



Sermon – February 10, 2019
Chris Osborne

Verses Covered

Ephesians 3:1 - 6

So we're in the third chapter of Ephesians. That where we've come to. It's interesting because what he writes today is at first very, very difficult to understand because it seems like what he says doesn't really make any sense. When you open up the Old Testament, there are all sorts of places in it that allow for Gentiles to come into Israel and join. There is provision in the law for a sojourner who becomes a part of Israel to be treated, to be allowed to take the Passover, to be allowed to involved himself and to be a part of Israel. When they went into Jericho, Rahab, a lady who worked in the wall, is actually in the line of the Messiah. When you go to Ruth, she's a Moabite. She becomes married to one of the most important men in Israel, Boaz, who produces Obed, who produces Jesse, who produces David. She's in the line of the Messiah. When Elisha heals, the only leper he heals, is commander of the Syrian army, Naaman, he's healed in Israel and he's so moved by it, he takes dirt back from Israel. So that when he worships, even though he's living in Syria, he can worship on Israeli land. And he looks at Elisha and says, "Just give me one break. When my master has to kneel in his temple, I will have to kneel with him. But let it not be counted against me. Jehovah is my god." No problem. Elisha's totally good with that. So the Old Testament is filled with this idea that Gentiles can become a part of Israel and be OK with God. Which makes this passage difficult to understand. But what he says here. If the church in my day, growing up, had embraced what he says here, there wouldn't be a set of black churches worshipping today and a set of white churches worshipping today. Because what he says is different than what we have in the Old Testament.

Now he's on his third section about the Gentiles. He's talked about the fact that the walls in the temple are broken and we're both, Jew and Gentile, standing inside the holy of holies. Then he says, both Jew and Gentile, we have the habitation of the Holy Spirit. But now he takes it one step further. Listen.

¹[Because of this I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles](#)

That's exactly right. He's writing either from the prison in Caesarea or the prison in Rome. But not matter which it is, he winds up going to Rome from Caesarea. He spends two years in prison there because he's in Jerusalem, he's making a defense of his ministry and they're with him. He's

even talking about Jesus and they're really not that mad until he makes this statement, "and God sent me to the Gentiles", and they go crazy. Guards have to pick him up and put him in a jail. They're going to kill him the next day and his sister's son, his nephew, goes to the guard and says, "They're going to kill him." So they take him to Caesarea where he winds up a couple years. And either in Caesarea or Rome, he pens this letter. And so when he says, I'm in jail because of you people, and remember this is a Jewish Raabi. This is a guy who's grown up saying, "Well I'm in Israel. Yeah, the Gentiles could come in, but we're God's chosen people. We're the people that matter." And so he says, "I'm in jail because of you." And then he says, look at this.

²If you've heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which is given to me for you;

He says, "Listen when I got saved, the whole purpose of God saving me was to bring me to Him so I could bring Him to you. That's why He saved me. So I'm preaching, I'm in jail, because I'm preaching, not to my own people, but to you Gentiles. Now listen.

³that according to revelation, that is something they couldn't understand unless God revealed it, the mystery was made known to me as I wrote briefly. ⁴So that you would be able reading it to grasp my understanding in the mystery of Christ.

Now here's this mystery. Now listen.

⁵which to other generations was not made known

He says Moses didn't get it. Solomon didn't get it. Elisha didn't get it. There's nobody in the Old Testament that got it. We got it.

to the sons of men, as now it has been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

He says all of us that are apostles get it. Agabus, the other prophets, they get it. Nobody has ever figured this out until now. Nobody. Now what he's about to say sounds like what we already have in the Old Testament, but it is not.

