

The Mystery of the Mystery

by Tim Conway

The mystery of God's will is revealed to believers through the Holy Spirit and the Bible, and understanding it is essential for growing in faith and living a life of obedience.

Duration: 58:39

Scripture: Ephesians 1:8

Topics: "Divine Revelation", "Spiritual Enlightenment"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of the mystery of God revealed in Ephesians, emphasizing how God's wisdom and insight are imparted to believers through revelation. It highlights the incomprehensibility of God's mysteries to the unaided human mind and the necessity of God's intervention for true understanding. The importance of humility, prayer for enlightenment, and the transformative power of comprehending the depths of Christ's love are central themes in unlocking spiritual truths.

Transcript

Ephesians 1, verse 7, "...in Him," or in whom, as the original says, speaking about the Beloved from verse 6, God the Father has blessed us in the Beloved. And in Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, the riches of God's grace. The redemption through Christ's blood that brings about this forgiveness of our trespasses is according to the riches of God's grace.

Now, verse 8. Every translation except the King James Version, including the New King James, they all start verse 8 with a witch. It's generally agreed that the KJV could be clearer in verse 8. KJV says, "...wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." It might better read the way the New King James, the NAS, the ESV. And you can see the meaning here.

It's very clear. "...Which He lavished." The witch. What he's referring to are the riches of His grace.

It is according to the riches of His grace that we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. And these riches are those which He lavished upon us. Now, brethren, these verses, all the translations are pretty straight on v. 7. Verses 8, 9, and 10, the different translations are all over the place.

And I recognize that when I preach here, not everybody has the same translation. And so, I often want to make some of these comments. Some are good in some places and some not so good in some places as

far as the translations go.

And what I will say is this, every translation is going to be different in these three verses, 8, 9, and 10. The heart of the issue is not missed in any of them. I mean, we don't have to be in perplexity about what is being spoken about here.

In every one of your translations, you have in v. 9 the idea of the mystery of God's will. That is there. In v. 10, you all have some idea about something happening in the fullness of time that unites or brings together or brings unity, brings some commonality among all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.

Now, Lord willing, we'll look at v. 10 next week. But the idea here is that God... Remember the context, brethren. V. 3, Paul is blessing God because of the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places that those who are saved are blessed with in Christ.

That's what we're talking about. He's enumerating. He presents and expands upon to some degree these blessings, spiritual blessings, spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.

These are the things that excite Paul about our salvation. And so what you have is the riches of His grace He lavished upon us. Some of the translations put a period right here.

You look at the scholars. Some think that the wisdom, the prudence, the wisdom, the insight, some think that it has to do with our wisdom. That basically the mystery is revealed to us and it results in our wisdom and our insight.

They take the wisdom and the insight or the wisdom and the prudence and they kick it over to v. 9. Most of our translations leave it in v. 8. Some put a comma after us. Some put a period there. Some start a new sentence.

In all wisdom and insight, He made known to us the mystery of His will. The scholars go back and forth. Is this God's wisdom? Is this our wisdom as a result of the mystery of His will? I'll let you guys fight through that.

Obviously, what God is doing here is an express manifestation of His wisdom. And if we look at the mystery, we see very clearly in the references to that, especially I'm thinking about 1 Corinthians 1-2, that it is a wisdom that is imparted to us as well. And so, if you want to say it's God's wisdom, amen.

You want to say it results in our wisdom, amen. Both are true. Both are realities.

But whether this wisdom and insight or wisdom and prudence, whether it's God's or ours, the obvious implications here is that in the riches of God's grace, which He lavishes upon us, something happens. Something is made known to us. It doesn't matter what translation you have.

You can see it in v. 9. There is a making known to us the mystery of God's will. ESV, making known to us the mystery of His will. NAS, He made known to us the mystery of His will.

The New King James, having made known to us the mystery of His will. KJV, having made known unto us the mystery of His will. It's there.

You see it. Now, this is what I want you to recognize. Think with me here.

