

24 May 2015

The gospel we preach today was a mystery (The mysteries of God Pt 3)

Introduction.

This is our third study on the topic of the mysteries of God.

Previous study.

1. Our second mystery: believers shall not all sleep, but shall be changed incorruptible at the rapture.
2. Our third mystery: the Gentiles shall be fellowheirs and of the same body.

Two points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. Fourth mystery: is the gospel of Christ crucified given to Paul.
2. The fifth mystery: is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Our two points in more detail.

1. The Fourth mystery: is the gospel of Christ crucified given to Paul.

Supporting Verse.

Eph.6: 19 "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,"

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Verses 1–9 is to children, father and mother, and servants. Verse 10 Paul changes tact and says to the brethren to be strong, then verse 11–18 he identifies the armour and weapons (2Cor.10: 4) that a soldier of Christ is to use in the battle to "war a good warfare: (1Tim.1: 18).

Continuing on with the request for prayer from verse 18, Paul now introduces the topic of the gospel in our verse (19), and asks his brethren to pray for him, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." Utterance is literally the "words", hence that he may be given the words to open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel (the role of a preacher is to proclaim the good news of God).

* Verse 20 points out that Paul was an "ambassador in bonds" because he makes known this mystery, and then he reiterates his role to "speak boldly as I ought to speak". So in the context of Paul's writings to the churches what is the gospel, what is the message of the good news of our salvation? Turn to 1Cor.15: 1–4, it is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord, that Paul referred to as "my gospel" (Rom.16: 25), the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20: 24), and the gospel of Christ crucified (1Cor.1: 23).

Other Scriptural support.

Rom.16: 25.

Application of our verse today.

* Paul is writing to the Gentile church at Ephesus, and so this epistle is applicable to us today. And good stewards of the mysteries of God, those who preach and teach today, are to make known this mystery, of the gospel today "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again from the dead" (1Cor.15: 3 & 4).

Illustration.

* An evangelist I know of from BCNZ, a man who believes he is called of God to evangelise the lost, proclaim the gospel to the heathen, is writing a book about the gospel. I am on his general email list and one day I received a draft of one of the chapters of his book. The author made the point that he was writing the book because of the confusion in the churches regarding "what is the gospel". The author asserted that scholars believe there is only one gospel in the Bible, there is only one message of good news in the Scriptures. I read the whole chapter hoping to see a study of the word "gospel" in the Scriptures, but other than a few quotes from his preferred corrupt version, there was no such teaching provided. So in an effort to stem the flow of confusion in the churches the author establishes his point of view based on the scholars that he deems suitable to quote, with no study provided to establish what God says in His written word.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Clarity in confusion only comes from the word of God, not from a man's point of view, whether he be a scholar, an evangelist, a pastor, or minister. No one is above the word of God, and no one can make authoritative statements on a subject when they simply quote other men. The BCNZ Christian evangelist has done nothing to shine a light on the mystery of the gospel that Paul preached, but only builds on the existing confusion in the churches.

* If the author, an evangelist, was to study the Holy Scriptures, and provide a summary for his readers of what the Bible says, then he would know and be able to write in his book what God says about the gospel. He would find there is more than one gospel, and the gospel that Paul revealed in his epistles would then be plainly put forward in his book.

* Paul understood, even in his day, that there was more than one gospel, because he warns the church that even if "an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal.1: 8 & 9). So if you hear a man preaching the gospel of the kingdom because Jesus preached it (as do Roman Catholics, Mormons, and some main-stream churches today), then know that they are not revealing the mystery of the gospel by which when a man hears, and believes today he receives salvation.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Let us contribute to shedding light on the mystery of the gospel of Christ crucified as revealed to Paul, that those who hear may understand the mystery, and be saved from the pit of hell. In order for the gospel of Christ crucified to not be a mystery today, believers, preachers, and evangelists are encouraged to read the words of God, preserved for us today in the English text of 1611 Authorised Bible. If you turn to the scholars or a minister, pastor, teacher, or Bishop that does not believe God's words, then you will not know of the gospel of Christ crucified as it was revealed to Paul, it will still be a mystery to you. If you do not believe me, go and ask the minister, pastor or vicar at your local main-stream church the question: what is the gospel today that a man hears, believes and is saved? Prove to yourself sadly, that the mystery of the gospel of Christ crucified is still a mystery to many ministers and evangelists in the traditional churches today.

