

Mystery of Christ

Blueprint: God's Design for the Church

Ephesians 3:1-13

I still get an eerie feeling sometimes when I pass by that old house. It was an old house, a couple hundred yards from the house I grew up in, and there were all sorts of stories on how it got there. It had been transported by horse and buggy from LBL. There were all sorts of stories on the original family to this old house. All we knew was it was an old house and no one had lived there for a long, long time, and it was right across the road from a graveyard. So here we have this old house, and you can imagine as kids we had all sorts of stories of what was in that old house. We would go and look in and see various things in that old house from time to time. But on my tenth birthday, I had my friends over with my sister and cousins, and we decided to go to the old house. We make our way to the old house and we're telling stories of various things we've seen, and one of the creepiest things about the house is it had a basement. It had a window that was half buried under the ground, but you could peer in and if the light was right, you could see what was in the basement. We would get next to the glass and peer into the basement, and I will never forget that particular afternoon as I looked in, I saw something I had not seen before. As I look in, I see a mesh bag holding golden snake that was all curled up. As I see this golden snake, I look to the right and see what has to be a bottle of potion. As I'm looking at this golden snake that's curled up, seeing this bottle of potion, all of a sudden, Michael, who is also peering in the glass, begins to yell because he swears he saw an old woman turn around and look at us, so we begin to run. We begin to run as fast as we can. We're yelling, we're screaming, everyone else is yelling and screaming. We run into the woods trying to run away from what we have seen, possibly, is a witch. We run through the woods and back to our

house. And as we're running, we come to stand right in front of a tree that, I kid you not, was in the shape of a skull with two horns pointing to the heavens! You can imagine, we got back to the house, locked all the doors, and as we slept that night, we all had a weapon in our hands. We had a BB gun, a slingshot, a rock, a club, or something because we were convinced that sometime in the night, the witches were going to come and get us. There was something creepy about that house, something mysterious about it. It had all these stories and these things we would see that we couldn't quite explain. That's how mysteries work. There's something about mystery, something about something being mysterious that draws us in. That's why on Halloween you will go to your neighbor's house that used to be your neighbor's house, but now it's been taken over by zombies, cobwebs, and a coffin and you don't know who's in there. You go and ring the doorbell, and you're not sure if the person in the coffin is going to jump out or not. It's this mystery that pulls us in. We like to be spooked every once and a while. We like not to know what's there. We don't know what's in the bottom of basements. Are there witches there or not? Something about mystery just pulls us in.

This morning in Ephesians chapter 3, Paul is going to talk about a mystery. In thirteen verses, he is going to talk about a mystery four different times. He's telling us about a mystery, but it's not a spooky story. He's telling us a mystery about a story that defines all other stories, the story that we all live under, and that is the mystery of Christ. If you have your bibles, go to Ephesians 3, and stand out of reverence for the Word of God as we see how we come to know this mystery, we get to tell this mystery, and we also get to live out this mystery for the world to see.

Scripture

"For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 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. 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. 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. 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, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory."

(Prayer)

Father God, we pray this morning that we would see the mystery of Christ, the mystery that solves us, the mystery that we get to tell to others, and the mystery that that we get to live under and show the great wisdom of God as a church. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen.

When you think about a mystery, usually a mystery involves solving something. You have a mystery, you've got some clues, and you're trying to solve an issue. Well, in the first three verses, Paul is going to tell us that there's not a mystery that is to be solved; instead, this mystery, the mystery of Christ, it actually solved Paul. So this isn't as though Paul went and checked all the clues and discovered a mystery; it's that Christ changed him. The mystery of Christ ended up changing the apostle Paul. He begins to talk. He says, I, Paul, I'm a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I've had a revelation from God. God has shown me who the Messiah is, Jesus. That's been revealed to me. I understand this mystery, so now I am a prisoner on your behalf. We see just in these first verses that the apostle

Paul identifies himself as prisoner Paul. Here is Paul, who's leading the church, planting churches, and now he finds himself in prison.