Paul wants to take us up into glory and show us the most glorious aspects of our salvation. That's where he starts Ephesians. He says, let me start by telling you this.

I'm going to take you to eternity past. God chose us in Christ. He elaborates.

We were chosen to stand before Him holy and blameless. What else? Predestined for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. What else? Redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

What else? You know what's interesting to me? Is making something known. Making the mystery known. God doing something in your mind is in the top four of the most profound aspects of our salvation as Paul enumerates and enlarges on them in this Ephesian letter.

Notice this. God makes known. Brethren, you find this kind of language in various places.

You can be reading through Galatians 4 and you come across something like this. Formerly, when you did not know God. You remember how David found it there in 1 Peter? Your former ignorance.

Do you know that the people out there that are not Christians walk around in staggering ignorance? You go door to door. You go to the campus. You go to the nursing home this afternoon.

You go out among this world. There is massive ignorance. People don't know.

There's a darkness that shrouds the mind. And you know what Paul is saying? To the Galatians, he says, formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved by those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God.

In other words, what Paul is hitting on is that there is a mystery that's made known. There's something that we didn't know we were ignorant to and one of the chiefest of the four manifestations of the aspects of the salvation that God imparts to humanity. You want to number them? In the top four, Paul puts one of the most marvelous expressions of God lavishing the riches of His grace upon you, the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, is what He does to the mind.

Brethren, this is key. Because you know what? We're told to examine ourselves. We're in a situation where Paul says to the church, examine.

And we can examine from this. You can't really tell. Here's the thing.

Think with me here. How do you know if God chose you to stand before Him? How do you know if He chose you in Christ? You weren't there. Election is not emblazoned on anybody's forehead.

Predestined. Predestination. Again, it's in eternity past.

You weren't there. How do you know if you've been predestined to adoption? Again, there's no tattoo on you that says that. Christ redeeming, shedding His blood.

Well, how do we know who that's for ultimately? I mean, how do we know who that's going to be effective for? We don't really know. Forgiveness of sins. How can you tell if somebody's sins are forgiven? It's a legal thing.

How do I know legally if that's taken place? But you know what? Now we come to something that is very experiential, very manifest. What's that? Listen, when God saves somebody, without question, without

exception, nobody can say, well, that's typically how He does it. He didn't do that to me.

Do what? Reveal. Make known. I mean, what's another word for that? To make known.

It's revelation. This is what happens when God saves somebody. There is a revelation of what? The mystery.

You see that there? The mystery of His will. I've called this message the mystery of the mystery. I mean, we can understand the mystery, but there's a mystery about the mystery.

I mean, what is the mystery? The mystery is mysterious. What is it? Revelation is one of the great spiritual blessings. What God does is He opens our minds, our perception to comprehend mysteries, secrets, hidden things, that we would never see and understand if God did not specifically single us out and cause us to see them.

We need to recognize that. Brethren, that is a hallmark of true Christianity. That something happened to your perception.

Something has happened to your mind. Something suddenly came upon your spiritual senses that you never were enabled to see or perceive before. So why does Paul use the term mystery? Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ, or according to God's good pleasure which He purposed in Him.

The ESV, stuck in Christ there at the end of v. 9, let me tell you, that is not in the original. It says in Him, and it could be in Himself. This could be God simply expressing to us that according to God's good pleasure, He purposed in Himself this mystery.

It could be in Christ. It's hard to tell in the original. The translators will take it both ways.

But brethren, revelation is one of the great spiritual blessings. I'm not talking about the book of Revelation. I am talking about your own mind being turned on to behold what you could never behold before.

That's what we're getting here. So, why the term mystery? Brethren, what do you typically think of when you think about mystery? The unknown? I don't know why it keeps coming to my mind, but when I was a kid, you know, Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew, I think mystery was even in the title of it. Or my mom read Agatha Christie.

I never did, but my mom did. What's a mystery in that sense? I mean, it's basically a story that somebody murdered somebody with something over there. And the plot thickens.

What happens is, you're trying to figure out who done it, right? And you don't know who did it. And so, it's a mystery. Because at a certain point in the story, you don't know the information.