⁶to His prophets in the spirit; that the Gentiles might be fellow heirs, members of the same body, and fellow partners of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

He says, "Listen, there's a promise in Jesus through the gospel." What's that promise? Roman 5:1. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We and God are OK. There's no problem between us. He's forgiven us. We're in right relationship with Him. That is the promise in Christ in the gospel. He says that that promise is for everybody. Which when you read the Old Testament, OK, I get it. And he says three things. He says, number one, we all have the same inheritance. When we die, he says, we are fellow inheritors. In other words, when we die, the Bible says, for example, that we will sit on thrones. Well you don't have Jewish thrones and Gentile thrones up there. Everybody's on the same throne. You don't have a Jewish sector and a Gentile sector. It's not like Southern Baptists think. There's a Southern Baptist section and a Church of Christ section and an Episcopal section. But that's not the case. There's no

Gentile/Jewish section. When he says we are a pillar in the temple of our God, there's no Jewish pillar and Gentile pillar. We are all identical. We inherit the same thing. It's not when we die that He sends an angel to get a Gentile, but He sends Jesus to get the Jew. No. He says, "Look, we are all getting the same thing. There's no difference." He says we're a member of the same body. So when you come to churches, Jew and Gentile, you both have the same amount of bread at the Lord's Supper. You have the same amount of juice. The promises that the preacher reads from the scripture are applicable to the Jew and the Gentile. You get the same promises. There's nothing the preacher reads in the Bible that isn't applicable to everybody. We're all the same body. We're identical. Then he says, "And we're fellow partners." That is, we all have the same responsibilities. We in this room have a responsibility to have people outside this room who Jesus is. And the Gentiles and the Jews both share the same responsibility. So we have the same calling. The same present status. And the same eternal status. You say, "Well that's the way it was in the Old Testament." No. Here's the distinction.

In the Old Testament, you had to join Israel to be OK with God. You had to go to the pastor if you do all that, but now Gentiles come directly to God. They don't because a part of Israel. Sometimes when I do weddings, there's a little thing they do, instead of a unity candle and all that stuff, it's two things of sand. And they have a big, empty container. They have like a black sand and a white sand and they pour them in together so the idea is now that we're married, you can't break apart the union. But in the Jewish mindset and the Gentile mindset, the Jew would have said, "If that were a picture of Israel, that all the white sand is Israel and there's a little tiny black segment down here, that's the Gentile. They can come in, but they're really at the bottom." That's why in the temple, they've got the back room. That's why if they go in the synagogue, they're not sitting in the front seat, they're sitting in the back seat because as a Gentile, you had to be a Jew to get right with God. Paul says, "No, sir!" Everybody comes through Jesus Christ. There is no distinction.

So, there's the text. I grew up, we believed 2:14, he's taken the wall down. We believe 2:22, that the Spirit was in everybody. But not 3:6. We didn't believe that. After the Civil War the South, and I love the South so don't misunderstand me today. I'm just saying what happened. But particularly the South, it was a frightening time. The North had left finally and the former slaves were getting elected to office. So the South, terrified that those that they had owned were now gaining authority, began to do two things. Began to kill them, Klu Klux Klan came into being. In their violence they would just ride around in groups and kill 20/21 black people indiscriminately. Grant would send in the army. They finally did some things. Kind of helped settle that. But then the South set up the idea of poll taxes and different rules. You had to be literate to vote and all this stuff so it moved the black out of the ability. And from that moment on every city went into segregation. So the black community lived over here and the white community lived over here until we got to the '60's when Rosa Parks said, "I'm not going to get up." Martin Luther King came along and we had these protests. And finally we had a shot at pulling everything together.

In First Slidell, Louisiana, we had a black janitor named Claude. Now the opinion of Claude in our church was stupendous. We valued, honored, and in a real sense, revered this guy. He was a deacon in his church. He put 12 kids through college on a janitor's salary. He was honest and true to his wife. He was a good father, a good husband, a good man. He was there before any of us were there at church on Sunday morning. He left after all of us left. The church was always neat,