There is something that has been popularized for a while now in our culture and all around the world; it's called the prosperity gospel. It basically teaches that if you follow God, everything will go well with your life. If you follow God, you won't be sick. If you'll obey God, everything will be happy with you, your family will be great, you'll get a good job, and you'll have lots of money. If you obey God, you'll receive God's bountiful blessings. So if you're not blessed, you are outside of God's will. If you're in God's will, you will only find blessings.

Then you run into this...here is Paul, who obviously is following God's will. He is under God's will for his life. He has taken the gospel to the Gentiles, yet instead of experience prosperity, he is losing it. Instead of gaining freedom, he has been put in prison. Almost everything is being stripped away from the life that he would probably want for himself in the flesh. He is a prisoner, chained to a Roman guard, not because of his disobedience, but because of his obedience. So following after the Lord Jesus actually lands Paul in prison. But he wants them to know as he closes out these verses not to worry. He says don't worry about me because what I'm suffering is actually for your glory. Paul is saying the mission he's been called to is why he is suffering. So sometimes if you follow God's will, it will lead to suffering, but the suffering that you experience is ultimately for a greater glory. Paul is under God's will, doing what God wanted, and it landed him in prison, prison that would be used to bring glory to the people that are listening, and prison that would be used to actually spread the gospel throughout the country.

Paul says that he's a steward. He says I've been given this stewardship from God, this idea of stewardship of God's grace that was given to me. So he's been given this stewardship. That stewardship means to be a manager. Here is what Paul believed; that God is the ruler of His kingdom, but God has given me stewardship over a portion of it. He has set me as a manager over His kingdom. That God's plan to the Gentiles, to make known His glory to the Gentiles, He's actually using me. I'm the steward of that portion. I get to manage the gospel going out to the people that God

has entrusted me with. See, Paul believed he was part of the kingdom. He was entrusted with some of it to go and proclaim it.

I think the same is true with you. If you are a follower of Jesus, God wants you to see yourself as a steward of part of His kingdom. He might not put you in prison, He might not send you to a Gentile nation, or He might not send you somewhere other than right here, but He has put you around people and He's entrusted you with the gospel to influence those around you. That's part of your stewardship. That's part of you managing the mystery of Christ; getting to share with those around you the glory of Jesus Christ. So what about you? Are you leaning into that? For Paul, the mystery of Christ wasn't something he solved. The mystery of Christ solved him. When he saw Jesus in the road to Damascus, it changed his life and he repented and believed in the Lord Jesus. Have you had that encounter with Christ, where He solved your life? He showed you that you were a sinner and desperately needed Him and you repented and believed, and you came to know the Lord Jesus. Your mystery was solved. If that's true, then as Paul, know that you've been given a stewardship to now go and share that mystery with others as Paul so willingly loved to do. He even suffered on behalf of it.

So what is that mystery? What is that mystery that Paul is talking about? He says it in verse 4-6, here is the mystery of Christ. So I've been talking about this mystery, I've been telling about this mystery, but here it is... Gentiles are fellow heirs. That's the mystery of Christ. When we think of mystery, we go back to old houses, basements, witches, potions, and we think about Halloween and cobwebs. It's mysterious. Or we think about a mysterious novel where we're trying to look at all the clues, but that's not how the Bible uses the word mystery. Instead, the Bible uses the word, mystery, as something that's not previously known, but is now been revealed. It's something that has been made known now. For instance, Paul would talk about marriage, that there is a mystery to marriage. He would say in Ephesians chapter 5 (which we're going to get to) if you go back to Genesis chapter 2, you find this command for a husband to leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. That's what marriage is. Then Paul would say this mystery is