You don't know the facts. It involves a crime or some other event. And what happens? It's unexplained.

It's not fully explained until you get to the end. Oftentimes, that's what we think of as a mystery. Or, like you say, how did you say it? Something that is unknown.

You know, it's a mystery. The Loch Ness Monster or something. Or, I remember going to Andreas' down in Mexico and there's a place about halfway to Cuauhtémoc where they see these lights off in the distance.

And they don't know what they are. Don Johnson was telling me a story about somewhere where he's over there in Arkansas and there's some place out in the woods where they see lights. And actually, after a prayer meeting one time, he and some of the guys went out in the woods to look for these lights.

Mysteries. Things that are unexplained. Sometimes, we start thinking about paranormal or something extra-earthly.

Or, you know, people see things in the sky or something. But we need to ask the question, how is the term used by Paul? How is it used in Scripture? And a good place to start here is our Lord's teaching. If I'm not mistaken, the Lord uses this term in His teaching just once.

Now, it shows up three times because each of the synoptic Gospels gives you its version of it. But it's basically, you may remember this, when the parables are being given. And you remember that after the parable of the soils is given, Jesus talks about the mysteries of the kingdom and how some people get it and some people don't get it.

Let's look at Matthew's account of that. Matthew 13. Brethren, what I want is just, I want us to develop a theology of what the mystery is all about.

Because Paul thinks this is a really integral part of our Christianity. So let's just spend today and dig this out. This is the question we're asking.

I mean, it's the mystery of mystery. We want to unravel this. We want to develop a theology of the mystery of God.

It may be used quite a bit more in our Bibles than what you recognize. But Matthew 13, verse 10, Then the disciples came and said to Him, Why do you speak to them in parables? And He answered them, Brethren, this is what Paul is excited about. What? Right here.

To you, it has been given. That's what Paul, that's the spiritual blessing that he recognizes that is so fantastic about becoming a Christian is that where you have this former ignorance, God fills your mind with light. To you, it has been given.

Something has been given to you that hasn't been given to others. Just like it's been given to you to be chosen, just like it's been given to you to be predestinated to adoption, just like it's been given to you to have Christ shed His blood for you and for you to have a forgiveness of sins, it has been given to you to be made known to your brains, to your perception, what is not made known. Brethren, you have to recognize having the ability to open up this book and look into it and perceive its teaching is a blessing that most of the people in this world do not have.

Don't take it for granted when you are able to behold wondrous things from His Word. That is not given to everybody. And Paul is excited about this.

Now listen, can you imagine you're sitting there and you're hearing from Jesus Christ Himself, God come to earth and He tells you, boys, you have been chosen out from among all the people in this world, you and some others like you, to know what the rest of mankind has not been given to know. To you it has been given to know the secrets. That is our term, mysteries.

The ESV says secrets. Most of the other translations say the mysteries. The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But to them, notice this, some people have this idea, listen, this is what's so prevalent in Arminian thinking, that God basically has done the same thing for all mankind. You see, sometimes people like to look in Scripture and say, well, Scripture says that God is impartial. But you have to be very careful that you don't take God's impartiality to an erroneous position.

When it says God is impartial, it doesn't mean that God doesn't bestow grace and favor on some and withhold it from others. We don't need to get into all that and develop that right now, but you don't want to take the doctrine of impartiality and make it what it's not. Jesus is very clearly saying, to you it's given, to them it's not given.

Does God give certain things to some people and not to others? Yes. Can God be faulted for that? No, because what all of us deserve is what our sins deserve. And if God makes exception to any, it's an expression of God's mercy and grace, for which we don't deserve.

And He's right to do it, because He can justify us and yet be just, because of exactly what He has produced for us through the sending of His Son, so that justice can totally be upheld. But look at this, to them it has not been given, for to the one who has, more will be given. What a principle that is.

