



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Ephesians 3: 1-13

Winter 2024

"Minister of a Mystery"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, good morning to you all. It's so good to see you on this Sunday morning.

Well, we are in a great text of Scripture, so if we're cold, this should warm our hearts because this is a great portion of the Book of Ephesians and one of the central themes, (or subjects), that Paul speaks on: "The Mystery." I'm going to take a rather lengthy text because it all pulls together; it's a text that I think needs to be taught to this extent. Chapter 3, verses one through thirteen,

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— ² if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; ³ that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. ⁴ By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; *(or we can translate that, "by the Spirit")*,⁶ *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷ of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. ⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of

the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; ¹⁰ so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*. ¹¹ *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. ¹³ Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Ephesians 3: 1-13

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

LORD, what a blessing it is to be with Your saints on this cold morning. It's difficult to leave the house and come to a place like this on such a day, but it's so good to see all who are here, and we're here because we want to listen to Your Word. We want to hear the great things that the apostle wrote and be built up in the faith. And they are encouraging things about our new status in Christ—the equality that we have in Christ and what He has done for us; He's given us access to You, a great theme of the Book of Hebrews of how we can come boldly to the throne of grace. We're in Your family; we're Your children. We're Your sons and daughters; and You treat us with all the kindness and love and generosity that a loving father would his son or daughter. —And yet, really, even more so. And so, Father, we thank You for that, and we pray that You would encourage us as we consider these things this morning and bless us and build us up in the faith, and give us great encouragement.

And LORD, we look to You as the "God of all comfort", That's how Paul describes You in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, (vs3). And what a glorious truth that is; Your compassion for us, Your consolation that You give us for 'we are but dust', as the psalmist put it. And help us to think on those things: On the eternal things, and the path that this world is passing away; but we have a glorious future.

And we have glorious truths in this text that speak, not only of that, but speak of the present, and the blessings in this present time that we have, and Your care for us, and the ministry that we have at this very moment. It should encourage us to be very active in our faith. And I pray that that will be what is produced through our time together this morning.

We look to You to bless us. Thank You for Christ, and His death for us. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.

(Message) Hamlet told his friend and schoolmate, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." That's a quote you've probably heard many times. Modern materialists don't like that quote, they dismiss that statement. It suggests something that they don't want to hear or don't believe—and that is, that there's something beyond the material.

But Paul would have liked it. He believed it. He taught on some of those things in Ephesians chapter 3, verses 1-13. He didn't believe in ghosts, like Hamlet did, but he wrote of angels and tells of, "the manifold wisdom of God", (vs10).

But all of that comes under a larger subject, which is "the mystery". (vs9). Who doesn't like a mystery, a sleuth like Sherlock Holmes, or Hercule Poirot, these men with these preternatural, these uncanny abilities to find clues and solve cases? Well, we all like that.

But that's not 'the mystery' Paul reveals in Ephesians chapter 3. He didn't figure it out. —It couldn't be discovered by logic and study. 'The mystery', Paul wrote, 'was a secret hidden in God'. So it could only be known by special revelation—and it had been revealed to him and the apostles. It came as a shock to many in the church; and it took time for them to adjust to it.

Paul has given some indication of it in the previous chapter. But in the third chapter, in verse 6, he states it plainly: "...Gentiles are fellow heirs...", with Jewish Christians. The two are spiritual equals.

That's the subject, which he introduced by reminding them in verse 1, that he was a prisoner. They knew that. He was in Rome. He was a prisoner of Caesar. But Paul called himself "the prisoner of Christ", (vs1). meaning 'a prisoner for Christ' due to Christ, due to preaching Christ, preaching the Gospel. But he also added 'that he was a prisoner for the sake of you Gentiles.' (vs16). It was because of 'the mystery' and the privilege he was given of preaching it to the Gentiles across the empire, that got him in trouble with the Jews—and landed him in prison.