profound, and I'm saying that it refers to Christ and His church. So Paul goes back to Genesis, and he says look, marriage has always been there. God gave us marriage, but there is something about marriage that hasn't been fully revealed. Marriage, a husband leaving his father and mother and holding fast to his wife, the two who are different becoming one flesh, this is actually pointing forward to something. It is showing something, and that is the gospel. It is showing Jesus Christ's relationship with His bride, the church. So it's always been there, even back in Genesis, but it hadn't been revealed yet. Now Paul is saying I've got a mystery, I've got something that is hidden that I'm now going to reveal to you; marriage has always been about this gospel. Your marriage gets to display the gospel. He does the same thing with the mystery of Christ. He says here is the mystery of Christ. In the Old Testament, it was always God doing something with Israel. God wasn't just building a nation; He was sending a Redeemer through a nation. He was going to reconcile all peoples to Himself through the Messiah. He was doing that all throughout the Old Testament. Though most of the time the Israelites didn't see it, they didn't understand it, they didn't believe it, but now Paul says the mystery of Christ has been revealed. The Gentiles, those who are outsiders, those who aren't obeying the Law, those who don't have all of the rules that we have, those who aren't ceremonially clean are fellow members of the household of God. He's saying this mystery of Christ that has been revealed is that the Messiah is not just for Israel, the Messiah of for all people everywhere. That's what the mystery is. That's what is revealed, whether you're in a synagogue, a mosque, or in Sunday school, Jesus came to be your Messiah. Whether you are in any one of those places, you have the same need. You need to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus. We are all separated from God, and we all need the Lord Jesus. That's the mystery of Christ. It's not good people are in and bad people are out. It is all people are outside, and you need to come in to the Messiah. You need to repent and believe in Jesus and you will be brought in, no matter what you've done, no matter who you are, no matter what language you speak, no matter what color you are, you will be brought in as a fellow citizen of the Kingdom of Christ. That's the mystery that Paul is revealing to this church, this mystery of Christ. Paul is going to say that as the church, as

individuals, we get to tell that mystery to everyone. I just want to read what he says in verse 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. 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, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things..." I love what Paul says. He says here is my simple mission in life. I want to make Jesus known to everyone. That's what Paul wanted to do. I've been solved by this mystery. I know this mystery. I know Christ. I know that He died for us. He rose for us and that by repentance and faith you can be connected back to God. I know that. So here is what I want my life to be about; I want to make known Christ. I want people to see and know who Jesus is.

I think that's just a real simple way to think about your life if you're a believer. Sometimes we clutter it up. We think about what I'm doing in my life; what's my purpose, my big purpose, my small purpose? How do I go day by day? Sometimes we get so busy in schedules and obligations and doing this and not doing this, and meeting this goal and not meeting this goal. We get so stressed, clutter our lives with everything, and we just want to say what exactly am I doing? We go to bed at night and ask the question what did I do today with my life that mattered? Maybe some of us don't know what the answer to that is, so we wake up and start adding some more stuff to try to find purpose and meaning and some kind of value to our life. I think what Paul would want to do is just simplify it for you. No matter what you do, whether you go to work tomorrow, whether you stay at home, in school, out of school, whether you're single or married, no matter where you are, here is a simple mission for you tomorrow. Make Jesus known to everyone. No matter what you do, as you go to work, don't go to work, as you have your day off, go to your sports or hobbies, whatever you do, here is a real simple vision for your life. Make Jesus known to everyone. That's what Paul wanted. I want to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. I want people to know who Jesus is and His wonderful plan that God has done through all of history. I just want to go and make Jesus known to people.

I think one of the ways Paul was able to do this was that Paul was a very humble man. Notice what he says just in this text. He says I am the least, the very least of all the saints. The apostle Paul, who is writing a letter to the church that he planted, is saying, look, out of all of us here, I'm the least. I'm at the very bottom. Everyone in here is of higher standing than I am. That's the apostle Paul. Because of his humility, he was able to walk in places and never expect to be served. He never expected to be put on a pedestal. He came into rooms, and I'm sure he was the first to serve because that's what he saw his Savior Jesus do. He didn't come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

If you want to make the unsearchable riches of Christ known to the people around you, first of all, see yourself as the very least, and everyone else as more important than you are. And whatever room you're in, whatever place you are, you are taking the place of servant and you're serving those around you. It's in humility, counting others more significant than yourself, as Philippians tells us. So that you view not yourself on a pedestal for everyone to serve you, but you see everyone else on a pedestal for you to serve them and to engage them with love and generosity, and ultimately, the gospel.

