little idiot kid of his, who went out and stuck beans up his nose? What you don't know is that all of our little children stick beans up their noses, and everybody's about to divorce their wives or they're having problems. And in the church, we get a taste of a lot of this on a wider scale, and in some way or another, it helps us become more natural. I don't know what I'm saying here, but I'm telling you it's more fun to be in the church. And you get to live with us, and we get to live with you, and it's fun, and now we're moving into that kind of a passage right here. Again, I'm seeking to get a flavor of what these letters really said.

*For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for the sake of you Gentiles, I'm in jail, in prison at Rome, a town you've never seen, never been to, only heard about. You're in a little town about 5,000 down here in the south-central corner of Asia Minor. And this next word could be "since"; not if, but since. Since indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace, which...Brother David, wake up, that's 69. If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you. Thank you, brother. I have been given a stewardship of God's grace for you, and yet I've never even met you. That's amazing.*

*That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.* Alright, now, why don't scholars notice this little appendage here? Do you know what that's referring to? Yes. So, why don't we call this second Colossians? Exactly, the other letter, Colossians. Okay. Paul has, by revelation, been allowed to know the mystery, and by referring to this, then you, 71, when you read it, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, one of the indications in my judgment of whether or not a man is really a church planter is whether or not he preaches on the mystery and whether or not he has insight into it. Try to find that guy; he is as scary as molars in a chicken mouth. Okay. *And by referring to this, then, when you read this, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by means of the Holy Spirit.* In other words, the apostles and the prophets who are speaking on this day have, by the Spirit, seen the mystery.

Now, let me explain to you what I mean. That's verse six. That the heathens, I don't know whether to count that one or not. So, you don't want to count that one. The heathen are fellow heirs. Fellow heirs and fellow members, fellow members of the body. This brother has a mind totally different from our own, fellow heirs and fellow members.

Now, this is part of the mystery that somewhere in this, you who are uncircumcised and unclean, you get to inherit something, and you're part of a body. And fellow partakers, that's got an "S" on the end of it, doesn't it...of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. We're in verse six. So, we get that we're partakers, we're inheritors, and we're part of a body. We partake together. We *heir* together, that's H E I R, and we also are part of a body. I don't inherit; *we do*. I don't partake; *we partake*. I am not the body, and I am not the greatest thing on this earth that ever happened; I am not a solo Lindbergh out here, I am a part of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ of

which I was made a minister and I think the of which I was made refers to the gospel but it also refers to the mystery but brothers and sisters the gospel is not Jesus saves. The gospel is Jesus Christ. And included within the gospel, which is Jesus Christ, and He has been called to proclaim Jesus Christ, within that is the mystery, the inheritance, the body, and the partaking. And you could spend a year talking about partaking of Christ, inheriting Christ, and being part of the body of Christ, but you probably won't do that unless you've been called to proclaim this incredible universal cosmological Jesus Christ.

*I was, for this, made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which has been given to me according to the working of His power, and rather than get off on power, here I would just like to say that against His will or totally apart from His will, God chose Paul of Tarsus to have a certain ability and that ability is to preach this incredible Christ. And Paul considered it a grace. And for those of you who might rejoice in your gift, please remember that the brother who made that statement's gift was not to plant the church in his flesh. His gift was to destroy the church, and God broke that, and God will break your natural gift. That was a gifted man who had brought down the church in Jerusalem, saying, and then God blinded him, broke him, turned him around, and headed him in the exact opposite direction of his gift. For those of you who say, "Well, God's gift for me is singing," then may you have laryngitis all your life.*

