

The Mystery of the Gospel (Eph 3:1-13)

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[0 : 00] Thank you for the opportunity to share the Lord's Word with you. I'm not sure whether everyone of you know who I am. I'm actually Pastor James of this church, and I'm supposed to retire three years ago, but I'm still here.

And Pastor William asked me what he can introduce me to you, but I said nothing, actually, because all the things have gone, it's past, so-called.

And if you really want to know a bit more, I don't think you will. But anyway, if you really want to know me a bit more, then you can ask me individually. So today I'm going to share with you a message of the mystery.

I especially use this phone, because I think this phone, the shape of the characters, is a bit mystery. So I choose this. I don't know how you feel, but I think it's very mystery, because this type of phone usually will be used, I think, two or three hundred years ago.

So you don't use this type of phone anymore. But it is for a very old age thing. But anyway, that can be the gospel, or the mystery of the gospel can be new whenever it is preached to people.

[1 : 22] And this is a message from the book of Ephesians. So I hope everyone can open your Bible, turn your Bible to the book of Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 1 to 13.

This is the first part of the chapter 3 of the book of Ephesians. Ephesians. I hope that you can open your own Bible. If you don't have any Bible beside you, then you can look at the screen.

I need to look at the screen, because the words in the Bible are too small for me. Okay. But it's good for you. Okay. Let us read together. Okay. For this reason, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of your Gentiles, surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by Revelation, as I have already written briefly.

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to man in other generations, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit of God's holy apostles and prophets.

This mystery is that through the gospel, the Gentiles are heir together with Israel, members together of one body, and share together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

[2 : 50] I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone that administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. According to his eternal purpose, which we accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in him and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. If you came last night or this morning, maybe this is your second coming today, or if you came this morning that you may have heard of I preach on this topic, actually I use the same message, and I hope I can make it slightly different so to help you awake, especially at this time in the afternoon. And the light, actually I need some more light. Okay? Let there be light. Okay? So, that's the light. Now, when we are reading this passage, I don't know what you feel, but quite a lot of people, light's gone. A lot of people will feel that this is actually, you doubt if this passage is really for you and for me.

[4 : 33] Now, why? Because you can see there's a lot of I, me, my, words like that here. It's first person, singular. That means the passage actually is supposed for Paul, the writer Paul himself.

It's not for us, not for the church nowadays, modern churches. It's very personal. That is what he understands, that this is the revelation from God, is the mystery of the gospel, or you can call it a mystery of Christ.

Now, usually in church, we put a equivalent sign between these two phrases. This mystery of God and mystery of Christ actually is the same thing. It's because our gospel actually is Christ.

Isn't it right? Yeah. So, what we are preaching is preaching Christ, and at the same time, we call this is the gospel. Now, so, when Paul is writing this passage that he was writing about himself, now, if you read very carefully from the very beginning, that you, you find that, uh, actually, Paul was about to start a prayer.

So, in the English Bible, most of the translations, you can't see that word. But if you read the Chinese Bible, especially the, we call it the, uh, Union Version, then you can see there's a short phrase at the end, saying that, uh, now, I want to pray for you.

[5 : 53] But suddenly, it goes to chapter, uh, to, to the, uh, the second verse, and he was, he was telling them that, uh, he know, he knew the, the, the mystery of God, the God, uh, the gospel is a mystery that revealed to him.

So, it, it is about himself, what he know about. And, and so you feel, oh, it is not for me. Now, if you have read Ephesians, uh, some time ago, and you know this book well, then most probably, when you're reading through that, you, you want to jump into the, the second, the second part of chapter three.

It's because, uh, usually we'll consider the second part of the Ephesians, uh, the chapter three of Ephesians is the core, is the core of the whole book. It's the, the most important thing.

And, uh, main theme of the book actually is in the second part of the chapter three in Ephesians.

Which will be preached next week. I don't know who is going to preach that. Pastor Albert?

Okay. Then, actually, suppose me, suppose I'm, I come next week, but, but Pastor Albert said, oh, this passage. Oh no, James, James, you go away. And let me, and go, let me, uh, so ask me to come here and to do a certain introduction.

[7 : 09] And then, uh, Pastor Albert can preach the next one. So, actually, I personally think that you should not break it into two paths. Two halves. And then to read the first part, and then to read the second part next week.

You're supposed to read through the whole chapter. So, I give you this as your homework, uh, this week. And read the whole chapter three during this week at least five times.

So that you know that, uh, why I, I stress that there's so much. That is because I considered it really important. So this part, actually, that, uh, we have the impression that it is Paul's message.

