

Ephesians—Series Overview

God's Glory in His Church

The book of Ephesians was written to show Christ's glory at work in winning/perfecting the Church as His bride. It exhorts Christians to walk in the newness of life He has won for us according to the Father's kind intention in adopting us. It shows us who we are—the dead raised to life and made fellow citizens with all the saints. Based on who we already are, it invites us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling.

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

Admit it. We all face difficulties. We are not alone in this. Paul had to write the Ephesians not to lose heart because they were dismayed. How are you specifically dealing with difficulties? How are others? How can you encourage yourself and others to trust in Christ?

Repent and Believe. God says through Christ we have been given confidence and access to His throne room. In what ways do you (we) not live out this reality? In what ways are you (we) most tempted to lose heart? Confess that to God. Ask Him to renew in you (us) faith in Christ's riches to vanquish our despondency and assure us of our security forever.

Give Thanks. God has purposed these difficulties and we can trust Him. Because of what Jesus has done, we have boldness to run to God with our discouragement (or whatever difficulty we have) and ask Him to help us. Thank Him for this wondrous grace. Ask Him to make this more and more clear to us at FCCW. Ask Him to help us trust Him.

Ezra-Nehemiah—Series Overview

A Community Restored for Worship

The book of Ezra-Nehemiah was written to encourage God's people returning after exile to believe the covenant promises and restore the temple in Jerusalem. God's people were being restored in the place of promise as a worshipping community. The restoration of purpose was far greater than their real estate. The place always has to do with what God promised would happen there.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
October 28th, 2018

Morning Service:

Ephesians 3:7-13

The Light of Christ Can Dispel Discouragement

1. We All Can Get Discouraged in the Dark (13).

2. Christ Has Called Pastors to Shine God's Light (7-10).

3. Jesus Turns Suffering into Glory (11-12).

We often struggle because we can't see what God is doing and what we can see is troubling and confusing. No wonder we get discouraged! But Christ has not left us to be despondent. The light of the gospel shows us what is true—all of God's purposes for His people have been accomplished by Christ. Let us live in the light of His unsearchable riches and rejoice!

Evening Service

Ezra 10: 1-17, 44

Community Reformation

1. Does Our Sin Grieve Us?

2. Reform Takes Place within Community.

3. We Need to Trust Christ Together.

Ezra led God's people in confession and repentance. They turned from their sin together even though it was a huge mess. And God was faithful to them, working in them to complete their repentance and return to covenant faithfulness as His people. From what do we need to repent?

Taking Gathered Worship Home

Our struggles are not new ones for the people of God. The folks to whom Paul was writing wrestled with losing heart. The answer was not a three-step process, but rather a reminder of God's gift of ministry out of the unsearchable riches of Christ. He reminded them of His role in preaching and their connection together as the Church!

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Ask the Lord to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ today's passage: **Ephesians 3:7-13**. How does this deal with the discouragement the readers are facing? How does that apply to any discouragement you may be feeling? What are differences/similarities? DISCUSS your experience with singing in the service. Why did you sing or not? How did that connect with the sermon? The prayers? PRAY for God to convince us of the boldness we have in Christ.

Sunday PM

READ today's passage: **Ezra 10:1-17, 44**. From what did the people repent? Why was that so significant? PRAISE God for His loving care for us. REPENT of ways we delight in other things more than Him.

Monday

READ **Ephesians 3:7-13**. What are the unsearchable riches of Christ? What is the mystery referred to here? How do they apply to us? REJOICE for God has gifted us with one another. PRAY for your neighbors, peers, friends & family asking God to save them. EXTEND His grace to someone today. Lovingly and thoughtfully express to them in word and deed the grace Christ has lavished upon you.

Tuesday

READ **Ephesians 3:7-13**. How is God's wisdom made known through the Church? How does our discouragement affect that? MEDITATE on this reality—we have confidence before God in Christ! PRAY, "Father God, thank you for making us Yours. Jesus,

we praise Your name and renew our love for You. Holy Spirit, enable us to keep this pledge and so honor the Father and Son by Your work through us."

Wednesday

READ **Ephesians 3:7-13; John 17:20-26**. Both of these passages deal with followers of Christ together. To whom are we visible? In what ways do we demonstrate the gospel merely by being brought together in Christ? What are we to do together? How? Why? MEDITATE on the astonishing grace God has given to us. REJOICE if you have been adopted through Christ's sacrifice. PRAY and thank God for uniting us to Himself.

Thursday

READ **Ephesians 3:7-13; Hebrews 4:14-16**. What does it mean for us to have confidence before God? How is this different from presumption? How is this only possible in the gospel of Jesus? REJOICE in Christ's coming and freeing us from sin and death. PRAY, "Heavenly Father, thank You for all Your promises. Thank You for the fulfillment of all of them in Christ. Help us to see them more clearly and to believe them more fully than anything else. Strengthen our faith and allow us to know Your faithfulness. Amen."

Friday

READ **Ephesians 3:7-13**. What was their glory? How is this foolishness for the world? How does it make sense in the gospel? What of this do you (we) struggle to believe in our context? REJOICE for Christ has died 'once for all' obtaining for us eternal life! PRAY for your neighbors who are deceived and unable to even see their own sin for what it really is. Pray for their repentance. Pray that God will use you to bring them into His kingdom to the honor and praise of His name.

Saturday

READ **Ephesians 3:7-13**. What have you been learning this week? READ tomorrow's sermon passage **Ephesians 3:14-16**. PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. PRAY for God's glory to be more and more manifested in the area. Pray that He will use us to extend His grace as we celebrate it together.