*Which has been given as a gift to me, according to the work of His power. His power and His grace are here tied together, saints. To me, the very least of all holy ones...you got it, brother; you have the gift now. To me, the very least of all the holy ones, this grace was given, not this gift but this mercy unmerited, was given to preach to the heathen, the unfathomable, unsearchable riches of Christ. I'm just going to say it again. It's not only that we preach Christ, but we just preach Christ, and He gets richer, and we preach Christ, and He gets richer, and He gets more unfathomable, to the point you just can't believe that there's so much riches in Him. And we have touched on these things this week, such as your Christ being excited about inheriting you and God giving this incredible cosmological, creating Christ, giving Him to the ekklesia as a gift.*

Those are unfathomable riches, and they can be fathomed. I am about to come to the conclusion that the organized church has reached a point, or has always been at the point, where the church feels uncomfortable hearing about the Lord Jesus Christ; at least Christian workers do. I can make a group of Christian workers within traditional Christianity nervous by talking about the Lord. And if we are preaching what we should preach, we should be preaching unfathomable. That means you can drop a rope over the side of the ship and you can drop it as far as you can and tie some more rope on and some more rope and then you rip the sails up and you make a rope out of them and you drop them and then you take all the people's clothes and you tie that on and then you take all the other rope and hemp and the stuff that's in the cargo hole, you tie that on, and then you can't find the bottom.

That is the Christ that you have a right to hear about and to touch and know. I had just finished 8, didn't I, and by the way, I'm not exhausting this, I hope you know I'm not exhausting

this book. I'm just looking for some words to give to brother David over here. And...now this "and" refers back to his calling and to the mystery, the two points he made here, and that's to proclaim the riches of Christ "and," by the way, there's always an "and" when we preach Christ *and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God. God, who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known...through YWAM.* Excuse me, I apologize to YWAM. Campus Crusade for Christ. I apologize to Campus Crusade for Christ. Intervarsity. I apologize to Intervarsity. Do you understand what he has said? He has said that I am a steward of the mystery. It is my privilege to preach an unreached and unfathomable Christ to you heathen, and this grace was given me to preach this unfathomable Christ for you, and that the manifold riches of God that are revealed in this mystery are not only revealed by me in my speaking, but are revealed by the church, in the church, through the church. There's always an end - and the end is that girl.

I am going to go back and read it again. *And to bring to light what is the administration, the working out of the mystery, the mystery which has been hidden...he's off the subject here...hidden in God.* That's God, the creator. *In order for the manifold wisdom of God,* that is, the wisdom of God to let the Gentiles know this, the wisdom of God to let you know Christ, the wisdom of God to let you know the mystery, the inheritance, the wisdom of God to let you know how rich Christ is. The wisdom of God, to let you have revelation of Christ and of the church. The wisdom of God is for the church to be the custodian of the gospel and for the church to be one with Christ.

*All of this that the manifold, the many splended, the multiplicity of the wisdom of God inexhaustible might now be made known by means of an instrument other than the church planter, but that which he has planted, that all these unsearchable riches, all the manifold wisdom of God, all the stewardship of the mystery can be made known by and through the girl.* Brothers and sisters, the man is obsessed.

Now, this is serious stuff for me. I haven't had enough time with any of the churches. I've not touched on this in any of the churches, and I may even skip some passages here. In fact, I think I'll actually go turn this off. I want to do this in each of the churches.

*...to the very least of all the holy ones, this gift was given to preach to the heathen the unfathomable riches of Jesus Christ and to bring to light, let it be known, what is the administration, the working out of the mystery which for ages was hidden by God the creator in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities on earth...no! In realms unseen,* and for those of you who sit and listen to me minister and wonder why in the world I talk so much about the unseen, it is because we belong in unseen realms. We have a right to places that have no dimension. We have the right to walk in there, which is the disputed territory between Christ and the enemy, and we walk into the unseen realms, and we stand there, and we reveal to the principalities and powers just how smart God was

in allowing the Gentiles to come and be a body, an inheritance, a partaking, a building. What else? Something else. A household, a citizenship, a nation, a temple, and also just how rich we are.

