

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 2

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “The Mystery of Our Redemption”

1:7-10 ~ February 13, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers understand the magnitude of their salvation – and God’s sovereignty over human history.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Rodeo-Fest! Feb. 20th
- Men’s Golf Outing – March 19th @ The Views Golf Club
- Anyone interested in ministering to our military members and families please plan to attend this important meeting in room 2 immediately following the second worship service TODAY.

Open your Bibles to Ephesians 1

Opening Prayer

Valentine’s Day...guys...it’s here. I hope this announcement doesn’t catch you by surprise.

Valentine’s Day is a time to celebrate love – to celebrate relationships. It certainly has some great aspects to it, but for some, it’s a day to dread. The expectations placed on a spouse or loved one – can be unrealistic. Extravagant gifts, expectations of a memorable night with a romantic dinner where everything is perfect can be unrealistic – and unaffordable. But many throw sanity to the wind on this day and their spending knows no limit...except when the credit card bill shows up and there is not enough money to pay the bill...so only part of the bill is paid, and that very expensive evening gets even more expensive as the credit card interest piles up month after month.

The sad reality is that on Feb. 15th – the candlelight is long extinguished...and life’s routine refuses to slow down for the moment.

Now don't misunderstand me. I love Valentine's Day. Any excuse to spend one-on-one time with Kim is something I'm always excited about. But the business of love – and especially the expense of love – has many people discouraged and confused.

But not God.

God has no confusion about His love for us. While we may walk around in the fog wondering how we can express our love to our spouse, He has perfect clarity on how to express His love. And His clarity is not a recent epiphany – His moment of clarity has existed from before the foundation of the world (1:4-5).

In fact, God's love for us is the ultimate expression of love – an expression of love that can never be duplicated or matched in its greatness. He gave His life for us.

The price of God's love vs. 7

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace...”

In Christ (“Him”) we have redemption. In the Greek (*apolutrōsis*), this word translated “redemption”, means to be released due to the payment of a ransom. Scripture tells us that every person is born into sin. This doesn't mean that every person is as bad / evil as they could be – but the Bible is clear that all of us – before faith - are a slave to sin.

Rom. 7:14 “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.” (See also John 8:34; Rom. 3:23; 6:6; 6:20)

So God has paid our ransom – He has purchased us out of our slavery and bondage to sin.

Notice the price of the ransom – “...through His blood...”

Normally, when a kidnapper has taken a hostage, and they are demanding a ransom payment, the police negotiator tries to talk them out of the situation – or at least to lower the ransom demands.

But God paid a ransom that has an infinite price. He didn't just trade a life for a life – He paid with His life – the life of God incarnate – for human, sinful lives!

On top of that – this redemption paid also brings us – upon our release – complete and total forgiveness!

The word in Greek that is translated “forgiveness” is *aphesin* and has the idea of setting free – the remission of a debt or punishment. It means that God frees us from any penalty or judgment our sin would bring against us.

Psalm 103:12“...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

So God has redeemed us – paid our ransom price – with the blood of His Son – and He has also forgiven us – separated us from the penalty of our sins...but that's not all.

The extravagance of God's love vs. 7b-8

“...in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.”

He has done this (redeemed us and forgiven us) – “...in accordance with the riches of God's grace...”

In other words...He has not skimped on showing us His love. He has done all of this – according to the supply of His grace. God has not given us the bare minimum of what we would need. When my kids go somewhere and they need some money from me – I'm cheap. I'm not one that spends money freely and easily. I want to find a good deal...a bargain price. I'll search out the menu to find a fair priced meal – instead of ordering my favorite food. It I'm shopping for clothes...before I take the hanger off the rack – before I try it on – I check the price tag. In fact – I don't even look at it unless there is a sale sign on it!

But God – when paying our ransom...when giving us He forgiveness...did according to the riches of His grace! The price tag was not an issue with Him. In fact, the idea here is that He saw the price tag – and overpaid well beyond what was needed!

“...the riches of God's grace...” - How much grace does God have?

If we could quantify that, we could get a better grasp of God's generosity here. The only way I know how to quantify this is to look at God's character and person. He is a sovereign, infinite, and benevolent God – so if He is infinite, His supply of grace is probably infinite!

Here's how we can connect this with our life.

Have you ever known a Christian...maybe this is you...who lacked confidence in God's forgiveness of them due to the extent of their sin? Have you ever wondered if God's grace would extend to sins committed – even after years of being a Christian? Have you ever wondered if your sins are too extreme and grievous for God to forgive them?

Put your fears to rest. He has redeemed you...He has forgiven you...not just from, but according to the riches of His grace!

(**Illus.** – Millionaire giving \$50.00 vs. \$50,000.00)

“...He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.”

This is the positive aspect of our redemption. Obviously, our redemption is positive – but it is a redemption from something – from our bondage to sin. Forgiveness is release from judgment we deserve. But here, Paul is telling us that God has given us Godly wisdom and understanding...and He has done so lavishly.

