

1Tim 24-04-14b

Let's pick up our study now. We're looking at the mystery of the church. This is the third of seven points.

You remember the first two, I reviewed them in the first session. And this is primarily in Ephesians chapter three, verses one through 10. We saw this last time by revelation, Christ made known to Paul, the mystery whereby when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, but is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel.

So there is a new people under a new covenant with a new means of being entered into and sealed into the people of God, in this case, the body of Christ, the church, Paul says in Romans 1 16, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God for deliverance unto salvation for everyone who believes the Jew first, also the Greek. And we don't realize what a discordant note that also the Greek would strike in the hearts of Jews who believe that they were the people of God by birthright.

And the equality in Christ of Jew and Gentile slave and free male and female and so on was new. And Paul is the apostle who reveals it, teaches it, emphasizes it. And in this gospel, verse 17, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

It isn't just what a wonderful new kind of salvation and what a great new set of blessings we have. The purpose is the revelation of God's character, God's righteousness, which is at the center of God's glory. It is so important that we are looking at the righteousness of God and the glory of God because it is outside ourselves.

It is objective. We were conversing over the last few days, and one of the subjects that came up is how untrustworthy our sense of rightness is. Scripture says there's a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.

But you look at the acrimony and the bitterness and the actual hatred on different sides of political questions or social issues, even within the church, there can be such bitterness in argument and division over theological points. Calvinism versus Arminianism and progressive deconstruct versus traditional church. And what characterizes any person on any side of these questions is how sure we are that we're right.

Well, I know you're wrong, and I know I'm right because my right detector says, Sam right, you wrong. And I'm very fully convinced. And everything I see, because I have confirmation bias, when I see anything that bolsters my belief, I take that on board and add it to my side of the teeter-totter.

And anything that is giving me cognitive dissonance and doesn't match my understanding and my view of what's right, well, I'm going to find a way to prove that to be a fallacy. I'll use appeal to authority or ad hominem or post hoc or go proctor hoc, or I'll find some way to say your point doesn't have any validity. You're misusing statistics here.

One way or another, we are so convinced that we're right and we trust our sense of rightness. Everybody does. And this is why you can never achieve political harmony on issues like abortion or capital punishment or whether or not to let undocumented aliens or whatever else you'd like to call them or characterize them as, let them come in and vote without being citizens.

There are people who are very, very convinced that anybody that wants to be a newcomer should be. Others that say there's a reason we have borders and laws that say it's a felony to come in here without asking and being granted proper permission. But people have many, many arguments and they are sure they're right.

We are all sure we're right. The great privilege we've had as believers and as members of the body of Christ is the body has a head and the thinking takes place in the head. Not in the heart, not in the bowels, not in the reins, not in the emotions, not in the elbow, not in the little toe, not in the back of the knee.

It's in the head. The thinking and the deciding all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Jesus says judgment has been given to the son by the father and it is an objective standard outside of ourselves.

And because we are in Christ, because we have the Holy Spirit to shine a lamp on our feet and a light on our path, there is an objective standard of appeal. For us, the final arbiter is the word of God and the spirit of God. And we will find the truth.

And when we know that truth, that truth gives us freedom. You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free. They put it over libraries, but it's not any old truth.

It's God's truth. And we can be rescued from our proclivities and our blindness and our upbringing and our traditions and our assumptions and our foundations that lead us astray. There is a way that seems right to us, but it ends in death.

The only rescue, the carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit. It is always going to draw carnal conclusions. It will have carnal motives.

It will have carnal outcomes. It does not glorify God. The beauty of the word of God and the reason we are a Bible church is we are rescued from our subjectivity by the objective truth of God.

What God's word says goes. Our emotions may pull us in a direction. We may say, well, there's

someone who's outside, but I just can't help myself.

I'm going to keep throwing pearls out there until they recognize the value of a pearl. I'm going to take these holy things. I'm going to keep presenting it to the dog until the dog appreciates that this is a very fine souffle.

Well, dogs don't have an appreciation for a fine souffle. Some human foods are bad for dogs, but do not give what is holy to the dogs. Do not cast your pearls before swine.

We have to have discernment. We have to have the leading of the spirit to know when and how we should act and express love and what kind of love. Neighbor love, enemy love is not one another love.

They have different criteria. They have different conditions. They have different expressions and they have different outcomes.

They have a different purpose. The purpose of one another love is to build the body up in the power of the Holy Spirit and the light of the word of God. That is not the objective of neighbor love.