It's not ours. Now, unfortunately, it's not just me, not just you, but even a lot of the, many of the comment, commentary writers, uh, they think the same thing.

So you read a lot of commentaries, and the, the writer will just, just try to, uh, write something, and then we'll skip and jump to the, uh, second part.

[8 : 07] It is really the core, uh, that is very important. It is to telling that how, why, how deep, how high that Christ love is. And that is the, you, you, you know, that is the climax, is it?

Is the Christ, Christ love. But actually, I personally think that this passage is still quite important. Uh, even though that is, that is for Paul, but it is, it talks about how we grow in our spirit and how church life should be.

So that is personally, that is still quite important for us. And, and when I was reading through and study through this passage, uh, especially for this sermon, then I found that actually it's very excited to read this part.

It's because more or less like Paul is telling you that, uh, something, something very good and very important is coming. Now in verse two, Paul says, surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you.

Now he says here that God has given, given him a certain responsibility, responsibility to administer God's grace.

[9 : 19] Now for the word grace, I don't know how you understand about grace. What do you think about grace is? We usually say God's grace to administer the responsibility, uh, to do the job that God has given us.

Uh, that is, we, we don't rely on that. We don't think, oh, this is the work that we have to do and then to, to win the salvation. But once we got saved, we need to work to, to have some performance, uh,

sorry, to have, to have, do something that for, for God, for, uh, actually it's not really for God, but for, for our, our own selves.

So this is, this is the grace that, uh, Paul is talking here. So, actually it's not just, not just, uh, Paul is saying that, uh, in the New Testament, there is another apostle, uh, we know him very well, that is Peter.

Uh, even apostle Peter in first Peter, uh, chapter four, verse 10. And Peter says that, uh, each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, favorably administering God's grace in its various forms.

So you can see that even Peter is encouraging the, uh, his audience. Now actually at that time, both Paul and Peter is talking to the, uh, we, we so-called at that time called Gentile Christians.

[10:45] You know what Gentile is? Actually, we are Gentiles. Uh, all those people who are non-Jews, you're not Jews. Any, any Jews here? A lot of people will be holding a cup of juice maybe, uh, but not that juice.

Okay. Yeah. Uh, once I went to the Holy Land and, uh, and the guy said that, uh, you know, we have the best Jews in the world. Uh, what, what juice? Juice and juice. You, you have a good Jew, Jewish people and bad Jewish people.

No, no, no. We have the best Jews, best Jews, orange Jews, uh, grape Jews and all types of Jews in the world. Uh, so juice means the essence of the fruit.

Fruit, so it's good. Uh, so it's a, so we are, we are Gentiles. We are not Jews. Uh, we are Gentiles.

So, uh, and, and we know that Gentile Christians are taking over, uh, the church nowadays.

And so Jews, Christians actually comparatively in a very small amount. Now, Paul in this, in this, uh, passage, he implicitly saying that, uh, he's, he is suffering for the Lord.

[11:49] Uh, you can see this word here in the chapter. In the first few, uh, verses, but you can see Paul was saying that he is a prisoner for Christ. Now, what does he mean by prisoner in prison for Christ?

What does, what does he mean? Now, if you live in, you live in New Zealand and when you visit the prisons in New Zealand, you, you can't see there is a suffering because you know, that is very luxury, uh, in the same prisons.

Uh, I heard of that, uh, uh, for every prisoner in the prison that the government needs to spend, at least, I think \$24,000 a year to serve, to serve a prisoner.

So they, they have ground heat, they have, uh, TV, they have, uh, say, uh, what, internet time, uh, every day is like that, uh, even single bedroom and something like that.

So, but at, in the first century, in the middle East, uh, it is totally different. Now, the, the prisons at that time actually is just a, a hole in the rock, in the hole, uh, and then the prisoners, prisoners just throw into the, into the hole and they stay there 24 hours a day.

[12:58] Uh, uh, you know, what, what does it mean by 24 hours a day? You have the food there and then do everything there. So, after eating, then you need to go somewhere. You can't, you stay in the room, in the hole and do everything.

So you can imagine, uh, uh, there is really poor condition. Uh, so it's a really big, uh, suffering there. So, and, and Paul, when he, he was mentioning that, uh, he, uh, suffer for the Lord, but he, it seems that he mentioned it very lightly.

Uh, just, oh, just in prison for Christ and that's it. And then go on to other things. Uh, that means what? That means Paul actually is focusing on the Lord, focusing on the gospel, and focusing on his audience of the gospel.

He's not focusing on his own suffering. He doesn't take, uh, his suffering as so important, so, uh, affecting his work. Now, in verse 13, now, Paul even says that, uh, his suffering is actually the glory of his audience.