* But the body of Christ would look so different today if ministers, preachers, and pastors, those who should be stewards of the mysteries of God, taught the mystery of the gospel, the good news of Christ crucified.

2. The fifth mystery: is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Supporting Verses.

Col 1:26 & 27 "[Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Paul is writing to the Colossians and encouraging them to give thanks to God..."praying always for you" (verse 3), "since we heard of your faith" (verse 4), "for the hope which is laid up in heaven" (verse 5), "whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (verse 5). Of the two occurrences of the word "truth" in the book of Colossians they occur in verse 5 & 6, and refer to the gospel that we spoke about in our first point, which when a man hears and believes: (i) other believers in the body of Christ are able to pray for him as a believer (verse 9), and (ii) other believers can instantly "desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (verse 9). And the purpose of this prayer for the new believer is:

* that he would "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (verse 10).

* Strengthened with all might (verse 12)

* Giving thanks unto the Father (verse 13)

And what happens when a person believes the gospel? They are delivered "from the power of darkness", and "hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (verse 14).

* Verse 15-22 is all about Christ, his likeness to the Father, and His work on the cross. Verse 23 and 25 identify that Paul was made a minister, to fulfil the word of God. Then we have our verses; "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations...is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Now that is a mystery, that Christ is in the believer!

Other scriptural support.
Col.2: 2 & Col.4: 3.

Application of our verse today.

* Paul is writing to the Gentile church at Colosse, and so this epistle is applicable to us today. And good stewards of the mysteries of God make known this mystery of the gospel today.

Illustration.

* Imagine for a moment that you are a believer who has not believed in vain, and so you **are** in the body of Christ, but you are consciously doing something you should not, something that is a sin in the eyes of God. Have you ever thought "I will stop soon"? Then your sin became a habit? You may get an uncomfortable feeling in your heart, but you have learnt to ignore it, pretend it is not there, or established a private interpretation of the scriptures which helps to make you feel better about your sin. You know God is watching and have moments of feeling guilty, and yes, you may need to receive a teaching on the fear of the Lord, for it is "by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil" (Prov.16: 6), but what if one day an elder brother who had discerned that something was not right, sat you down and asked you: if the Lord Jesus Christ was sitting next to you would you continue in your sin? You would reply, "no". Then the elder brother continues to instruct you on the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Learning from our Illustration.

* When you sit through a movie with violence or foul language, or scenes that are not suitable for younger viewers, then remember that Christ your redeemer, the Holy One, is "in you". We shouldn't be surprised, because the scriptures also teach that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor.3: 16). Christ who stands on the right hand of God, is in you, watching, knowing your every thought, your every decision, your every action. Wow! Can you explain that to anyone? No wonder Paul called it a mystery!

Challenge & or encouragement.

* If you struggle to fear the Lord, perhaps because He has been so gracious unto you, and you only see the love of Christ, then know that when you sin, He sees you, He knows your heart, and is in you. May that be sufficient for now for each one of us to cease from any, and all excuses for our sin. Stop, repent, and feed your spirit with the word of God, not the flesh with the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Hence why we are to meditate on the word of God "day and night" (Ps.1: 2).

* Imagine if those that claim to be ministers, pastors, and teachers of the word of God, those who claim to have the role of being stewards of the mysteries of God, if they taught this mystery to their flock! There would be less acceptance of sin, more departing from iniquity as believers come to the realisation that Christ is "in you". Something that we may never fully understand because it is a mystery.

* Let us live each day in this knowledge from the Scriptures of the mystery that Christ is "in you, the hope of glory."

Summary of our three points.

1. Fourth mystery: is the gospel of Christ crucified given to Paul.
2. The fifth mystery: is Christ in you, the hope of glory.