



## ***Rulers and Authorities - Eph 3:1-13***

Nov 3 - Dave Navarro

### **INTRO**

Ephesians is part of what are called the Prison Epistles - a series of letters (Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon) that Paul wrote from prison. In the ancient world, as today, being in prison would bring suspicion on you and hurt your credibility. In today's passage, Paul addresses this issue. He explains that the fact that he is in prison paradoxically shows that he is truly participating in God's work.

*Open with prayer<sup>1</sup>, then read Eph 3:1-13 together as a group. Consider dividing it by paragraph. It's helpful to all use the same Bible translation. SLC preaches from the NLT.*

### **SERMON RECAP**

1. Intro
  - a. Intro series and text.
  - b. Paul's digression.
2. Paul's Work
  - a. The potential shame of prison. Particularly because circular letter. Some readers would not have known Paul. So Paul takes time to address. And he addresses by weaving together two threads - Paul's work and God's work. So it looks like this... (show outline). But I'm going to pull it apart for the sake of our discussion today.
  - b. Paul's work as an apostle, pt. 1 & 2 (v1-5, 7-9)
    - i. Gentiles. The great irony.
    - ii. Mystery.
3. God's Work (v6, 10-12)
  - a. V6 is a recap. One people out of two. Remember last week.

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<sup>1</sup> Some groups prefer to begin with a longer time of sharing and prayer. This is a good instinct and ensures that prayer time doesn't get shortened by time constraints.

- b. God's eternal plan
  - i. Define Rulers and Authorities
  - ii. Divine Warfare Pattern
- 4. Takeaways
  - a. Display His Wisdom (V10)
  - b. Cruciform Victory
  - c. Paul in Prison (V12)

## BONUS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*If you're covering 2 sermons in 1 Life Group meeting, skip to the Core Discussion Questions to save time. Otherwise, start here.*

1. Can you remember a time when you won at a game or competition? Have a few people share memories.
2. Read Exodus 15 and/or Psalm 24. For one passage or both, do you see the divine warfare outline play out? Where does each section (kingship proclamation / recounting triumphs / praise and temple building) begin and end?

## CORE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In V8, Paul says he is God's messenger despite being "the least deserving of all God's people." Why would he say this? See also 1 Cor 15:9.
2. Dave commented that there's an irony around Paul being chosen to minister to the Gentiles. Why is this ironic? How did Paul's "career" focus change? See also Acts 22:3-10 and Philippians 3:3-9.
3. What is the relationship between the divine warfare motif and Jesus' call to be peacemakers? See Matthew 5:9, 43-48; Ephesians 6:12.
4. Dave proposed the idea of cruciform victory - of a triumph that comes not through dominance, but through self-sacrifice. Have you observed examples of this kind of victory?
5. Verse 10 talks about the church standing as a witness and a resistance against the powers of evil in the world. Are our churches and our church members, in the sorts of life they lead, posing the kind of challenge to the power of evil that provokes a reaction? How can we do better at this?

## ACT & PRAY

1. As a group, share areas of praise and need. Write them down so you can be praying for them during the week.



2. Remind yourselves of your Adopt-a-Missionary, and any prayer requests you've seen from them.
3. Spend time praying, either all together, or in smaller groups. Feel free to experiment with silent prayer, written prayer, etc.
4. Our 40 Days of Prayer initiative will wrap up this week. Spend extra time praying for healing for Donna, Vonnie, Cameron, and Colin.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Don't forget to get your tickets to Christmas Tales, our dinner theatre event on Nov 30. See the Welcome Centre on Sunday! This is a newcomer-focussed event, so please bring friends. It will be fun, and the food will be great, and there will be no pressure or awkwardness.
2. Our Christmas Eve service will be Dec 24 at 5pm. Mark your calendars. This is a very visitor-friendly service, so please invite friends.