Now, when you read, read, read the Bible just before now that, you know, you, you still can remember. So, to him, the gospel, it is far more significant than the environment that he is meeting.

[14:20] Now, when we try to, uh, preach the gospel, that, uh, sometimes that we still can beat some hardship. I don't know how much, or how often you preach the gospel to your friends.

Uh, one of the ladies in the mandarin fellowship next door, and she told me that, uh, she likes to preach the gospel, and try, uh, and then tell people about Jesus. And she, she swims every morning in the small park, in the swimming pool.

Whoever she meets, then she'll ask, are you a Christian? Do you know who is Jesus? And then go on. And she told me that, uh, more than 99% of the chances that, she'll get someone will scroll at her, at her as, well, you're disturbing me.

I don't like Jesus, or something like that. And sometimes even, uh, say, oh, you are a witch, or something like that. Uh, so, you know, it is, uh, when you're preaching the gospel, it's not always a good experience.

But for that lady, uh, from the mandarin fellowship, she's very happy, and say that, I have the chance to preach the gospel. Uh, maybe she doesn't know much about the gospel, but she's very happy, and very, uh, think it is very enjoyable, because he's doing something for the Lord.

[15:32] Now, in the, so, here, that, uh, uh, Paul is saying, saying that the gospel is for you, for your glory. It is a certain form of glory.

It's not, not a, something that being insulted, but, uh, but a glory. Now, actually, in the early church, uh, in, uh, book of Acts, uh, book of Acts, chapter 5, 41, uh, verse 41, and here it says, the apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering.

Disgrace for the name. You see that? Quite interesting. It's a very interesting verse. It says that, counted worthy of suffering, disgrace of the name.

Have you ever thought of, you are counted worthy of suffering for Christ? Uh, counted worthy of beating up by someone, uh, because of Christ. Now, actually, Paul and, uh, Peter and John, all those early apostles, they did.

They did like that. Now, this, actually, this verse actually is describing Peter and John, so, you know, uh, then they, they, they, they think they are worthy of, of, uh, counted worthy of suffering, disgraceful, for Jesus.

[16:45] Now, for this passage that we have just read, the core of this, uh, this passage is about mystery. So, my topic is the mystery of gospel, mystery of Christ. Uh, so it's the mystery.

Now, as mentioned, it, uh, verse three, uh, the word actually appears in this passage, all together four times in the NIV version of the Bible, of, uh, Bible.

If you read the Chinese Bible, there are five times, uh, just because the language, uh, difference in language. So, some, some languages four times, some five times. But at, at least in NIV, that is four times.

So, that means what? Now, in such a short passage from, uh, because the verse one, a lot of people say that it should continue on to, uh, verse 14. So, it's from verse two to 13, altogether, 12 verses.

And you can see that Paul mentioned mystery four times. So, it is very, uh, very, uh, significant words in this passage. Now, Paul is calling, uh, this message is, uh, this mystery is a revision, revelation to him.

[17:54] And, of course, we know the revelation to Paul is unique. It's not, uh, similar to, uh, not the same as the, uh, for God's, um, say, uh, the calling, uh, for the other people.

Now, if you read the book of Acts, you know that, uh, Paul's calling, uh, is similar to only a few people, less than a handful. Now, at, in the book of Acts, only Paul got that type of calling.

Other than Paul, maybe you can count Peter. You'll remember the Peter, once that he was very hungry, like what I am now. And then, he walked in the roof, and then, uh, God laid, uh, a large piece of cloth, and then we have a lot of animals, and insects in it.

And, and Peter said, oh no, no, no, I can't eat this. But God said, I clean it, so it is clean. So, you know, you cannot, you know, for, for Jews, a lot of, uh, things that they consider as clean and unclean.

You know, some unclean, like, what are unclean things? What, what did you eat in, for lunch this, this afternoon, or this morning? Do you eat pork?

[19:02] You know, pork is unclean. Is that? Pork is unclean. So you are not supposed to eat pork, and you are not supposed to eat, uh, fish without scale. Is it called scale?

Yeah, scales, and, and, uh, so you, you can eat ponds, or, or, or crabs, or lobster, those things, uh, those are unclean. So, and, God says to, uh, Peter, now, I clean, then you cannot consider it as unclean.

So this is the, and then Peter went to preach the gospel to, and, a Gentile. Okay? So, uh, uh, uh, Peter got, got a similar calling as, uh, as Paul.