Hold on to that. Listen, my brothers and sisters, if you look at... See, sometimes we take this and wrench it out of context and use it to mean all sorts of things, but if you take it in context, oh brethren, what an encouragement. What it means is, if you have had your eyes opened to your own sinfulness, to your own sickness, your eyes opened to Christ being your own hope, and you've looked to Him in faith, what He is saying here is, to you who have been given a revelation, there's more revelation coming.

Keep going back to the Word. This is a promise that He's going to give you more. As you live your life and study Scripture, you will come to recognize greater riches, greater secrets and greater treasures that we are told are hidden in Jesus Christ.

It's very interesting, Paul says that to the Colossians, even to those who are already Christians, and he talks about what is seemingly yet hidden in Christ, and waiting there for us to unearth it, to dig it up. There is still more revelation to be had. If once God has opened your eyes and said, let there be light, and you have beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, let me tell you, there is more glory.

Don't stop looking. Don't be content. Don't feel like, you know, I've already arrived, I've already seen.

No, no, you haven't seen. You've seen, but you have not seen. There's more.

He will have an abundance. Listen to what is being talked about. This is revelation on the table.

Abundance of revelation. That's the issue. From the one who has not even what he has will be taken away.

I mean, that's kind of a scary picture. Even in the parable he just gave, he gives us pictures of birds who come, and what has been given is taken away. Those birds are demons.

What has been given is the Word of God, and it's taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand the mysteries of the

Kingdom of Heaven. It's a mystery.

It's given to some, it's withheld from others. Brethren, shortly after I was saved, and I've told this story before, probably some of you don't remember, and many of you never heard it the first time around. Shortly after I was saved, it was just in the first few years, it was before I moved down here to Texas, I was looking for opportunity.

I so badly wanted my father to be saved. He was one of the most wicked men that I knew. I wanted God to save him.

I don't remember where we were going, but he asked me to drive. I was driving his truck. He had a cassette deck.

And I think before jumping in the truck and going wherever we went, I ran out to my car and I got in there and I would carry around this sermon by John MacArthur based on Matthew 7, 12, and 13, 13 or 14, called Which Way to Heaven? It was one of the most clearest gospel presentations that I had on tape. So I ran and grabbed it. And I'm driving my dad's truck.

I said, Dad, this is my opportunity. One-on-one, we're in a truck. He can't go anywhere.

I said, Dad, please, I want you to listen to this. I pop that thing in. I am sitting there and just glorying in the truth.

I'm thinking, praise the Lord! My dad is hearing one of the clearest presentations of the gospel that he could ever hear. It seems like in my memory 20 years ago, 10 minutes in, he reaches over and he ejects it. And he looks at me and he said, I cannot understand a single word that man is saying.

And it's true. I'm sitting there thinking, this is the clearest gospel message he could be hearing. He's hearing the same words I'm hearing.

Brethren, when Jesus spoke, imagine the crowd. Peter, James, John, the rest, the Pharisees. They're hearing the same words.

To you it's given. To you it's not given. It's not enough to have the words audibly presented on the page.

It's not enough. It has to be given to you. That's the kind of thing... Brethren, we know, as I was just saying, what happens? The birds come and they pluck it up.

Or we have the truth of the Apostle Paul there in the second Corinthian letter that our gospel is veiled to some people. Why? Well, it's veiled because they're perishing. And in their case, the God of this world has blinded them.

Do you recognize that when it comes to the Gospel, the God of this world is in control? You have to recognize the scope of this. Think about the billions of people on the face of this earth. And there is a massive conspiracy at work everywhere, all throughout our city.

Can you imagine the demonic activity that is going on just in our city? Just in these neighborhoods. If you could see into the spiritual realm. Do you know what was happening in that truck when my dad was listening to that tape? We're told, we're given glimpses, birds, demons come and pluck the seed up.

Those who are perishing, the God of this world has blinded their eyes. That's what we see. To keep them from seeing what? Seeing light.

The light of the Gospel of Christ. They're prevented. They're kept.

Charles Leiter told me just this week, I was telling him about some things that are going on. Charles' book on the law of Christ creates no little stir. And he was telling me, he can go in and he can preach and repeat and emphasize and show Scripture.