He says I'm the very least. I was called to be a minister. The word there is actually a deacon or servant. I was called to be a servant. Why? Because of God's grace. He gave me a gift. He gifted me. He called me by His grace. In other words, I didn't pick this, walk into this, or get smart enough to do it. God just gave this to me; so therefore, I'm doing it. So he saw it as this great gift that he got to use for the sake of the church; that I get to serve others because I'm the very least among all of you. I think if we take that place amongst one another and amongst the world, we will see that we'll live out a different life and it will cause people to want to know the difference in us, and we get to tell them the unsearchable riches of Christ.

So what exactly was Paul's message? We saw his humility but what was his message? His message was that...the unsearchable riches of Christ. His message wasn't ok, here are a few rules, here are a few ways to live where you can get ahead and do better. He says my message is about a person. It's about you seeing Jesus as God and Savior and you finding all of your

treasure and satisfaction in the person of Jesus Christ. You are coming to Jesus and worshipping Him with your life, and in doing so, you are finding life. His message was all about a person. It was about the person of Jesus Christ, the unsearchable riches found in Him. As he preaches Christ, he got to flip the lights on for people. He says the Gentiles are in darkness. They don't know this beautiful plan and what Paul got to do was to turn the lights on and show how Jesus is for the Gentiles and for the Jews. He's for all people. That's what Paul got to do. He got to go turn the lights on. Do you remember in your life when somebody did that for you? Do you remember when somebody spoke to you about the gospel, when they told you about the Lord Jesus, what He did, and how the lights came on? For the first time, you saw the true gospel and you saw who Jesus was. You were in darkness, but now you're in light. Paul says I get to go flip the lights on for people. I think that's what we should joyfully want to do as well. We should want to, as people who see the light, know the light, know the mystery of Christ who solved the mystery of the universe, flip on the lights and show people who Jesus is. Paul got to flip on the lights and say, hey Gentiles, you're in too. I know for us, most of your coworkers aren't asking the question if Gentiles also welcome into the Jewish church. That's probably not a question that's going on around the coffee table. That's just not something we are probably asking in our culture, but most people outside of faith are assuming here is what Christianity teaches: good people are in, and bad people are out. So if you're good, you're probably loved by God. If you're bad, you're not. What you get to do is flip the light on and debunk that myth. The gospel is not good people getting in and bad people have to stay out. The gospel is all people fall into the category of bad, that's why we need a good Savior. So, all people are in the same category. We're all on the bad side. What we need is to come through the Messiah. We need to repent and believe in Jesus because the only way into the kingdom is not be being good or being religious; it's through Jesus. It's a relationship with Him. You get to flip the lights on. Most people assume I just need to do better and then God will love me. No, they don't need to do better or try harder; they need to stop and repent, and trust in Christ. That's the only way back to the Father, and you get to flip the light switch on. You get to show them and tell them how they can find life in Jesus.

Paul wanted everyone to know this. Do you want everyone to know this? Do you have the same passion for people to know Jesus and know how they can come into a relationship with God, and that is only through Him.

So the first thing we get to do is to tell people. We get to tell people the mystery of Christ, the riches that are found in Him. But then secondly, we get to show people the wisdom of God. So we not only tell people the mystery of Christ, but we get to show people the wisdom of God. Here's what God's wisdom looks like. If you want to see God's wisdom in action, with flesh and blood, come see our church because the church is the place that's supposed to display the wisdom of God. Here's what it says in verse 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. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory." Here is what he says about the church; it is the manifold wisdom of God. He's talking to the Ephesus church. He says here is what you get to do church. You get to show the cosmos. You get to show the angelic hosts. They're in heaven just watching what you are doing, and you get to display for them, and show them the manifold wisdom of God. That word, manifold, means 'many sided, diverse, or varied.' That word, I was told in one commentary, comes from that Old Testament word of Joseph and the coat of many colors. It's many, varied; it's beautiful. The church of Ephesus got to show the beautiful and varied wisdom of God, as the angels looked down and saw all throughout human history, that everyone dividing over difference, now they're looking at a church that is different, yet the same. They had different colors, different language, different dialects; they're all different. They look different and sound different, yet they're coming together, all as the same. They're all image bearers of God, redeemed by the same Savior, and they're loving each other relentlessly. The angels are saying we've never seen this before. What is this? It's the kingdom. It's the church. It's the manifold wisdom of God. I think we today still have that great purpose as the church. We as the church gets to show, yes the angels, but also the world around us, the manifold wisdom of God. We get to show the world that if

you want to know what the wisdom of God looks like in action, just look at how we do life, and you will see the wisdom of God that might sound foolish to you, it might look foolish, but when you see it, you find it to be beautiful. That's what we need to do as the church.