Don't you love a gift(s) given *lavishly*? Some of the synonyms of *lavishly* are: extravagantly, wastefully, unrestrainedly, and excessively.

These words describe the generosity of God in giving us wisdom and understanding. So, we have a lot of these two things – but what are these two things – wisdom and understanding?

Simply put, these describe the mind of God the believer has – and is called to develop and cultivate over our lifetime.

Romans 12:2“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Upon our redemption, God not only forgives our sin, but He also gives us the capacity to apply His thinking – His truths to our daily affairs. This is the ability to see things as God sees them. This is not intelligence – for intelligence does not naturally lead to wisdom, as most college campuses will testify to. This is Godly wisdom – and an ability to understand life and the events of life in relation to God’s Word.

This doesn’t become a reality overnight. Upon our redemption, God gives us wisdom and understanding in generous portions that we will never use up. But our use of these things will be realized only as we learn more about Him and His will through the study of His Word and the fellowship with other faithful believers.

The mysterious love of God vs. 9-10

Ask any woman, and a great ingredient of a memorable Valentine’s Day is a surprise...a mystery...something she didn’t see coming.

One year, when I was in seminary and Kim was working as a paralegal, I left early for class one night, and I had arranged for a co-worker of hers to let me in the office after hours so I could decorate Kim’s office with various pink and red streamers and other Valentine’s Day decorations. The next day, she was indeed surprised – and since I put in a little extra effort in expressing my love for her – it was a great Valentine’s Day!

Not to be outdone in any way by me, God has also surprised us with His plan for the church, and His eternal plan in Christ to bring all creation into submission to Christ.

⁹ “And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

In Ephesians (and other passages in the N.T.), Paul speaks of a mystery. As we will see in the coming weeks, one aspect of this great mystery is the blending of Jew and Gentile together, united as God’s people, in the Church. The larger aspect of this mystery is that God would unite all creation under the authority and rule of Christ.

This “mystery” is not something mysterious as we often would use the term, but it means something that was previously unknown or undisclosed. The mystery of Jews and Gentiles united in the Body of Christ – and the mystery of creation’s complete unification under Christ, is not a confusing truth, but simply one that was unknown and unrevealed in the O.T.

Notice that God’s mystery is according to His “...good pleasure”. Since before the creation of the world, this was God’s plan and purpose for Christ.

Vs. 10 tells us that this aspect of the plan is to be put into effect when “...the times will have reached their fulfillment..”

In other words, all of history – from the first day of creation – through the thousands of years until Abraham, then at least 4,000 years after Adam, Jesus was born. We know that His birth was at just the right time (Gal. 4:4) – and eventually, when the time is right, God will bring an end to human history as we know it, and Christ will reign over all creation.

This phrase – “...under one head, even Christ.” is interesting.

According to the Expositor’s Bible Commentary, “*When a column of figures was added up, the total was placed at the top of the*

column (we put the total below the column of figures). At the end of the age, everything will be seen to add up to Christ.”

Paul is telling us that when this happens, the curse on all creation will be lifted. He is describing the Millennial Kingdom where Christ will reign over all things. The fallen universe will be set right – and righteousness will reign. This period – the Millennial Kingdom is not without sin, but the disorder of sin is removed, and universal peace will be established and experienced by all. (The Bible

Knowledge Commentary, by Walvoord and Zuck, p. 618)

As members of the Church - the Body of Christ – He is our head. We are called to submit ourselves to the Law of Christ now. In a sense, we in the Church are a living preview of what is to come. The Church is a mini-version of what God will do in the future! Another great source of encouragement here is the term in vs. 10 – *oikonōmia* – which means a dispensation, or the administration of a large household. The NIV translates it with the phrase “...to be put into effect when the times have reached...”

It points out the comforting fact that God is in complete control of history. It’s as if God is the owner of a large household – and this household is actually creation history. And God is managing this entire household – and when the time was just right – God sent His Son – and when the time will be just right – God will put all things under Christ – the one and only Head.

What a comforting fact that in the turmoil of nations – the turmoil of politics – the turmoil of life and family, God is sovereign – He is in control.

Application

Praise God that He paid your ransom.

He redeemed you from your slavery and bondage to sin – and He has forgiven all your past, present, and future sins. He has done this out of the riches of His grace. You can never

out-sin His grace! Our response...give thanks to God...praise Him for His generosity!

Praise God for His excessive blessings.

He has given us wisdom and spiritual understanding (ties in with vs. 3 – “...every spiritual blessing...”).

1 Cor. 2:6-7; 16

“We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”

“...we have the mind of Christ.”

Matt. 11:25-26

“At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”

James 1:5

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

Take comfort in God’s sovereign management of history.

At just the right time...

God will put all things under Christ.

At just the right time...everything in disorder will be put in order.

At just the right time...not according to your time schedule...but according to God’s perfect timing.

Close in prayer