He says he will get done preaching and somebody will walk up to him and say, now are you saying such and such? And he looks at them and says, I was teaching the exact opposite of that. I mean, how does that happen? Somebody was sitting there hearing exactly what he was saying, being encouraged, being helped in living the Christian life. Somebody else comes up and says, now are you saying... and their perception is that Charles just preached the exact opposite.

Brethren, there are mysteries. And one of Paul's four primary demonstrations of the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, one of the four great manifestations of the salvation of God is this very thing. Your mind.

It takes... we get this from 2 Corinthians 4 as well. It takes God, the same God. You know, Paul is saying the same God who said, let there be light.

It takes that. It takes something on the scope of that for anybody to see. Just a side note here.

I was thinking about this just in light of agnostics. Many of you know an agnostic is basically somebody that what? Believes that God and the truths of God and the truths of salvation are unknowable. Not like the atheist who just basically denies the existence.

The agnostic says it's not possible to know. And you know, I was thinking about that and I thought there is truth in what they say. The agnostic says it's not possible to know.

And you know what? He makes it a universal rule that it's not possible for anybody to know. That's where he goes wrong. But if he simply said it's not possible for me to know, with my unaided mind, he'd be right spot on.

Did you hear me? Me with my unaided mind. If he makes it a universal rule, he's dead wrong because there are people who see what he can't see. There are people that know what he doesn't know.

But he is right in this. You know, he comes along and he says, I don't think anybody can know that. Well, in the state he's in, he's dead on.

He can't know. Why? It's hidden. Okay, Jesus.

You know this, Jesus Christ is healing people, feeding 5,000. He walks on water. Not that the whole crowd saw that, but the crowd saw Him heal palsied people, restore sight to blind, turn water into wine.

And you know what? The vast majority of His miracles were done in just a handful of cities. And you see that in Matthew 11. And He rebukes them for not repenting upon seeing all of this that He does.

But you know, in the end, He looks to His Father and He says these words, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them

to little children. Yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. Look, if you have any doubts about this, the proof and the evidence for what I'm teaching you is everywhere.

That it's not just God sent His Son to the cross and has now made it possible for everybody to be saved, and basically, man has a free will and man has the capacity to believe the Gospel and God, just kind of like the deists teach, He just stands over there kind of hands off. He's set everything in motion and now He's given us all the opportunity to believe and if we're smart enough or if our wills are just right or if we're not just so evil as to keep rejecting it, we can come to the light. But let me tell you, that is not what Scripture teaches.

What Scripture teaches is that unless God gives it to you to see these realities, you will never see them. You can fight that reality, but I'm telling you, this is so. Let's keep going.

Romans 16. Look at Romans 16. Romans 16 v. 25.

Again, this concept of the mystery comes up. Romans 16.25, Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to My Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according, here it is, the revelation of the mystery. That's what we've been talking about.

When we talk about the mystery, we're talking about that which God reveals. Revelation. Not the book.

We're talking about your spiritual eyes. Boof! You're flooded with a perception of what you could never see before concerning the salvation of your soul. Now notice, according to the revelation of the mystery, that was kept secret for long ages.

Now, in this respect, God's mystery is like the mystery thriller where you don't know who did it until the end. It's kept shrouded in mystery until the end. You see, that's what He's saying here.

He's saying for long ages, this wasn't made known. Notice, it was kept secret for long ages, but has now been. Now, remember, Paul, 2,000 years ago, he's writing to the Romans.

That's what he's saying. Now, it's been disclosed. When? When Christ came and now He's resurrected and ascended and the apostles are writing, then, He's saying now, now, now, now.

At that time, Christ came into the world. Christ left His apostles to bear testimony and to write the New Testament. That is the now.

Paul is writing, that's the now. It has now been disclosed. What he's saying is that prior to Christ coming, prior to the New Testament, it was not known.