So my question is how. If we are supposed to show the manifold wisdom of God, like the world is looking at a diamond of God's wisdom and they're turning it every which way, and the more they turn it and the more they look at it, the more they see this different wisdom of God, this wisdom that is beautiful, and it's rich, and it's diverse. They get to see that by looking at us, so the question is how are we going to do that? If we're called as a church to show the wisdom of God, then what must we do to show the wisdom of God? I've got three applications for us.

1. Live under God's wisdom together

I think that's the first thing we must do. If we're going to show the world what the wisdom of God is and looks like, we have to live under it as a church together. We have to all say I don't care what the world's wisdom is, we're going to go with God's wisdom, and we're going to do life how God has spoken. We're going to live under the wisdom of God. I remember when I was a freshman at Murray State University. I had a Humanities professor, and he had a little experiment for us to take as a class. He spoke to the class. He knew most of us had probably grown up in some form of a church. He said there are two people that I'm going to put in front of you and I want you to tell me who you would follow with your life. The first one is Jesus, and the second one is Machiavelli. Of course, most of the class agreed we would follow Jesus. We've always been told to follow Jesus. There were some people who didn't. He said before we vote, we're going to talk about their lives and their principles for living life. If you don't know much about Machiavelli, he was a fourteenth century philosopher humanist. A lot of our political science comes from him, most people would say. He had a little different way of doing life. Instead of being virtuous and letting virtue be above all, he had this way of doing life where in every situation you put yourself first. So when it came to dealing in business, when it came to dealing in leadership, you always tried to manipulate the situation, whether it was through dishonesty, putting

yourself above the other person, through competition, deceit, or whatever it was, you always looked out for you. You always put yourself first. Then he had this other guy named Jesus who says when you get hit, you need to just turn the other cheek. If somebody steals your coat, you just go to the closet and get them another one. You have this guy Jesus who would say just give all your possessions away. He would say just lose your life. Be last. Go serve. As we all felt a little uneasy, he began putting different situations up for how we would behave in a certain situation, and as all the situations came through...here was a situation, would you rather be served, or serve? Would you rather have money, or lose all of your money? Would you rather get beat up, or beat somebody up? All these different things that he would propose, which guy do you want to follow? Of course, at the end of the class, everyone in the class besides two of us, me and another girl, had said, "Well, I guess we're going to follow Machiavelli because his path to life seems a lot better. We're going to have more money, more fame, get higher on the ladder; we're just going to have a better all-around life if I always look out for me in all situations." So most everybody said when we really look down to the teachings, we're going to follow Machiavelli. I remember him looking at me and this other girl. He asked the girl, "So why do you want to follow Jesus still?" I was just glad he didn't call on me because I had no idea what I was going to say! This girl really had no reasoning. She couldn't say anything that would make sense in that class because when you put the two lives together, it was obvious. With Machiavelli, you're going to have a better life right now. Your kingdom is going to look better on earth if you follow Machiavelli's teaching. If you follow Jesus, it might not go so well with you. You might be a prisoner one day writing a letter to a church. He says, "Why do you want to follow Jesus still?" I remember this girl, and she kind of had her head down, and she said, "Well, because I love Him." Because I love Him, I thought that was better than any answer I would have given! That's the reason, because I love Him. Here is the point. As we look at the wisdom of this world and compare it to the wisdom of God, from the world's side looking in, the wisdom of God seems very foolish at times. It doesn't seem like the thing that makes the most sense because in the world's wisdom, we find greatness through serving rather than being served. That's the opposite of