Luke recounted it fully in Acts chapters 21 and 22. Paul had gone to Jerusalem with a gift from the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Corinth, to help the poor Jewish saints. It was an expression of Gentile love for them—and equality with them. While there, he went to the temple to worship when he was recognized by some Jews from Asia, (probably from Ephesus). A mob seized him, and would have killed him when the Roman soldiers rescued him.

Safely in their custody, he asked to be allowed to speak to the crowd. He recounted his history as a rabbi and a persecutor of the church—and his conversion on the Damascus road in a bright light. "...I fell to the ground", he said, "and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul. Why are you persecuting Me?' And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene.'" (Acts 22: 7-8).

The Jewish crowd listened to him very carefully. But when they heard him speak of the mission Christ gave him, "Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles", (Acts 22:21), everything changed. They tore their shirts; they threw dust in the air; they called for his death. It demonstrated that divide that the Law caused—what Paul spoke of in chapter 2, the Jewish hostility toward Gentiles, ('the dogs'). The joining of the two groups into "one new man", (Eph 2:15), is what *the mystery* is all about. It was a complete mystery to the Jewish crowd in the temple—but even the hint of it was *anathema* to them. Paul was a blasphemer in their minds, and worthy only of death.

And so began Paul's years of imprisonment, first in Jerusalem, then in Caesarea, and finally in Rome, from where he wrote this letter to the Ephesians—one of the four 'Prison Epistles'.

So Paul reminded them, as he introduced the subject of 'the mystery', that he was there, "...for the sake of you Gentiles." (vs1)—and there without regrets. That was Paul, a selfless man who was willing to risk his life for the church—for the elect of God across the globe. His love for them, his love for the Lord put him in harm's way to preach to the lost.

But then he told them of his special ministry to them, what he calls, "the stewardship", (vs2), or ministry, that God had given him. He called it, 'a ministry of grace which God gave to him for them.' Paul was made a *steward*, (or *manager*), of the Gospel and its message to the Gentiles. In that role, he was given special revelation of *the mystery*.

In verses 4-6 Paul explained to the Ephesians what he calls "the mystery of Christ." (vs4). He had explained a little about it in chapter 2, and how Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ—who reconciled them to God in one body, and making them all fellow citizens of 'God's household.' But now, in verse 6, he summarizes it that, "Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel..."

Now that is something the Jewish people had never imagined. Just the statement that 'Christ had sent Paul off to the Gentiles', sent them into a rage. But this was even more radical: That uncircumcised Gentiles would be equal partners with the Jews in the blessings of salvation...and the blessings of the kingdom to come. They couldn't imagine it, because it had never before been revealed. Paul stated that in verse 5, 'which in other generations it had not been made known.' It was a mystery sealed up and hidden in God.

Now Gentile salvation was known. It had been revealed; God told Abraham, in Genesis chapter 12, verse 3, that, "...all the families of the earth will be blessed in him."

Isaiah called the Messiah, "a light to the nations", (Isa 42:6), and prophesied that, 'salvation would reach to the ends of the earth.' (Isa 49:6). And there were Gentile God fearers and proselytes, converts to Judaism: Rehab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess were saved, and became Israelites.

But this was different. This was something new and unanticipated: Believing Gentiles were spiritual equals with believing Jews, co-heirs of the promises and the kingdom with the Jews!

Salvation has always been, 'by grace through faith'. Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4 is one of the great texts about that; ("...But the righteous will live by his faith.") as is Genesis 15:6, a great text on that; (⁶Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.) But it had different consequences in the Old Testament. Gentiles came under the Law, and they identified with Israel. In effect, they became Jews.