Well, again, it's like our mystery thriller. You know how they go along? It's not like you don't get any facts until the very end. It's you get these facts along the way that give you a little bit of light, but still there's so much perplexity and uncertainty and indistinguishable.

Brethren, in the Old Testament, they didn't know what to make of it. They're looking at Scripture and they're saying, well, it looks like He's going to be victorious. It looks like He's going to sit on a throne.

But then we got this man of sorrows over here. What's this all about? So much were they perplexed that some even thought that there were two Messiahs. They're looking, son of man, son of... I mean, what are they making out here? Who is this guy? I mean, even as they're watching it unravel, Peter's like, no, you're

not going to the cross.

Get behind me, Satan. They're all like, come down from the cross if you be the Messiah. They don't get it.

They don't get that He has to die. They don't get that He's going to rise from the dead. This is all shrouded.

Christ. Jesus Christ. They knew a son of David was coming.

They knew a son of Abraham was coming. They knew a son of the woman was coming. They knew this.

They had an idea they were putting pieces together. But it was so much a mystery that when He came, they were all baffled, including His own disciples. They could not figure this out.

They were getting pieces of the puzzle. That's the idea. But I'll tell you, brethren, once Christ has come and the apostles are writing these accounts, they're giving us light like we have never had before.

These people that, listen, especially I think of like dispensational. Brethren, you end up with religious systems that are wrong when you say that the New Testament basically stands alone and you try to interpret the New Testament by the Old. That's not the teaching of Scripture.

What Scripture says is now the mystery has been made known. Don't go back to the mysterious things and start there. Go to this revelation and go back there and pull what you know from the New and figure out what all the mysteries in the Old were about.

That's the teaching here. What He says is now. When was the now? When He's writing to Rome.

And what does He say happened in the now? Notice, it has now been disclosed through the prophetic writings. What prophetic writings? His. Now.

He's talking about now, right there now. His and the other apostles. That's the prophetic writings.

He's not talking about the Old Testament. He's saying now it's been disclosed. Not back then.

For long ages, it's been hidden. It's now been made known to all the nations. Again, you have those words.

Made known. Revelation. According to the command of the eternal God to bring about the obedience of faith.

I just think about this. Can you imagine? You're in the crowd of the Pharisees. For long ages, this has been hidden.

And here's Christ Himself and He's teaching it. You know what it's like? It's like they got to the end of the Agatha Christie novel. On the page, you're supposed to find out who did it.

And they look at it and it's like it's in another language. It's like all the words are scrambled and upside down. They actually got to the time frame.

And it's being revealed. And now they morally are not capable of even hearing. Go to 1 Corinthians 2. 1 Corinthians 2. Notice this.

Verse 6. 1 Corinthians 2.6 Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom. Although it's not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away. Doomed.

You know, if you can't see what it's given to some to see, you're doomed. Remember what I just said. Our blindness is a moral blindness.

Men don't want to see. But notice this. We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God.

Now that's the ESV. We speak the wisdom of God in mystery. That's the Greek rendering here in many of the translations.

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. Notice, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. It was in God's mind before the ages began.

That's what Paul's been telling us in Ephesians 1. Now notice this. Verse 8. None of the rulers of this age understood this. They couldn't see.

They didn't know the mystery. Now, don't despise the simplicity of this next statement. If they had, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of Glory.

Brethren, there's real simplicity there, but think about it. Pilate does not have a guy crucified if he really looks at him and says, this is the Lord of Glory. I'm going to have to stand before Him.

He's going to judge me in righteousness on the last day. You see, if you see that or you recognize, wow, the wrath of God is upon me. I'm a sinner and this is my only hope.

This one right here is my only hope. You don't send Him to the cross. Herod doesn't do what he did.

They don't mock him. The soldiers, the Sanhedrin, the chief priests, the Pharisees. These are the rulers.

You see, you don't do what they did if it's been revealed to your mind what Peter, John, and James had revealed to their mind and what many of you have had revealed to your mind. If Christ came here today, you wouldn't crucify Him. But you know what? If Christ came here today, the vast majority of this world would crucify Him just like they did back then.