The Christ who has not been seen on this earth for 2,000 years, and to display to the enemy in real physical form in heavenly places that He's still alive and that He was so smart and that He is unfathomable in His riches and that He had a mystery hidden in Him when the devil pulled His stunt, a mystery the devil didn't know anything about. Satan had no knowledge of, and God is daily revealing it to him and literally taunting him for his really dumb stunt that he pulled to the principalities and powers. It has been given to the church to reveal the manifold wisdom of God, the unfathomable riches which are Jesus Christ in the church.

I hope you enjoy that hot tub. And all of that, the first, then we come to the end; and now he somehow makes a conclusion. All that I've just said to you was according to, and then here's Gene Edwards' obsession—the eternal purpose. People rib me about God's eternal purpose, His ageless purpose. His eternal purpose, to save men from their sins. His eternal purpose, to evangelize the world. (sarcasm – these are not the eternal purpose) His eternal purpose, a purpose that preceded creation and will still be His purpose when creation is dissolved. A purpose that has nothing to do with the fall or redemption, an eternal purpose. The fall began; the fall shall end. The eternal purpose precedes it, is being worked out in the midst of the fall, and will continue to be worked out when there's not a molecule left anywhere. And all things will simply be spiritual, invisible, and unseen. He will continue working out this eternal purpose.

What is His eternal purpose? Same thing as His mystery. Christ in the church made one, until we are indistinguishably one. You go ahead, join your movements; God has a purpose. You and I were destined to be in it. Find your satisfaction in organizations with His eternal purpose as a part.

Now, only when I get to Ephesians do I do this, I suppose. Okay, I do, and in *The Divine Romance*. I guess I was thinking of an intellectual explanation, like *Living by the Highest Life* and *The Secret of the Christian Life*. Well, you say, Gene, intellectual? Well, yes, I move away from the parabolic to the explanation, the expository. See, that's the UCLA tape in the little pamphlets of the eternal purpose. Yes, the UCLA tape. By the way, somebody found an ancient edition; the one you probably own is a 10th or 15th generation. Somebody came up with a newer one, and we're now using a much better recording.

*Which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Not that He will, but He did. All that has to do with the completion of the eternal purpose has been done. Isn't that wonderful? All I have to do is go jump right in the middle of it. So, this is the outworking of the Gospel and the church exhibiting to the angels. *All of this was in accordance with the eternal purpose which Jesus Christ has already established. In whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.* What do we have boldness to enter into? I do believe it's the eternal purpose. Can you help me here? Am I mistaken? To what Christ has carried out, we have access with boldness. *Therefore, I ask you...* I don't understand this. Colossae is hundreds of miles from Rome. *Don't lose heart at*

*my troubles*. That in itself is strange enough. What's this sentence doing here anyway? *Therefore, don't lose heart at my troubles*. That's strange enough. Look at the rest of the sentence. *My troubles are on your behalf. For they are your glory*. And I have to sit and stop and say, do you mean to tell me that everything you've written, brother Paul, up until now in chapter 3:13, is simply to encourage these people to not lose heart over the fact he's in prison? And the answer to that is yes.

So now you tell me there's not a romance going on between the Lord's people and the church player. Why would they lose heart in Colossae? I don't know, but they did. They were concerned about Paul being in prison, even though they had Epaphroditus. I've told you all of this so that you won't lose heart; that what is happening to me is for your sake.

Now, God gives us churches, of which when you hear, I've been thrown in jail by the Baptists, they'll say that was for us. And when a brother goes to China and gets thrown in prison there, it was for your sake, and you will rejoice in the strength that he is being thrown in prison, it gives the churches, that the things we go through are for your sake.

I want to tell you something, saints. I don't understand that, and don't ask me to explain it, but I am telling you that there is a relationship between church and church planter that enriches both of their lives, and when you suffer, we suffer, and when we suffer, it's for your building up. That is absolutely magnificent and beyond my understanding, but may God hasten the day when that makes sense to all of us. Praise the Lord.