Where in the old Testament, where in the sermon on the Mount does Jesus talk about one another love? It's not in the sermon on the Mount. It is neighbor love and it is enemy love. And this has a purpose, which is to put a lamp on a lamp stand so that others, those who are on the outside will see your good works, the work that God is doing in and through you, and will be those who are interested in light will be drawn to that light.

The lamp doesn't move. It doesn't grow legs and walk around. It's not a self-pointing flashlight, doesn't aim itself in any particular direction.

God in places the lamp, the lamp shines. Jesus said, let your light so shine. This is why our one another love is the greatest testimony that there is a Jesus Christ, because it is a supernatural love that is reciprocal, that is unifying, that is upbuilding and that shines the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ so that those who see it are not drawn to us, not drawn to the club, not, well, if you're going to do these things for me, I'll stick around and let you do something else for me.

They should see the light that shines from our life and be drawn through us to Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ to the father. As we saw last time, stopping short at the Lord, Jesus is to miss the mark. Jesus said, I am the way to the father.

You can't come to the father, but by me, if you've seen me, you've seen the father and you want to come to the father. We pray to the father. We bring our requests and our need for grace and mercy to the father.

The Lord Jesus has made a new and living way through the veil so that we come into the father's

presence. So these are important truths and essential to understand if we're going to look at the church as the body of Christ, what distinguishes the body? One another love distinguishes the body. There are nominal Christians.

There are professing Christians who are not actually functioning members of the body. We don't have the same level of contact and the same level of ability to express love even to professing believers. If they put themselves in the category of neighbors, if they put themselves in the category of those who are outside and this is important to distinguish so that we do not do more harm than good.

So Paul says in first Thessalonians four, we've seen this before about brotherly love. You did not need anyone to write to you, Paul says, so I'm not going to write to you anymore about brotherly love. But in first Thessalonians four, 10, he says, you're showing this love to all the brothers throughout Macedonia and we urge you brothers to excel more and more and to aspire.

Now he's going to talk about a different quality of love, a different target group and to live quietly, to attend to your own matters. Notice, attend to your own matters. This is not what we do in the body.

We bear one another's burdens. We are tenderhearted, forgiving one another. We are encouraging one another.

We are exercising our spiritual gifts for the benefit of one another. This is not the same as attending to our own matters, hoeing to our own row, as I used to say in an agricultural metaphor. Paul says, when it comes to those who are outside, aspire to live quietly.

Don't be a party to controversy. Don't create division and dissension with those who are outside. Aspire to live quietly, attend to your own matters, work with your own hands.

Don't look to society for sustenance, for provision, for tax breaks, just because you're a believer, work with your own hands as we instructed you, then you will behave properly toward outsiders. About brotherly love, I don't have need to write to you, but those who are outside, I am writing to you to live quietly, attend to your own matters, work with your own hands, don't be dependent upon those who are outside for anything, without being dependent on anyone. I've already quoted Galatians 6.10, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

There is a difference between all and the household. And the elders in first Timothy three, we've already seen this in verse seven, are to have a good report of them who are outside. It's not enough to have a good report in the church.

If he's got a bad reputation in the community, Paul says he's not qualified to represent the church. He should have a good report from those who are outside. Otherwise he will fall into reproach

and the snare of the devil.

If we don't distinguish these areas of love and exercise them properly, reproach and the snare of the devil will follow. So first Corinthians chapter five, verse 11, I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother, but this is the apostle Paul talking about the third mystery element of the gospel, the body of Christ. I am writing to you.

Notice these are the Corinthians, not the Thessalonians. Thessalonians, I have no need to write to you about brotherly love. You're doing great.

I'm just telling you to do it more and more. In Corinth, I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother, but is sexually immoral, greedy, an idolater, this is rank materialism, covetousness, which is idolatry, or a verbal abuser. This is someone every time you get in conversation, you start hearing negativity and rancor and bitterness and criticism and, you know, evil speech, a verbal abuser, a drunkard, this is anyone who takes something in their life to excess and is identified by it, controlled by it.

It's one of the first things you think of when you think of that person, that's a drunkard, it can be any one of a number of things, or a swindler, someone who deceives, prevaricates, shades the truth to their own benefit. With such a man, do not even eat. Don't share your table.

This is not entering the house. Jesus in Revelation 3, 20, I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you.