Why? Because they can't see what you see. Because you're only going to see what they see. You're only going to see what James and John see if it's been given to you to see it.

So, now, turn to Ephesians. We're building a theology of mystery and I know time is almost gone, but just bear with me for a few more minutes. This is where it gets really good.

Ephesians 3. We're talking about the mystery of God. For this reason, I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you..." Notice v. 3, "...how the mystery was made known to me by revelation." Again, when you find mystery, you find if you understand it, it's by revelation. The word reveal or revelation consistently associated with this idea of mystery.

He says, as I have written briefly, when you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ. Again, which was not made known. Remember, it was basically kept secret.

It was hidden for long ages. That's what he says right here. "...It was not made known to the sons of men and other generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." They didn't have it in the Old Testament.

They got glimpses. They got shadows. They got types.

They got figures. But they didn't have it. Now notice v. 6, the ESV adds this mystery.

It's implied. This mystery is that the Gentiles, our fellow heirs, members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. You know what? One of the huge components of this mystery is that you and I, many of us here, are included.

Again, you have glimpses of this all over the Old Testament. But isn't it amazing? They didn't get it. They didn't grasp it.

God's mystery, like I was saying, in a certain fashion, is like a murder mystery where you get to the end and it's whodunit. Through the long ages, God kept us in the dark. There's been some light to be sure.

It's a murder mystery. It unravels. There's clues along the way.

And God's mystery... God's mystery is not a murder mystery. This mystery is about life. But you get to the end and He reveals it.

The mystery. The mystery has to do with the Gentiles. The mystery is the Gospel we're told.

The mystery has to do with the Kingdom of Heaven. The mystery of Christ. Son of God and Son of David.

God and man. There's still great mysteries there. There's mystery.

How is He going to be victorious when it seems like He's been defeated? He dies on the cross. They're expecting that He's going to be victorious. He would come down from that cross and He would conquer Rome.

How can this be? It's all about life. It's all about how Christ gained salvation for His people. But here's the thing, the mystery is not something permanently secret for long ages, but then it's revealed.

But the thing about it that we need to recognize is this, it will always remain incomprehensible to the unaided mind. Just the carnal mind. Can't grasp it.

Can't perceive it. Can't go there. Doesn't recognize in the end even when it's revealed to us what it's all about.

The Gospel we are confronted with is a mystery that no human mind will ever grasp unless and until God breaks into the man's darkness and reveals Himself. You remember how it was. Peter, who do you say that I am? You're the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you. And if you know it, flesh and blood did not reveal it to you. The only way you're going to know it is if the Father has revealed this to you.

The mystery is not absolute incomprehensibility to the human intellect, but to the unaided mind, there is a satanic haze. There is a satanic blindness. Look, how does man overcome an angelic blindness? He's

stronger than us.

The only hope you have is if God intervenes. That's the only hope. Brethren, what we're going to see in the weeks ahead is this is really a main theme of Ephesians.

You don't have to turn to it, but just listen to these. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, listen to this, this is His prayer for these Ephesians, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.

These people are already Christians, and Paul thinks it's appropriate to pray for them that they would yet be given a spirit of knowledge, of wisdom, and of revelation in the knowledge of Him that they might have the eyes of their hearts enlightened so that they may know. What? They may know about the hope, know about the riches, know about this incomprehensible power that is at work within them. He even goes on in chapter 3 to say this love of Christ, you guys actually need some help outside of yourself to really grasp this.

You need strength to comprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth. You need God-given ability to recognize this. This is part of what this whole letter is all about.

That He's going to take us into places where our minds are going to be opened up. And remember what Christ said. You know what's going to happen in the weeks ahead? If you've already been given the ability to see, more is going to be given.

I have that promise from Him. I know there are some of you in this room that as we move through this, more is going to be given to you because you've already been given something. Some of you have had the word given and it's going to be taken away because you're going to go out and guess what's going to happen? The birds are going to come and they're going to take it up.

