



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Fully Alive: Ephesians

April 20-26

Ephesians 3:1-13

Things to Know

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Gospel Connections and Conversations

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Studying God's Word In Community

Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.

Sermon Recap

Ephesians 3:1-13 reveals that the gospel is not a last-minute plan, but God's eternal purpose to unite all people in Christ. What was once hidden has now been made known—through Jesus, everyone is invited to become part of God's family. This mystery has been entrusted to the Church, calling us to boldly proclaim it to the world. Because we have confident access to God and a secure place in His plan, we can live on mission knowing that even our suffering is not wasted, but used for His glory.

Read

Read Ephesians 3:1-13 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
 - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
 - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
 - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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Scripture

Ephesians 3:1-13

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

[1] For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles —[2] assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, [3] how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. [4] When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, [5] which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. [6] This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

[7] Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. [8] To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [9] and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, [10] so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. [11] This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12] in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. [13] So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. (ESV)

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 3:1-13.

Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means embracing the reality that the gospel we've received is the mystery we've been entrusted to share. Ephesians 3 reminds us that God's plan has always been to bring all people into one family through Christ, and now the Church is the vehicle through which that message is made known. As a group, this means we don't turn inward—we live with intentionality, praying for those far from God, creating space for others to belong, and boldly speaking the truth of the gospel. We encourage one another to see everyday moments as opportunities for mission, remembering that we carry a message the world desperately needs to hear.

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

Leader Resources - April 20 - 26

Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 3:1-13

1. Session Overview

In Ephesians 3:1-13, Paul pauses his teaching to highlight the “mystery” of the gospel. God’s long-hidden plan, now revealed in Christ. This mystery is not mystical or unknowable, but once concealed and now clearly made known: Gentiles are full participants in God's promises. Through Jesus, all people are invited into one family as co-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the same promise.

Paul frames his own life and ministry around this truth. Though he is imprisoned, he regards his suffering as purposeful, having been entrusted with proclaiming this mystery to the nations. More than that, God is using the Church itself to display His wisdom to the world. This passage reminds us that the gospel is not just something we believe; it is something we are sent to declare. And we do so with confidence, knowing we have access to God and that our mission is part of His eternal plan.

2. Opening

Prayer:

Father, the “mystery” of the gospel has been revealed like the curtain drawn back at a theater - thank You! Thank you for the hope of Jesus. Please remind us that experiencing the grace of Jesus leads to being on mission with Jesus. In His name, amen.

Icebreaker question:

Ask:

“Have you ever been trusted with a secret or important message to deliver? How did it feel to carry that responsibility?”

3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read Ephesians 3:1-13 out loud.

4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

1. The Mystery of the Gospel

Ephesians 3:1-6

In verses 1-6, Paul introduces the “mystery” of the gospel, something that was hidden for generations but has now been revealed through Christ. This mystery is that Gentiles are not outsiders—they are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. What was once divided has now been united. This reminds us that God’s plan of salvation was never limited or reactive; it has always been His eternal design to bring all people together in Christ. No one is beyond the reach of His grace, and no one stands on higher ground than another—we all come the same way, through Jesus.

2. The Mission of the Church

Ephesians 3:7-11

In verses 7-11, Paul shifts to his role in this plan, describing his calling as a “stewardship of God’s grace.” He has been entrusted with making this mystery known, not because of his own merit, but because of God’s grace. But this mission is not his alone—the Church itself is now the means by which God makes His wisdom known to the world. The message of the gospel has been given to the people of God to proclaim. This means the Church is not called to turn inward or become distracted by division; we are called to go outward with clarity and purpose, declaring the good news that all are invited into Christ.

3. The Confidence of the Christian

Ephesians 3:12-13

Finally, in verses 12-13, Paul emphasizes the confidence believers now have because of Christ. Through Him, we have boldness and access to God with confidence. Even Paul’s suffering is reframed—not as a setback, but as part of God’s plan for the advancement of the gospel. He encourages believers not to lose heart, reminding them that what looks like hardship is actually serving a greater purpose. This gives us confidence as well: we can live boldly on mission, knowing God is with us, His plan is secure, and our obedience is never wasted.

5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 2:1-10?
2. Why do you think Paul refers to the gospel as a “mystery”? What makes it so significant?
3. What does it mean to you personally that you are a “co-heir” in Christ?
4. How does Paul’s view of his calling challenge the way we think about our role in the Church?
5. What distractions or divisions tend to pull the Church away from its mission today?
6. How does knowing God’s plan is eternal and purposeful give you confidence to live on mission?

6. Application

This week, identify one person in your life who may feel like an “outsider” when it comes to faith. Pray for them daily and look for opportunities to intentionally share the hope of the gospel or to invite them into community.

7. Closing Prayer

Prayer:

“Father, use our lives and our group to make Your wisdom known. Keep us focused on the mission, united in purpose, and faithful in proclaiming the name of Jesus. Amen.”

8. Memory Verse

“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,”

Ephesians 3:8