clean, spotless, A/C on, heat on. This guy was revered by us. And if you asked us, "So is he in the holy of holies with us?" We'd have said, "Oh, yeah. He's a Christian." Is the Holy Spirit indwelling him? Yeah, absolutely. He's a Christian. Is he a person? Absolutely. But could he be a deacon in our church? No. Could he come? Maybe. Would his sons and daughters be allowed in the youth group with the capacity to date white girls and boys? No. So we took 2:14 and 2:22 but not 3:6. He wasn't really equal because he wasn't our skin color. And because the church missed that opportunity for some reason I don't know what it is about us at times, but we are behind the culture. But somehow because we missed that, we lost our chance to bring black and white together inside the house that of all houses should show that. But in 2019 we have a black section of town and a white section of town and we have black churches and we have white churches. Because 3:6 is too hard for us to adopt. So let me be clear here today, OK. Do you know why I don't preach from an iPad or phone? Because I want you to understand everything in this book is binding on who we are if we claim Jesus. Everything. You don't get to pick and choose. You don't get to say, "I like 2:14. I like 2:22. But I'm not good with 3:6." You don't get to say, "I like John 3:16. God loved the world. But I don't like Hebrews 10:31. It's a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God." No, no, no, no, no. We don't get to do that. And I know personally how this works. I've share before a few years ago, probably maybe 25, I married a black and a white. A black young man Rod Bernstine, played ball at A&M, called him, he was a believer. Married him to one of our ladies. White girl. And I told my parents in Alabama. So my Father said, "Boy son, that's not wise." And then my mother called me. She said, "You are going to wreck your ministry doing this." And I said, "Mom if I wreck my ministry, I'll go down on the truth. Because the Bible doesn't speak to interracial, it speaks to interreligious. I can't marry someone that doesn't believe what I believe, but there's nothing about skin color inside the marriage document in the scripture." And I remember this particularly because it's the last words I heard from my mother for three years until she called my office at the old church and said, "If Chris cares, his dad's had a stroke." These are the last words she said to me before that three-year span on non-communication. When I said, "Mom you're the one who took me to church, you and dad both, and told me to live out the scripture. So the scripture doesn't agree with your position." And my mom said, "I don't care what the Bible says. When you see a couple like that in the grocery store, you know in your bones it's wrong." That was the last time we talked until my dad had a stroke. So I understand how it works. I've had people in this church, when their daughter or son would date someone not white, I had one lady say to me, "You know you think that's OK?" And I said, "I'm telling you, the Bible doesn't say anything to it." And one lady said to me, "You know, when your daughter gets up, you're going to change your mind." And I said, "Let me tell you something, I've got to choose between my daughter marrying a lost white man and a saved black man, there's not even an issue in my heart on that." I don't care what you think. And I'm not saying that to be obnoxious or to be a jerk. I'm just telling you that that book is binding. When I was a kid in Georgia we, we went to this restaurant. The name's not politically correct today so I'm not going to share it. But we went to this restaurant and I always loved going, not because of the cuisine. When you're a kid, corn dog will do it for you. But we went to this restaurant and the reason I loved it is because when you finished they had three different toy chests. And they were all age graded, right. So I got to go and you got to open up the toy chest and you got to pick out one thing that you wanted. So I would pick out, what would I do? If I didn't like the toy, would I pick it out? OK, this is not a hard question. You people are terrified. I don't know what the answer is. Would I pick it out if I don't like it? Can y'all lock the doors? Because we're going to stay longer than we thought we were. No. I'd pick out what I want. I'd pick out of there what

I like. I'm preaching at chapel at Southwestern April 2nd. And this is pretty much going to be my issue. I'm going to walk into a couple passages in Ephesians because I want them to understand. I remember I was sitting in a PhD seminar class and one of the professors had said, "You know," and he was talking, obviously about me, he said, "You know I don't think preaching book by book, verse by verse starting in chapter 1 going all the way to the end is the best way to do it. Your people will get bored." Let me tell you something. If I don't do that basically what God's given me is a box with 66 books. Now I have two options. I can reach in there and kind of feel around and go, "Yeah, I think I'll try that book this week." And I can flip in it and find something and you know what I'll find? I'll find either what I like or what I think you will like. And that's what I'll preach. But if I do that, I will never preach all that God has to say. So I'm going to tell these kids, "I want you to take a book and start at the beginning and go to the end because it will make you preach what God says completely." Not because I'm trying to be a jerk and not because I'm trying to be obnoxious, but when I die, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians that I am going to face an evaluation, all of us are as Christians, not judges for our salvation, but we are evaluated as far as what we did here. And when I stand before Him, after all my years, I don't want the One who called me to preach to look at me and say, "Chris, why did you choose not to preach everything I wrote to you?" I don't want to hear that question.

Father, seal us from Your Son to Your word. Let us not pick and choose. Let us understand its depth. Because Father we have sometimes damaged Your call in our culture. Because we have not stood on what You actually say. Drive us to stand against our culture in Your truth with a love that You showed at Calvary. I ask that for all of us in this room in Jesus Christ name.