And you're going to be left with this incomprehensibility. You're going to be left in the darkness. And you say, yeah, but you're telling me that this is what God does.

You're telling me that Christ was thanking His Father that He had made known to some and withheld it. He'd hidden these things from the wise and from the understanding. Okay, well, that's true.

So what's the remedy? Don't be wise and understanding. In other words, what you're called to do is to be a fool. I mean, can you see it? You know what Paul said to the Corinthians? He said, God didn't call many wise.

There's a reason for that. You can take encouragement. You don't have to be smart.

You don't have to have an IQ. God is in the business of picking people actually that don't always have the highest IQ. In fact, only a few do.

The vast majority don't. And He's saying consider your calling, brethren. This is the reality.

You don't have to be incredibly smart by this world's standards for you to perceive what these guys... You ever look at Richard Dawkins? I mean, this guy, where's his IQ? There's guys like this. But they don't get it. They can't see it.

And they look at us like we're ignoramuses. And you know what? In many ways, we are. We don't understand many of the things they understand.

But the most important thing to understand we do understand. And they don't. Secrets.

God has chosen you to know them. Consider your calling, brethren. Not many of you are wise according to worldly standards.

God chose what is foolish in this world. You know what we're told in Scripture? If any man seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may become wise. So you say, well, I don't like all this.

Well, I would say this. Stop being wise. I don't mean really wise.

I mean stop being wise in your own eyes. The way forward for all of us is a path of humility. Lord, I don't understand.

Open my eyes, Lord, that I may behold wondrous things from Your Word. Lord, teach me as only You can teach me. Teach me like You showed Peter.

Lord, please, I know there are mysteries here. I know there are mysteries in Christ. I know there are mysteries in the Gospel.

There are mysteries that pertain to the Kingdom of Heaven. Lord, open my eyes. As Paul prayed for these Ephesians that they would be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of Him.

Having the eyes of their hearts enlightened. Lord, give me that. Give me that.

Lord, give me strength to comprehend. Don't you want that? To comprehend the love of Christ that passes understanding? How can He be praying on the one hand that I be given this power to comprehend when He turns right around and says, it's incomprehensible? Because that's what we're dealing with. We're dealing with incomprehensible things.

And if you've been given some light, you've been savingly given the light of Christ and the beauty in Christ and how He's your only hope. Oh, brethren, the very prayers of Jesus Christ Himself assure you to whom something is given, more is going to be given to it. But the promise is that much is going to be given to you.

The prayer here in Ephesians is that they would be given this ability, the revelation and the knowledge of Him. Brethren, this is crucial to living our Christian lives. Why? Because as your mind is expanded and stretched, as you're able to comprehend with the saints what is the breadth and length and the height and depth, brethren, I'll tell you this, when your mind is stretched and you're able to behold manifestations of the love of Christ towards you in ways you have never tasted before and you experience the assurance and the joy of that, you do not easily go out here and look at pornography on the internet.

This is the heart and soul of living the Christian life. It is fought in the mind. And we saw it gird up the loins of your mind.

How are you going to do it? Well, it's something that God has to do. Pray for one another to the way Paul prays here. Pray that for each other.

Pray that for the pastors so that when they step up here to open up the Word, God has given them the ability to see what otherwise can't be seen. Brethren, we need that. And then to impart to you so that you might see what it has.

And in your own study, we need to be praying one another for that. Comprehension. Given power to comprehend.

Oh, if God gives that to this church, we'll be a healthy church. Why? Because our minds will be transformed. And that is at the heart of living the Christian life.

Your battle of faith is fought here. Your battle of resisting sin is fought here. So may God give us grace.

The mind of man at its best, by itself unaided, is never adequate to comprehend these things. And you saw it in 1 Corinthians 1. You know what the Lord's aim is in all this? That in the end, we would glory only in the Lord. Oh, Father, we pray.

Oh, Lord, I would pray for this church. Give us the power, give us the grace in these weeks ahead to comprehend every one of us, to comprehend at levels we have not yet comprehended. I pray in Christ's name, you're dismissed.

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