

Ephesians 3:8-13

No Longer Strangers

In 2:11-3:7, Paul explains how Gentiles (all non-Jewish people) have been included in the plan of God which had once been focused around the Israelites (Jews). Read 3:8-13 and see if you can explain the meaning and significance of the three following phrases as they relate to what God has done:

> "A mystery" (v. 9): This was a new teaching that had not been completely revealed before (therefore a "mystery"). At that time it was being revealed that the Gentiles were now included in God's plan.

> "The Church" (v. 10): This refers to the concept of God's "called out" people, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. We are all one in Christ.

> "Eternal purpose" (v. 11): God had this plan determined before time even began. It became realized through the work of Christ which unites all believers together.

Application

This plan, orchestrated by God, is another example of His wisdom (v. 10). Despite our sin, we are offered forgiveness through faith in Christ and entrance into God's family!

> We were once considered "strangers" or "outsiders." Have you ever felt unwelcomed by a group of people? Why is that difficult? Because it is never fun to be excluded from what is happening. We all want to fit in, and it is hard when we can't.

> What can we learn from this passage about relating to people who are different than us? We were different, but God welcomed us! We must reach out to people despite our differences.

Is there anyone that you have trouble connecting with? How can your perspective be different? What can you do to show God's love for people who are different than you?