But no longer—Gentiles are now saved independently of Israel. The Law has been annulled: That is, it's been made inoperative. Not destroyed; it is still Scripture. It is helpful and it is as much Scripture as the books of the New Testament—and we study it equally. But it's not 'the rule of life', as it was with Israel. Now, apart from the Law and by faith alone, Gentiles and Jews alike have salvation, and are made into "one new man", (Eph 2:15), fellow members in the church. We're both equals in the church. Jews and Gentiles are no longer rivals, no longer enemies, but friends— brothers and sisters in the same family, the one family of God, with the same hope and same destiny

So 'the mystery' is *equality*—the equality of the Jew and the Gentile in Christ, joined together in a spiritual relationship with Christ—a close, living relationship with the Savior equally.

And Paul was stating that: 'That this ministry of the mystery was given to him', verse 7, "of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace." Everything is a gift—and it is all according to grace. Paul knew he had not earned this

privilege. In fact, he could only accomplish it, he could only do it by God's sovereign grace—or as he said, "according to the working of His power." (vs7b).

Paul did amazing things in his, 'ministry of the mystery,' in carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles and teaching them all the blessings they had in Christ. He crossed continents, survived storms at sea, and endured beatings, imprisonments, hunger, thirst, and exposure to the elements. No apostle worked harder or sacrificed more than Paul. But he did it all gladly, impelled by the grace of God, by his love for the Lord, his love for the Gentiles, and by the power of God working in him. As he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 10, "By the grace of God, I am what I am."

Now, by way of application, that is true of every one of us. We live each day, every moment of every day according to 'the working of His power', so that we can do what is pleasing to Him in spite of ourselves—and do it only because of Him. We're not left to ourselves; we can accomplish much as a gift of God's grace.

And Paul knew that better than anyone for he understood the grace of God better than anyone. 'By grace alone' was Paul's watchword. The only thing that could explain the great privilege given to him to be the minister of *the mystery* was the grace of God—a blessing which really was a mystery to him. I think he was mystified by the fact that he, of all people, was chosen. He kind of expresses that here; "To me..." he said in verse eight, (that is, "To me of all people!)", "...the very least of all saints...", (this privilege of preaching the Gospel), "...to the Gentiles was given." What a surprise! Who would have thought!

And his opinion of himself didn't elevate with time. Later he wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 15, that he, "was the chief of sinners."

Paul had an especially notorious history. He, (as you know this), he had been a persecutor of the church. The blood of the saints was on his hands. So he called himself, 'the very least of all of them.' But was Paul, (the hardest working apostle, the greatest friend of the Gentiles and the Jews), being too hard on himself? Was this just unhealthy

self-loathing? Critics today would probably dismiss it as that and give some 'psychological' explanation for Paul's feelings about himself—a disparaging description.

But no one was more well-grounded and mentally healthy than the apostle Paul. What he expressed here is what every believer in Christ will sense about himself or herself as we mature in the faith. We don't become more and more approving of ourselves and amazed at how wonderful we are; no, we realize how we're saved by the grace of God. Man's problem, our problem even as Christians, was stated by Anselm in the 11th century when he told his debate partner, "You have not yet considered the greatness of the weight of sin." (You've heard me say that a number of times. It's a good one to learn and memorize.)

Paul had considered that; and Paul understood that. And the more we understand God's grace, the more we will know ourselves, and the more we will wonder: 'Why did God choose me? Why did Christ come in this world specifically to save me?' The result of that self-reflection and understanding is not discouragement, it's not depression, but joy! —Joy and a desire to serve the LORD because it is understanding the unconditional love of God. It's out of God's love that we have spiritual life, and faith, and forgiveness—and have the hope of a glorious future, and have meaning and purpose now—in the present.

The Lord has given us a mission. That's what Paul marveled over—that it, "was given to him to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ..." (vs8b). Every believer in Christ is '*in Him*'—that is, joined to Him in a living relationship, like a branch in a vine, as Jesus illustrated it in John 15. And 'in Christ' we are joined to what is '*in Him*'—and that is "unfathomable riches." And we have access to that.