Other than him, there's another person called Philip. You know, Philip is not, uh, uh, Apostle Philip, but the, the other one, then we usually call it the six people who take care of, uh, uh, uh, take care of, uh, uh, say, distributing meals, uh, lunchboxes, maybe, uh, to the, to the, to the widows, uh, that are, and, and, and, and Philip, once they went to the, uh, to the road down to Gaza, uh, Gaza actually is the, um, coastal part, south, southern coastal part of Israel, so, and preach the gospel to, to, uh, to a certain official from Africa.

So it's also a Gentile. Now other than those two people, uh, there may be Barnabas. Barnabas is a colleague to Paul. So, and then any other?

[20 : 30] I can't think of any, any other. Maybe one or two, but I'm not quite sure, but I can't think of anyone. So you can see that the calling of Paul actually is quite unique, is to preach the gospel to the, uh, Gentiles.

Now, in, um, to, for Jews at that time, that Paul himself is a Jew, so for Jews at that time, that, uh, they, they, uh, there, there are barriers between the Jews and Gentiles.

They are not allowed culturally, and they are not allowed to cross the barrier. Uh, that is, suppose that you, uh, preached it last time, is it? Last week?

And preached it, uh, in the temple, there is a, uh, a wall of, uh, called a dividing wall. So, uh, Jews can worship inside, but Gentiles are not allowed to go inside, but you can worship, but outside there.

Uh, that is the part that, where Jesus cleans the temple. Uh, that is the part. That's why, uh, to say that, uh, this is supposed to, the place, the worship place, or the praying place for all nations, that means for the Gentiles.

[21 : 38] They are supposed to go there, uh, but because they, they make it very messy, so, uh, Jesus was upset. So, now you can, we can see this is, uh, very special for, for Paul.

It's different from any other people. But for nowadays, that we don't, we are not supposed to have that barrier anymore. Is it? If you set a barrier like that, then maybe, uh, you will be in trouble, because you are doing racial discrimination.

Is it? Nowadays, actually, we know we, we do, uh, but at least, theoretically, we can't. We are not allowed to have that. But at, at the time of Paul, it is official.

It is, you, you're supposed not to meet with Gentiles, if you are a Jew. But, Paul says in here, in verse 6, he said that, through the gospel, the Gentiles are, is together with Israel.

It is totally impossible at the time. Uh, uh, you know, when Jesus started to preach the gospel, at, uh, um, chapter 4 of Luke, uh, he was just reading, reading the scripture, and then say that, oh, God saved the, uh, some, some people who are non-Jews, and make the, the other Jewish people very angry, and nearly, they want to murder, uh, Jesus at the time.

[22 : 58] So, you know that this is, it's not, not supposed, so let's suppose that, uh, the Gentiles are saved. But here, Paul says that, uh, the gospel, the, uh, through the gospel, Gentiles are heirs together with Israel.

Uh, uh, their, their equal parts. Uh, members together of one body. How can it be? But, Paul did say that. Uh, and share us together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Now, as I said before, that, uh, nowadays, that, uh, we found that, uh, actually, Gentiles are taking over the church. Uh, so, Jews, Jews, Christians, actually Jews, they, they won't call themselves, uh, Christians.

You know, if they, they become a Christian, they believe in Jesus is the Messiah, then, uh, they call themselves, uh, Messianic Jews. So, they never call themselves, uh, Christians.

They don't like to be called Christians, because they value their Jewish identity very highly. Uh, so, but we, but usually we, we use Jews as, uh, to say jokes. We, uh, those very mean people, we call them very Jewish.

[24 : 08] But, but for the Jews themselves, they take it very, very highly. Uh, a lot, but for us, maybe, even when you come to New Zealand, that, uh, you are, say, a lot of you are, not a lot, a lot, any other, so, I can say at least 90% of us are Chinese.

Okay, we have ethnic Chinese, but, uh, a lot of people don't, they, they, they don't tell people you are Chinese. You tell people, oh, I'm from New Zealand. I'm New Zealand. Do you, do you say that?

I'm a Kiwi, or maybe, uh, New Zealand-born Chinese, and we, we still call ourselves Kiwis, do we? So, so we consider ourselves Kiwis, but we, that means that we don't value Chinese so highly, but

for Jews, they value their, their ethnic identity, identity very high, so they don't want to be called Christians, so they, they call themselves Jewish, maybe Jewish Christians, but they, the one side, I met a, uh, Jewish people, uh, so I asked him that, are you a Christian?

He hesitated for a few seconds, and they said, I am a Jew believer, in Messiah. I'm not a Christian, so he doesn't want to call himself a Christian, but here, that we, we see the Gentile Christians, actually, are replacing Jews in modern churches, enough, even in a few years ago, there is a campaign, then the people say that, let us preach the gospel back to the Jerusalem.

