

20141005 Life-lessons 6: God's secret plan

Ephesians 3:1-13

*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you,
3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In
reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which
was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit
to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are
heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise
in Christ Jesus.
7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of
his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me:
to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the
administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all
things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be
made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal
purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him and through faith in him we
may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be
discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.*

In our text, Paul describes the Gospel as “the mystery of Christ... (that has) been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets...” (3:4,5)

The Gospel is a SECRET that reveals the very heart and mind of God. But rather than keep the secret to Himself, in the Gospel, the reality of God's plan is laid out for everyone to hear. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a secret that God wants all believers to openly share with others!

I. The Secret of God Must Be REVEALED by the Spirit of God

In Paul's day, there were many "mystery religions" that claimed to have secrets to unlock the key to life and happiness. Christianity is not like that at all!

Although the secret plan of God is intended to be open for all, the Bible reminds us repeatedly that we can only come to know the mystery of God as God reveals it to our heart.

In the Gospel, God's plan of salvation is revealed to the human heart. Sometime we can get all confused about the complicated details of the Bible's message. Because of this, it is helpful to keep it simple enough to get right to the heart of the matter.

“In love he (God) predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will...” (Ephesians 1:4b-5)

II. The Secret of God Should Be EXPERIENCED

Paul uses three phrases (all using the word "together") to describe the extent of God's blessing of his people who take part of the mystery of the Gospel. We need to experience this mystery ourselves!

1. HEIRS together with Israel... (Eph.2:11-13)
2. MEMBERS together of one body... (Eph.1:22-23)
3. SHARERS together in the promise in Christ Jesus... (Eph.1:13-14)

In Ephesians and Galatians, Paul makes it clear that the promise is that we believers will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"How much more will God give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13)

III. The Secret of God Has To Be PROCLAIMED

Collectively, the church has been designed by God to be the means by which the secret of God is made known to all. Paul says, that "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms..." (3:10)

Individually, we Christians are called to witness to Christ.

Today's Life-lesson is: Only the Spirit of God can reveal God to us. We are called to experience God and then proclaim Him to others.

CONCLUSION

SLIDE "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)