the world. If you want to be great, find people to serve you. The Bible says if you want to be great go and serve the least of these. We get rich, not by hoarding but by giving. That's completely opposite of what the world would propose. We actually find by losing. We actually gain by denying and putting a cross on our back and walking into our own tomb, and then coming out the other side. When the world looks at that, it says this does not seem like wisdom, and it's not wisdom if life is only right now. The answer to why you follow Jesus instead of Machiavelli is because Jesus knew something that Machiavelli didn't; this life is not it. This kingdom is not it. There's a kingdom that is coming that is going to last forever, and following Jesus is about Him and His eternal kingdom, not what's best right now in the moment.

As the church, here's what we get to do. When the world hears the wisdom of God, they will often hear it as pure insanity. But as the church, we get to show that it is actually beautiful. They will hear it, it will sound crazy, but we get to show that it actually works and it's beautiful. In other words, if you have a co-worker who is in a terrible marriage and they are sharing with you about marriage, maybe she is saying me and my husband just don't get along. We fight all the time. The marriage is terrible and I want to get out of this thing. They're probably not going to go to Ephesians 5. This wife if probably not going to include, I guess I need to submit better, because that just sounds horrible. That does not sound like wisdom at all. When the world goes to Ephesians 5, they see folly. They see something that doesn't make sense at all and would have no joy and no hope. But what they need to hear is not just principles about marriage; they need to see your marriage. They need to see a church that is filled with vibrant marriages that live out Ephesians 6 before the world to see because it's not just about us and our happiness; it's about the gospel. It's about the glory of God, and living for the sake of the gospel and the glory of God makes your marriage better and it thrives. If you make your marriage about yourselves, it will not satisfy. If you make it about the kingdom and about Christ, it will satisfy deeper than anything the world has to offer.

See, they will hear our wisdom and think that's foolish, but when they see the beauty of it, that is how we get to show the manifold wisdom of God.

As your friends have rebellious kids, they're probably not going to go to the book of Proverbs and decide now we're going to arrange our house in the fear of the Lord, but maybe they will look at your home. They won't see a perfect home, but they'll sure see a compelling home, a home that deals with sin, repentance, and grace, a home that's pursuing after Jesus and fears the Lord, and there's a difference there. They can't explain it. It doesn't make sense. How you live looks crazy to them, but they see the beauty of how it lives out in everyday life. See, as your roommate who is trying to figure out the meaning of life and can't, they are probably not going to go to Ecclesiastes to find the meaning of life and understand that life can only be lived above the sun and not under the sun. They will look at you and see you as a college student getting up with purpose and value for your life because you're on mission for the kingdom, and you have more excitement than they could ever have. What seems like foolishness will be shown beautiful as we live under the wisdom of God, but it's not just as individuals. It's not individuals doing this; Paul says it's the church. It's all of us together, coming together to show the wisdom of God, and we get to show it to the world. Think about it. Here is Ephesus church reading a letter from a convict in prison and obeying it with their lives to find joy. That doesn't sound like what the world would say is good advice. But here is this church who is seeing Jesus, and Paul who is in prison who is leading them in this way.

So the first thing is we've got to live under the wisdom of God as a church. We've got to actually live under Him. We've got to go to the wisdom of God and say even though the wisdom of God looks different, we're going to live different. We're going to live out the wisdom of God, and we're going to show that it's beautiful, that the world might see it as foolishness, that it might hear it as foolishness, but when they come around us, they can feel and see that it's actually beautiful and we have something they don't have. It's the unsearchable riches of Christ. As we live under the wisdom of God, then we come to the second thing we get to do.

2. Speak God's wisdom to one another

This is very important. We've got to speak God's wisdom to each other. I don't know if you've noticed this, but as a believer, when you're pressing in

on what the Bible says and what Scripture is telling you to do, it often doesn't sound like the thing you want to do. Because the world's wisdom is often prettier, it sounds better and it feels like what you should do, but we, as a church, have to speak into each other's lives and say I know this feels like what you should do, but that's not the wisdom of God. I know you're in a marriage having some hiccups. I know it feels like getting out is the best thing to do, but just press into the wisdom of God. Press into the wisdom of God and say, what God has joined let not man separate. Let's press in. let's lean on the beautiful wisdom of God and show it to be what it truly is to speak to one another. Say I know you want to do this, and I know it sounds like the best thing to do, but let's lean into the wisdom of God because that is where beauty and true hope and joy are ultimately found.

