

SERIES: 'WALK WORTHY'- -12/8/24 (#6)

PASTOR ROB

- PASTOR ROB...Recounting his experience at Church last Sunday, he was introduced to a young man who'd never before been in a Church....he seizes the opportunity to share the grace of Jesus....this man is totally taken back by the Gospel story, incredulously now understanding that He needed forgiveness...that Jesus had to die to justify him (and all of us)...totally opening his eyes....and ACCEPTING CHRIST into his life! What a supernatural happening...in such a short period of time!
- A great example of 'God at work'!.....doing supernatural things all over...and in our own Church. That young man is now amongst the 'children of God'....meaning: **ONLY** those who have received Jesus are heirs to the Kingdom! Reflecting the spirit, enthusiasm and 'brotherhood of our Church body, he introduces the young man(now a Believer) randomly to another in the cafe (Zach)..who greets him with great joy and super excitement as he recalls his own transformation at Christ First just 13 months prior.
- Despite ANY differences between us.....nationality, culture, background, job, political affiliation, etc., etc., we are **ONE IN CHRIST**...one family in Spirit and in fact! It reflects **THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S GRACE!**
- Paul, under chains and in prison, understood this mystery and recognized supernatural grace! Paul is a great example of someone "**WALKING WORTHY**".

Eph 3: 1-13- -For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— (2) assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's GRACE that was given to me for you (3) how the MYSTERY was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. (4) When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the MYSTERY of Christ (5) 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. (6) 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 (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. (8) 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 (9) and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the MYSTERY hidden for ages in God who created all things (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. (11) 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. (13) So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

“Mystery”...Paul says it four times! How do we define this reference to “mystery”NOT as vague, or fleeting, or hard to understand....rather, this wisdom of God, that might be unintuitive to people, has been revealed. Two parts: 1. Gentiles are fellow heirs; 2. Gentiles are part of the same body (Church).

- **The second part (#2) is, from a Jewish perspective, the main “mystery”. Throughout the OT and even in Genesis (12)- the Great Commission-Abraham), ((the Ninevites, Ruth, Naamon, etc.) we note that the grace of God (the blessings, Messiah, healings, etc.) was not reserved for Jews alone. Even Jesus said: (John 10:16) “I have other sheep that are not part of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd”. BUT, they didn’t see these dirty and ‘dangerous’ people as part of the same Body.**
- **Paul noted that he was in chains BECAUSE of the Gentiles.....his second time in jail (Acts 22:23-24)....when the Jewish people were repelled and in an uproar when He recounted: “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles’ “.**
- **The Jews were used to this separation.....even to the extent that the Temple was set up to separate....the outer court for the Gentiles, the Jewish women in the next, Jewish men next, and, finally, the high priests in the center court. So this was their deep-seeded culture....separation.**
- **So Paul’s statement that they were all together now was flabbergasting! Paul, ironically, in the not-so-distant past was himself so ardently against Jewish believers that he made it his life’s work (until his revelation) to persecute them.....from killing Jewish believers...to leading the fight on their behalf....historic ‘turnaround!**

Gal 2: 11-14- - But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

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- **Paul was fighting on behalf of God’s Grace...his stewardship.....against a rules-based culture...he did it for them and he did it for us (who would otherwise be in the ‘outer court’). Refer back to Eph 3:2) This was all in keeping with God’s plan....for a Church that would recognize its own commonality in Christ and would, thereby, be unified.**
 - **CS Lewis was once asked about the difference between Christianity and every other religion in the world.....his answer: “GRACE”.....(‘undeserved favor’ and so much more... supernatural...miraculous).**
 - **Pastor Rob’s question to us: why did Jesus have to die for our sins....why not something less? Because: “The wages of sin is death” - (“but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ, Jesus our Lord”) Romans 6:23. Jesus took on our sins....by God’s grace, we can be saved!! The nature of grace is forgiveness.....GRACE MAY BE FREE BUT IT ISN’T CHEAP! Christ died so as to justify you!**
 - **And Grace abounds even beyond and in your daily lives...blessings! See V-8...bringing the gospel to others (bringing Jesus to the world) *is not a burden....its a privilege!! ITS GRACE!!! And its a purpose!!! ITS GRACE!!!***
 - ***Its also Grace knowing that God knows you intimately just as He knew Paul:***

Acts 22: 3-4 (When Paul begins his speech to the Jews) I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this City, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.

- **Paul was a Jew, highly educated/taught by the infamous Gamaliel, highly respected, but also born in Tarsus making him a Roman citizen. So God uniquely designed him and perfectly positioned him for his leading missionary role (bringing Grace to the whole world) He was under God's special Grace.....but, as a human that was as stalwart a Jew as they come....then saved..... then placed in this special, God-directed role, it was NOT easy....in fact, very arduous/difficult....but he had God's Grace and dedicated himself to promulgating that Grace to Gentiles (and to all of us!).**
- **We ALL have this Grace....imagine if we all each understood the privilege inherent in God's grace and asked Him how we could use our gifts to be "on-mission" with Him!!! Think about this and, in gratitude for His Grace (not to 'score points'), take steps to accomplish your mission!**
- **V-10 - Its supernatural...when we can put aside all of our human differences and come together in Christ. That's the manifold wisdom of God...the mystery of our Church. When we come together, under God's Grace, something supernatural ...even to the eyes of the angels....is taking place.**
- **John Stott quote: "It is as if a great drama is being enacted...history is a theater....the world is a stage and the Church members in every land are the actors...God himself has written the play and He directs and produces it...act by act, scene by scene....the story continues to unfold...but who are the audiences?...they are the cosmic intelligences ... the principalities and powers in the heavenly places."**
- **So- - -The angels have been watching history unfold from the Beginning! They've seen it all....wars, genocide, division, hate, sin, etc. and then see emerge 'Grace Incarnate'-
-Christ, Jesus!!! Now....'WHERE SIN RUNS DEEP, HIS GRACE RUNS MORE!'**

Rev 7: 9- After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all the tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (10) and crying out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (11) And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God. (12) saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST- -THE GRACE OF GOD