This word, *unfathomable*, in Greek literally means, '*not to be tracked out*', which seems to suggest *tracks* or *footsteps* that cannot be followed—there are too many of them. So the idea is something that's *inexhaustible*. The point is, 'There's just no end to the riches that are found in Christ.' They go in every direction: Past, present, future blessings, blessings from the Judge of all the earth; from wiping the slate clean of our

crimes, misdemeanors, and guilt, justifying us, to making us heirs of His glorious, eternal kingdom, and giving us a secure present.

You can't be any more secure in any way than you are right now in Christ. Whatever the weather is...whatever the circumstances are, we're absolutely...absolutely secure in Him. That's our present, and we have a glorious future that we look forward to.

We are governed at every moment by God's gracious, hidden hand to work all things to His glory—and all things to our good. So as William Cowper wrote in his hymn, "Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face", the blessings are constant and inexhaustible. And Paul, of all people, Saul of Tarsus, had the privilege of telling Gentile believers that they were the full recipients of those blessings with the Jewish believers. They are equals in the eyes of God. He has no favorites. He loves all equally—and infinitely. And as we follow those tracks, follow the Lord's direction, we will only increase in wisdom and blessing.

The challenge is to believe that—and not believe the alternative or the many alternatives that are offered. We see that challenge early in the Book of Proverbs. The Proverbs were written to guide the young and the naïve in the safe paths of wisdom. There are always those who are seeking to redirect; there are always those who are seeking to hijack the naïve into following different paths—different ways.

In chapter 1 of the Proverbs, Solomon warns his son of that. He said, "If sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, 'Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood. We will find all kinds of precious wealth. Throw in your lot with us.'" (vs 11,13,14). In other words, they proposed adventure and easy riches. It's attractive; it has an appeal—but it's foolish! It's the way of self-destruction. Solomon said, "They ambush their own lives." (vs18).

What Paul offered the Gentiles was the wisdom of Solomon and more, "the manifold wisdom of God..." (vs10). In Colossians 2 he said that, in Christ, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (vs3). Gentiles, who in spite of their many philosophers and philosophies walked in darkness and lived foolish and hopeless lives,

were now included in all the blessings of 'wisdom and knowledge'. They now go out in every direction of life to give peace and real prosperity. (And when I say prosperity, I mean *moral, spiritual, intellectual* prosperity.) It restores the soul and stores up riches for all eternity. That's 'the good life'—the truly *good* life. That's what Paul revealed and taught: Through faith alone in Christ alone we, Gentile and Jew, male and female, black, white, Asian, however you want to divide the human race, every believer has "the unfathomable riches of Christ", —you have that in Christ.

So Paul's ministry was not only to reveal these glorious truths to the Gentiles across the globe, but also to the angels in heaven. That's what he states in verses 9 and 10. "...to bring to light...the mystery...so that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*."

Now that is a surprising fact: God has given the church, each local church, the responsibility of instructing the angels of God; instructing them with wisdom, and especially as it is revealed in *the mystery of the church*. That's quite a responsibility, if you think about it, for that's what he says.

And there is much to reveal. Here, God's wisdom is described as "manifold", and that has the idea of '*multi-colored*'. It gives the picture of a richly woven tapestry—or a field of flowers; and I witnessed that a few years ago in Israel. I think I've mentioned this to you before but it applies again here. It was early spring when the wildflowers bloom and they bloom all over; I mean the landscape is filled with them. We happened to be driving in a field not far from the Valley of Elah, where David slew Goliath, and the field was full of these wildflowers. And so we stopped to just look at them; they were of every color imaginable—and some colors that I've never seen before. I couldn't tell you what the color was, couldn't name it. It was a magnificent sight—and that's the picture that Paul gives here of God's wisdom: multi-colored, multi-dimensional, many sided, unexpected. And the church has the responsibility of bringing to light this wisdom, not only to ourselves, but to the angelic host—especially in regard to *the mystery*, the equality in the church of Jews and Gentiles, together in harmony.