Fellowship. With these in this category, they may claim to be a brother, but if this is the characteristic of their life, Paul says, do not associate, do not even eat. What business of mine is it to judge those outside of the church? Are you not to judge those inside? Paul says the implication of that is yes, you are supposed to not worry about those who are outside the church, you discern who's who inside the church.

You should judge those inside. God will judge those outside. So you don't have to try to fix society.

You don't have to be a social justice warrior. The world is the world and you're going to have the poor with you always. There are going to be wars and rumors of wars.

There's going to be all kinds of dispute, dissension, and evil rampant in Satan's world, the environment in which he is God, the God of this world who blinds the minds of those who aren't seeking. God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you.

First Corinthians 5, 11 through 13. Do not associate, do not even eat, expel the wicked man from your one another area. Now, does this mean that he's, it's open season? He's a free target.

You can shoot at him and tear him down and gossip and malign and backbite. Not at all. You

have moving this person from the one another realm into the neighbor realm.

I have contact, but not close contact. I don't eat. I don't meet.

I don't greet, but I'm also not going to, I'm still going to do good to all, but I'm going to look for those opportunities within the household of faith first. And I am going to maintain a distance, touch not the unclean thing, hate the garment spotted by the flesh. So second Corinthians chapter six, Paul says, we give no offense in anything.

This is talking about the wide world. We endeavor to not give offense. Occasionally people take offense, but there's a difference in someone taking offense and us giving offense.

Paul doesn't say I traveled throughout the Greco Roman world and nobody's offended, I make sure nobody's offended. He says, we give no offense in anything so that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things, we commend ourselves as ministers of God.

How are we commended as representatives of God, ministers of God? Patience. How we act under pressure in tribulations, how we act when we have needs, how we act when we are in distress, how we act, Paul says, receiving stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, fastings. How do we commend ourselves? Verse six, by purity, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, genuine love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, in honor and dishonor, evil report, a good report, deceivers and yet true, unknown, yet well-known, dying and behold, we live, chastened, not killed, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things, the difference between the material and the spiritual.

And he continues in verse 11, O Corinthians, we have spoken openly to you. Our heart is wide open. Notice these are the believers in Corinth, the one another's.

And Paul says with you, our heart is wide open. We're speaking openly. You are not restricted by us.

You're restricted by your own affections. So you need to be open as we are open. Do not be unequally yoked together with the faithless.

Unbelievers there in the King James is apostia. And it doesn't just mean if somebody is an unbeliever, don't marry them. Do not be in harness with the faithless.

We are mostly under the yoke of Christ. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. But as we are doing the work of the Lord, we are not to partner with the faithless.

We are to separate from the faithless. Be not unequally yoked together with the faithless. What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? Those who don't have the words of the Lord and

keep them, who aren't cultivating the presence and the power of the Lord Jesus and the Father.

What communion has light with darkness? Men love darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil. And we are not to partner with, not to spend time with, not to meet, eat and greet with those who are outside. What part has a faithful with a faithless? Says believer with unbeliever, but it's, it's pistia and apostia.

If you're a faithful believer and you spend very much time with the faithless, the bad apple will turn the good apple bad. Doesn't work the other way. Goodness doesn't spread, rottenness spreads.

Bad company corrupts good morals. Paul says in another place, what agreement has the temple of God with idols? Something else is in first place than living life to please and glorify God. You are the temple of the living God.

Potentially all three members of the Trinity indwelling us back to the second point, the indwelling of Christ and with it, the indwelling of the father. You are the temple of the living God. God says, I will dwell in them and walk among them.

I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore, therefore, what is the therefore? Therefore, if it is God's purpose to dwell in our midst and show forth his glory in and through us come out from among them and be separate. Says the Lord, do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you just a touch.

Is all it takes. I will be a father to you and you shall be my sons and daughters. Says the Lord almighty family, love one another, love the new commandment.

We saw this again in second John. I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in truth. This is the commandment, the new commandment that you received.

You heard it from the beginning. You must walk in love. Many deceivers have gone out into the world refusing to confess the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh with all of its implications.

Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be fully rewarded. Anyone who runs on ahead and does not remain in the teaching of Christ, who doesn't abide in the teaching of Christ, vine and branches, does not have God.

Notice it says remain. You have to be in a place to remain there. So you come into the teaching.

You get attached to the vine. You are a branch. But if you don't remain, you go off on your own.

This run ahead is a real fascinating word. I did a whole word study on it. Remaining in the

teaching of Christ does not have God.

