

Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of January 4, 2015

Ephesians 3:1-12

NRSV (New Revised Standard Version):

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you,³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:⁶ that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power.⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ,⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things;¹⁰ so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,¹² in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Connection Questions:

1. How is it possible for devout Christians to find opposite solutions to complex issues and still remain together in the Christian community?

2. Do you agree that one of the cries of the ages is to have peace without being able to achieve its essence? If so, what are the barriers? What are some ways that we as a society can work toward breaking down some of those barriers?

3. What were the barriers for Paul as he sought to bring Christianity to the Gentile world?

4. What barriers would Paul face with his own Jewish people?

5. Do you think Paul was successful in his quest to share the endless mercies of God with the Gentile world? Why or why not?

6. If you think Paul was successful in his task, what personal traits or abilities do you think he had that helped make that possible?

7. Talk about conflicts you have had with others because you had different views. Is it possible to find peace or contentment when people disagree on issues? If so, discuss how it is possible.

8. What are ways that our leaders on a national and world level could improve their approach to conflict, thus furthering Paul's vision of peace for God's world?

9. As we enter the year 2015 in a world with partisan politics and terrorists who kill others who disagree from their perspective, what concrete things can you do in your life to promote peace?

10. Give examples that you have witnessed where people or groups on opposite sides of an issue were able to find a solution to an issue in a respectful way.