One of my professors at seminary, Dr. Harold Hoehner, wrote in his commentary on Ephesians, "Equality between Jews and Gentiles was beyond the comprehension of any human being; and any angelic being." In chapter 2, we saw the historical division between the two groups, which is one of the basic divisions of mankind, Jew and Gentile. This division was like a stone wall that separated the two, with death threats on it. And yet, God brought the Gentiles, who were far off, He brought them near, and joined them with the Jews in one body, the church, which Paul called "one new man", unified and equal.

And we all believe in the Gospel, in Christ the Savior. And having believed in Him, we are joined 'in Him', and put in the promise given to Abraham. All of us are put in that promise given to Abraham, what Paul calls in Romans 11, verse 17, "...the rich root of the olive tree." We've been placed in that—that promise, (and promises), given to Abraham and the patriarchs.

We all now share the same life in the Holy Spirit, the same hope of the resurrection, the same hope of the future kingdom—and of the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth. We all have equal access to God in prayer. That is the unexpected, multi-colored wisdom of God in the sovereign grace of God. And we're to proclaim it to all! And in proclaiming it at this moment, we're instructing the angels. Not only do we teach it though, we live it.

There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy. If God would give us eyes to see, as He did to Elisha's servant in Dothan, we might see the sky above full of the angelic host, horses and chariots of fire all around.— They're here! If I read Paul correctly, they're here. There may be a few of us here this morning, but this is a big congregation—bigger than we know. We don't need to feel like we need to greet them; but I think what we should do is certainly greet one another. That is, we should show, exhibit, the unity that we have for one another, the love that we have for one another, and model the wisdom of God. They are watching, and they are learning. And what they should see should match what they hear. And they should

see this unity of the body, and this love of the saints for one another: Those who are placed in the family of God.

And I would say this as well, 'You have their attention not just in this place, but wherever we are, whatever the situation may be.' When we go through trials, what they see in you is what Paul spoke of in verse 7, and what we'll refer to in verse 20, 'The power that works within us.' They see God's grace; they see His enabling grace in us. We have a wider audience in life than we might realize.

So if no one else notices your situation in life, your predicament in life, the trial that you may be going through, the personal challenges of life—well, they do! They see it; they see how you respond to it. They see God's work of grace in your life. When you respond well, they're instructed as they see the grace of God played out in our lives in various circumstances. We're never alone, so we need to live a life that's consistent with what he's saying here, for it instructs the angels.

The church is a work of His grace, His masterpiece of grace. The church is not an afterthought. It's not 'Plan B' that God had when Israel rejected 'Plan A', and rejected their Messiah. It was all carefully planned out from all eternity. No mistakes. It's all according to God's plan. And according to verse 11, this is where the multi-purpose, "manifold wisdom of God" is seen: In His eternal plan, or "eternal purpose", in creating the church. And the great wisdom of His plan is revealed in how it was "...carried out...", which Paul said He did "...in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs11b). And He did that on the cross when His Son redeemed a people for Himself.

What an amazing thing! God planned salvation from all eternity; His plan involved choosing, electing a people for Himself; and not a chosen few, but a vast multitude of souls, fallen people, guilty people—and He gave them to His Son to save. And He did that, not with a strong arm by coming as a conquering king, but in the weakness of a man, the weakness of a servant, who allowed Himself to be arrested, beaten, and slain on a cross.

It appeared to be a tragic defeat but was actually a joyous victory. When the Godly One died for the ungodly, suffered their penalty in their place and so secured life for them by His death—He achieved it! That's the wisdom of God, in the plan no man or angel could have imagined. But in this way alone, God could be what Paul called Him, in Romans 3, verse 26, "...just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." That's grace.

We have forgiveness. We have eternal life—hope now and glory for eternity. Not through any work of our own but the work of Christ alone, which we receive ... not achieve ... we receive, through faith alone. That's the wisdom of God that Paul was given to preach to the Jews and the Gentiles, and to bring to light to the angels. And we're to carry on that great work, work that's gone on for 2000 years—and now we're a part of it in what we say and what we do.

