



Sunday, November 19, 2017

Pastor Don Denyes

## **Introduction to Ephesians 2:19-3:13**

There is a tendency today to want to generate artificial enthusiasm in church. It can be very tempting to want to get the energy flowing and develop an atmosphere of heightened emotion so that everyone will be excited about the hour or so we spend together on a Sunday morning. Paul, however, had no misgivings about how to motivate his people to be passionate about the church. He knew that for people to feel deeply about something, they had to first think deeply about it. And that is his premise as he begins to stoke the fires of passion for the church.

His approach to motivate his people was to set the church in the context God's grand purposes for creation. God created all things (3.9) and when He created all things He decided that the best way for the world to work would be to create a group of people who have no other reason to gather except that they share a common faith in His Son, Jesus. In doing so, He has ensured that this group of people would bring ultimate glory to Him. There is no other reason for their gathering (no common race, or language, or hobby, or anything) except that they have been saved by Christ and are united in Him.

### **Context**

Ephesians 3 continues the "indicative" section of Ephesians (1-3), and as Pastor Don noted, serves as something of a digression into the reasons for Paul's ability to speak authoritatively on their life as Christians and as a church community. Some scholars have even argued that Ephesians 3:8-10 is at the very center of the message that Paul is trying to get across in the letter. Now, the validity of that claim is debatable, but suffice to say, it is a very important passage for us as Christians to understand the cosmic implications of our common union with Christ before we get to the "imperatives" or the nuts and bolts of what church life is like.

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“The Mystery Revealed”

Read Ephesians 2:19-3:13

Metaphors of the Church Described

- Citizens of One Kingdom 2.19
- Children of One Family 2.19
- Stones of One Building 2.20
- Members of One Body 3.6

Mystery of the Church Revealed

- ...Of His Will 1.9
- ...Through Revelation 3.3
- ...Concerning Christ 3.4
- ...United People 3.6; 5.32
- ...Must Be Proclaimed 3.9; 6.19

This was always His plan!

Gen. 12.3 “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Acts 3.25

Is. 49.6 “I will also make you (My Servant) a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” Luke 2.32

## Discuss

- 1) Pastor Don opened the sermon talking about the cheer at Penn State football games and how they lacked enthusiasm because of scandals. What are some reasons Christians might not be enthusiastic about simply “being the church”?
- 2) Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 and Titus 3:9-11. Are there any legitimate causes for being divided or breaking fellowship with other Christians? How are those legitimate causes different from “illegitimate” causes?
- 3) What is your reaction to the fact that the church is a dwelling place for God (2:22)? How does that change the way you think about the church?
- 4) Pastor Don talked extensively about how the true church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (2.20; 3.5)—effectively talking about the Old Testament (prophets) and the New Testament (apostles). How should we view “churches” who claim to have new revelation from God beyond what is taught in the prophets and the apostles?
- 5) Read Eph. 3:8-10 again. Verse 10 is a purpose statement—the church exists *for the purpose of* demonstrating God’s wisdom. How can we grow together in appreciating and responding to that truth?