



PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Ephesians 3:1 - 13

What Makes the Church Such a Big Deal?

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.
⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.
¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

The “*church*” is a dominant theme in Ephesians It dominates his thinking because it’s *through the church*, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms

“church” - 13 times

“body” or “body of Christ” - 9 times

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Every Christian, in every place, across all time
since the Church was born in Acts 2.

Matthew 16:18

1 Corinthians 12:27

Ephesians 1:22 & 23

The term “Body of Christ” emphasizes that the church is the focal point of Christ’s activity now, just as was his physical body during his earthly ministry.”

(Millard Erickson, Introduction to Christian Doctrine, 2nd Edition, p 342)

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Matthew 16:18 1 Corinthians 12:27 Ephesians 1:22 & 23

LOCAL CHURCH

The visible expression of the Universal church . . .
the local church is what people see.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Philemon 1 & 2 Revelation 1:4; chapters 2 & 3

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH?

To restore what was lost when Adam sinned

⁹ God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. ¹⁰ And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. (NLT)

Ephesians 1:9 & 10

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH A BIG DEAL?

Through the *church*, the multifaceted wisdom of
God is being made known

“The church is like a beautiful tapestry. Its members come from a wide range of colorful backgrounds. No other human community resembles it. Its diversity and harmony are unique.

God’s manifold wisdom is reflected in the church’s variegated construction. The angels marvel at God’s wisdom as they observe Jews and Gentiles united in one body. The church is to be an audio-visual display of God’s reconciling work. In this primary way she testifies to God’s grace and wisdom. So Paul encouraged living life in Christ in such a way that reconciliation is the dominant feature of church life.”

(NET Bible notes)

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH A BIG DEAL?

The *church* is the vehicle through which God is achieving his purpose

To do this he has created a *new humanity*

“¹⁵ His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two (Jew and Gentile), thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.” Ephesians 2:15-16

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH A BIG DEAL?

The *church* is the vehicle through which God is achieving his purpose

To do this he has created a **new humanity**

²⁶ For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷
And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26 - 28

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH A BIG DEAL?

The church is the vehicle through which God is achieving his purpose

To do this he has created a **new humanity**

“When the new humanity gets together, disregarding the boundary lines of identity that work to keep them apart, they are the wisdom of God incarnate.” *(The Bible Project)*

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH A BIG DEAL?

The church is the vehicle through which God is achieving his purpose

God's intent/purpose/will – v.3:10 – now *through the church* the multifaceted wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” (NIV)

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WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE LIKE WE REALLY BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE?

That's what he explores in chapters 4 through 6

1. If we really believe this we will: “Live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (4:1)
2. If we really believe this we will: “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace . . . by being humble and gentle; patient, bearing with one another in love. (4:2 & 3)

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE LIKE WE REALLY BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE?

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3. If we really believe this we will hold our church in high esteem and do our best to promote its health and growth.

“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (4:16)