What does that mean? You have no opportunity for the indwelling Christ and the indwelling of the Father. The Holy Spirit is going to be there sealing you under the day of salvation, but anyone who remains in his teaching, this is 2 John 9, whoever remains, abides in the teaching of the Lord Jesus has both the Father and the Son, has them both. If anyone comes to you but does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your home.

Do not even greet him. Whoever greets such a person shares in his evil deeds. This is why misdirected love is such a hazard.

We end up enabling. We end up sponsoring. We end up being accessories after the fact to evil by failing to be discerning and make a distinction and separate when we need to.

It's a hard truth and hard truths tend to get avoided. It's much easier to talk about love and acceptance, but there are so many scriptures that tell us we have got to, even as we are harmless as doves, we still have to be wise as serpents. And it doesn't say walk in love toward those who are outside.

It says walk in wisdom toward those who are outside. Walk in wisdom. So this is our calling and it's our opportunity because by observing these distinctions, God will work in the neighborhood and God will work among those who are outside and we will be in harmony with and usable by God in that witness and in that testimony.

We inadvertently gum up the works when we're not careful to do all that we are instructed to do and to discern where we should discern, to separate when we should separate. I've used this illustration many times, but it constantly comes to my mind for various reasons. The son of the father who left, took his inheritance and wasted it in riotous living and ended up in the hog trough, at the hog trough.

The father of the prodigal did not pursue him, didn't send servants to check on him, didn't come to the trough and plead with him to return. The father said, my son is making bad decisions, has bad priorities. He's basically an idolater.

He has pushed himself outside family love and the father let him go and let God deal with him in the world. When he comes to the end of his own rope, he decides to return. The father has not locked the gate.

He hasn't told the servants, don't let him in if he comes back, but he maintained the distance and the separation. God worked in the heart of the prodigal son and when he returns, the father cannot welcome him too quickly and too fully. Get him some clothes, get the ring, fatted calf, so much so that the son who remained behind became jealous.

I never left, why don't I get a party? This that was lost has been found, but when it is lost, it's in

the outside realm where God works, the Holy Spirit convicts. We have to focus on what is our neighbor and what is one another. Those who are outside, it's basically do no harm, render to Caesar, love not the world or the things that are in the world, come out from among them and be you separate, touch not what is unclean, don't let stuff into your house that shouldn't be there and let God do his work.

When you see the prodigal approaching the gate, that's the time for welcome, celebration, embrace, but it's spiritual self-discipline to honor God's standards and God's guidance and not be led by our emotions and our personal desire and our good intentions that end up you know, you can kill with kindness and the road to Hades is paved with good intentions. We're not as wise as God, so we've got to live in his wisdom toward those who are outside. Well, that's a review, those notes will be up hopefully in the next couple of days if you want to review the passages from which they are drawn.

All of these are straight out of the Word of God, many of them out of the Apostle Paul who was the first to reveal and detail them. So we'll pick up next time at the fourth of these seven mysteries, which is the mystery of the blindness of Israel. There is a great deal to be learned with God's attitude toward Israel during the age of the church.

And if you want to talk about those who are outside and those who are even despite the promises of God, when Israel of their own free will departed the covenant. This is why Jesus weeps in the middle of the triumphal entry, Jesus stops on the brow of the hill and in the midst of the celebration and the hosannas and the palm branches and coats, Jesus cries over Jerusalem, you who slay the prophets, you did not know the hour of your visitation and how often I would have gathered you under my wings as a hen gathers her chicks, you would have none of me. And forty years hence they will be obliterated, there will not be one stone left on another.

Jesus could not love them into the kingdom, he could not love them into salvation, he presented himself, he is announced by his disciples never more fully and formally than at that parade, at that procession and three days later he is on the cross, four days later. So it's important for us to recognize God's policy, he loves the world but he doesn't save the world, he loves everyone but he doesn't come to everyone. The Lord Jesus is our model in this regard.

Well we'll pick up at point four, the mystery of the blindness of Israel from Romans 11 next time but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father we thank you for the clear guidance we receive from your word and the presence and power of your spirit to shine the light on our path, to lead us into these truths, to help us to remember them and see their pertinence and applicability. We pray that as we endeavor to live our lives in service and obedience that we will find the example of the Lord Jesus Christ compelling in living not to please himself but to accomplish your plan and purpose that we can do the same and as such represent the Lord Jesus as his body until the day that he returns to take us to himself and present us before your throne.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.