And we can do it with confidence. That's the assurance Paul gave in verse 12 because we are in Christ, the One who carried out the plan successfully; He will give us success as a result. And He does that by giving us access. 'In Christ', Paul said, "...we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him." (vs12). For all those that Christ has saved, He gives access to the Father. The Judge of all the earth is now our Father who accepts us.; and we shouldn't doubt that.

Again, He doesn't accept us based on what we've done, because if that were the case, then we'd all have reason to doubt that He's our Father at any given time. But that's not the basis of His acceptance of us. It's not what we've done, for if that were our ground of acceptance, we'd have no acceptance. —We could never be confident, because we fail continually.

No, the Father accepts us based on what Christ has done—which is complete and perfect. Jesus said it succinctly and explicitly when He declared from the cross, "It is finished!" (Jn 19:30). We can add nothing to that—and to add something to that, Paul told the Galatians, (Gal 1:6-7), is, "a different gospel", and 'no gospel at all'—and is a blasphemy.

No, we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And that is the basis of our boldness in coming to Him—not ourselves, not what we've done, but altogether what He has done. And so with such access, (which is constant), we can ask the Father for help and He will give it according to His perfect wisdom—and as Paul will later say in this chapter, 'more than we ask or think', (vs20), beyond that. He gives it according to His perfect wisdom, gives us power for faithfulness and success in our mission; that's where the success comes from.

This is why it's so important for us to understand who we are, and what we are by God's grace—and grace alone...and be men and women of prayer. We must be people of study, we must be people of prayer, and come to Him continually. And so, with such access, which is constant as I said, we ask the Father for help—and He will give it. He will give it according to His wisdom and power.

Now on that basis, Paul exhorts the Ephesians, and us, in verse 13, with strong encouragement.; "Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory." Paul concluded where he began—with his imprisonment and tribulations. He was a prisoner of the mighty empire that could crush the little apostle and leave those Ephesians without his guidance.

That may have discouraged them. That may have frightened them, but Paul wanted them to be encouraged, not discouraged. He was not the prisoner of Nero but, as he said in verse 1, he was, "the prisoner of Christ Jesus" —a prisoner for His service but also Christ's possession, and so absolutely secure, just as we all are—absolutely secure in Christ.

God works everything according to His eternal purpose. Even Paul's imprisonment was part of God's plan for himself and for those Ephesians. And he did have tribulations...but he said the tribulations that he had were even for 'their glory'. Now he didn't say how his tribulations were for the glory of the Ephesians. Maybe his example of perseverance would strengthen them, so that when they suffered for their

faith, they would suffer well—resulting in eternal glory. What Paul shows here is that tribulations are not meaningless; they are an opportunity to represent Christ to men and angels. —And there is glory, eternal glory, in that.

What a privilege to be part of the church and *the mystery* that God had planned from all eternity: To be chosen of God, redeemed by Christ, and forgiven and bound for glory. The angels marvel over all that God has done with fallen humanity; He made it into a new humanity, into “one new man”, in which former enemies are now friends, at peace with each other, at peace with God.

If you're not part of that, but want to be, then come to Christ. Trust in Him and His sacrifice for sinners. Receive the Savior as your Lord and God, and be saved; He will receive you. So may God help you to do that—and help all of us who have done that to rejoice in the great privilege that He's given us, and the great position we have in Christ.

(Closing prayer) Father, we do thank you for Your Son, who is our Savior and our God, the eternal second Person of the Trinity, who took to Himself a body and a human nature in order to sacrifice Himself in our place, that we might have life. And now we're hidden in Him; and when You see us, You see us through Him, as righteous and acceptable.

We can claim nothing for ourselves. It is all Your grace, and we give You praise for that, and thank You for it. Help us to understand it more, and to live lives that would be consistent with that.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace. I Christ's name, Amen.

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