3. Contend God's wisdom in the world

So we live under it, we speak it in love to one another, and then lastly, we contend for God's wisdom in the world. We can't just believe the Bible; we also have to live it out. We've got to live it out, not just among each other; we have to live it out in the world. What we have to do as believers is make the church a place where God's wisdom is not just spoken but it's lived. If we're going to have an impact on our culture, we can't just shout God's wisdom louder; we have to live God's wisdom bolder. We can't just get on social media and lambast everybody and expect that to work. We have to live God's wisdom in a bold enough way where people will see our lives, and though they mock our convictions, they will marvel at our living. They say I don't believe a thing you say, but you've got something I don't have and I can't argue with that. You've got more love, more joy, and more hope than I could ever imagine. We've got to speak up about issues, but we have to back them up with a life that is lived under the wisdom of God and sold out to God's wisdom if we are going to truly impact the world.

Here's what God wants us to be as the church. See, in the Garden in the very beginning, humanity was created to live under God's rule and reign, love Him supremely, and love each other like ourselves. That was God's plan for humanity. That was God's plan for creation. Then there was a cosmic fall, and we said no; we're going to do it our own way. We're going

to love ourselves supremely, and we're going to use everyone around us. That is how the world has been ticking ever since. But God has done a mystery. He's done something in time where He sent Jesus Christ, Jesus is putting together a church, and the church is this little signpost that points back to a garden once lost. It says here is a group of people. They're living under the rule and reign of God, they're loving God supremely, and they're loving each other like themselves. If you want to see what Eden was like, come visit among us. Come see the way we love, serve, and give our lives for one another. It's not just pointing back to a garden lost, but it's pointing forward to the new Eden, the new kingdom, the new heavens where we all will live under the perfect rule and reign of God. We will love Him supremely, and we will love each other like ourselves. That's what we get to do. That's what we get to do as a church, showing the world the manifold wisdom of God. If you want to know what it used to be like before the fall, if you want to know what it's going to be like when all things are summed up in Christ, come visit with us. Come walk around with us. We won't do it perfectly, but we'll give you little bitty glimpses of what it means to live under the wisdom of God, and love our neighbors as ourselves, as we worship Christ as supreme over our lives. That's what the church is supposed to do. That's what we're called to do. That's what we get to do. That's what Paul is urging us to do so that we show God's wisdom to the world.

This morning as I was driving down Hwy 1346, I actually passed by that old house. It has trees grown up all through it and you can hardly see the old house anymore. As I began to think about all the years that have passed, I'm beginning to see that the things we saw that night were probably not true. They were probably all in our ten-year-old little heads. There probably wasn't really a witch cooking up a potion with a snake in her basement. There probably wasn't a tree with a skull. It probably was all in our imaginations, but if you pressed me on that, if you really ask me if it was true or not, I can't say. I don't know. I've got those memories. It seemed like it really happened. I think if you asked me, I would have to say the mystery is still unsolved. I just don't know what we saw that night. That's not what Paul is doing here. He's not saying we still have an unsolved mystery. He says the mystery of Christ has been revealed. It was

once hidden, and it is not hidden anymore. It has been revealed, and that mystery actually solves us. We who know it; we get to tell it, but not just tell it, we also get to live it. There might not be witches in a basement brewing up a potion, but there is a king who came and died and rose again. That king's name is Jesus, and He has told us that He is coming back. This mystery that we know that's been revealed, the King who ascended and is coming back has actually told us what to do while He is away. He's told us to go and tell the mystery to the world. He's told us to live under God's wisdom to show the world as the church. He's told us what to do. He wants us to go and tell everyone the unsearchable riches that are found in Him. We know the mystery, so let's go and tell it. Let's live it, and let's let the world see the unsearchable riches of Christ.