

Introduction: Ephesians so far

Ephesians study 4

Forgiveness that transcends cultural barriers (part 2)

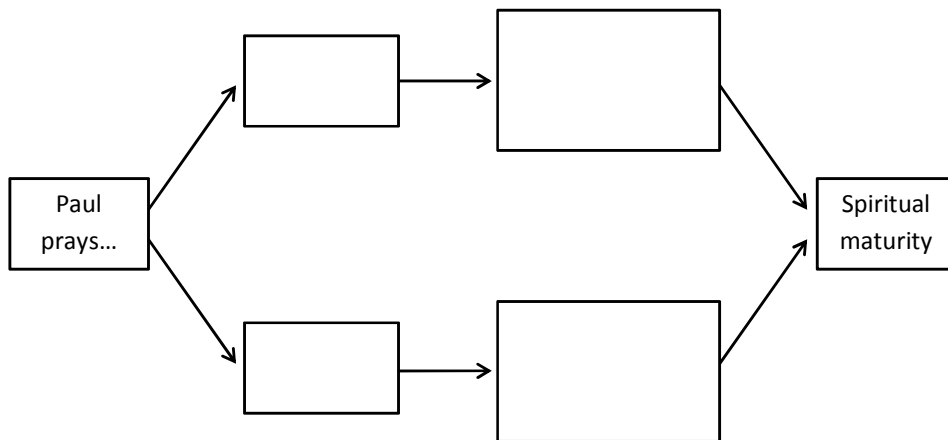
1. God's secret plans in the ministry of Paul

2. A picture of the Christian life

Acts 9:15–16; Rom 8:16–18; 1 Pet 4:12–14; 2 Cor 1:3–7; Gal 6:17; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24–27; 2 Tim 2:10; 3:12.



3. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians



Read Ephesian 3:1-6.

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
² Surely you have heard that God gave me this work to tell you about his grace. ³ He let me know his secret by showing it to me. I have already written a little about this.
⁴ If you read what I wrote then, you can see that I truly understand the secret about the Christ. ⁵ People who lived in other times were not told that secret. But now, through the Spirit, God has shown that secret to his holy apostles and prophets.
⁶ ***This is that secret: that through the Good News those who are not Jews will share with the Jews in God's blessing. They belong to the same body, and they share together in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus.***

New words

prisoner – captive or slave

Gentiles – people who are not Jews

body – family , people

Discuss

What do you think of the following statement?

“Christianity is a western religion and therefore is more suited for western cultures but not suited for other cultures.”

Q. How does Paul describe himself? What does he mean?

Q. Why were people separated into Jews and non-Jews?

Q. What is the term which the people in your country use to call foreigners? Is it a good or a bad word?

Q. Why was it hard for Jews to mix with Gentiles? What was the problem between the Jew and Gentiles? (See also Acts 10:27–28.)

Q. What is the secret that Paul is talking about in v3–4?

Q. How do other people know about this secret?

Q. What is the Good News? How do people know God through this Good news?

Q. How does Jesus death and resurrection make it possible for non-Jews to share in God’s blessings?

Q. How is the Good news of Jesus relevant to you and your culture? Which of the following do you agree with?

- a. It means that all peoples of all cultures and languages are accountable to Jesus.
- b. It means that Jesus is relevant for me even though I am not a Jew or a westerner.
- c. I cannot see the relevance of this.
- d. I want to find out more about this Good News

Q. At FOCUS, there are people from many different countries. What makes it difficult to get along with people of different cultures?

- a. Language and communication
- b. Different way of understanding things – eg. how people view life
- c. What people are interested in
- d. Others...

Q. How would you overcome some of these problems?

Q. Do you think something like the Good News that Jesus died for all of humanity’s sin would be able to overcome these problems?

Q. Does this make you want to be a follower of Jesus or prisoner of Jesus (like Paul)?