Now, actually, you, you know, where the gospel came from? It was from Jerusalem. It's more or less like a, say, a circle that goes back, uh, to Jerusalem.

[25 : 48] It's very interesting, and, but actually, this is a fact. So a lot of people say that, well, because Jews don't, don't believe in Jesus, let us preach the gospel to them. Now, this passage we read today, tells us that Jews and Gentiles, all are on the same footing.

We are on the same level, and receive the same benefits. Now, Paul, actually, here, it's not just, in here, he's preaching that, the equality between Jews and Gentiles, but it is a general teaching of Paul.

Now, you can see that in, in 1st Corinthians, that Paul says, for we were all baptized by one spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks.

Now, in here, when he said Greeks, actually, he's saying that those people, no matter what ethnic background you are, if you are speaking in Greek, then you are called a Greek, or in some of the older translations, Hellenistic, those are, just to speak in Greek language.

Actually, Greek language is the world language at that time, similar as English nowadays. So, for those like you, English speakers, then you are Greek at that time, as equal to that in the New Testament.

[27 : 11] And slave or free, and we were all given the one spirit to drink. And in Galatians, chapter 3, Paul says again here, and say that, there is neither Jew nor Greek slave or, well, free people, and male or female.

This here, it says male and female. There is not only racial discrimination, but also gender or sexual discrimination. for you and all one Christ Jesus.

So, Jews and, you can think that, think it over. Jews and Gentiles, actually, even in the book of John, the Gospel of John, that, in chapter 4, tells that the Gentiles and Jews, they have no relationships.

They don't communicate to each other. But, even Jews and Gentiles can be united in Christ. Then, no matter what type of difference we have, with other people, then, why not, we can unite together in Christ?

Now, so, actually, when we, when we tell the Gospel, that, what does it mean by Gospel? Gospel means what, how we, make peace with God.

[28 : 31] Is it? That is what we are told in the book of Romans. That we make peace with God. But, the Gospel actually tells us to make peace with people as well. Now, the principle is easy, is simple.

Now, we know that, what is the greatest commandment? We need to love God, and love people. Is it? So, when we, when we project to this, to here, that, then we say that we, the Gospel, just help us to make peace with God, then, of course, at the same time, make peace with people.

Does it make sense? It's very, very sensible. Is it? So, Gospel asks us to make peace with God, and, make peace with people.

Okay. Now, this are, I consider some of the main points in this passage. But how do we apply, apply this message, apply this message into our daily living?

Now, first of all, and we need to have the same attitude, as Paul's, towards the revelation from Christ. Now, it is very important, that we, we need to consider, if we don't recognize, Christ's Gospel, as the revelation to us, then, the power of the Gospel, will not, work in us.

[29 : 51] If you don't consider, the revelation of the Gospel, is for us, then, it don't, if we don't recognize this, then, the power of the Gospel, will not, work in us at all.

Does it make sense? If we don't believe, the Gospel, we don't think the Gospel is for us, then how can, the Gospel, can work in us?

So, if you don't think that, the Gospel is for us, that is to make peace with God, and make peace with people, then, we can, we can never enjoy, the benefits, of the Gospel.

Now, every one of us, and we live according to a certain, value system, inside us. Maybe you don't, really, feel that, or you don't recognize that, but actually, you are.

You have a certain, value system inside you, and, the value system, in, within you, actually, develops, throughout the whole year. My value system, may be more complicated, than yours, because I'm older, and you're younger, then it's maybe, not so complicated, but you still have, a certain, value.

[30 : 56] That means that, you consider some certain thing, very important, some other things, are less important, and some are totally, not important, and things like that. That is the, value system, that work in us.

Now, all Christians, have Christian values, and non-Christians, will have some, non-Christian values. But, no matter your question, or non-Christian, because, we are living, in this, non-Christian world, that, a lot of, the parts of our, value system, actually, is distorted.

That is, if you study, or investigate, or you think carefully, that about your, values, what you think, important, you find that some of those, actually, you don't need that.

It's better to take it away, some of the values. So, that means that, the value, actually, determines, what our, destiny will be. And what, we value, we think is, more important, actually, value, this word is different, difficult to translate, to any other.

So, this is, we value most. But, for, as a Christian, then we know that, our, ultimate value, our direction, actually, is supposed to be, the gospel.

[32 : 06] The revelation, of, from, Christ, from God. God. So, now, Paul, considers, the mystery, that he received, is the most important task, for him, and it is the privilege, to be a gospel, preacher.

So, he will, give up, whatever, needs, to preach the gospel, for, for the purpose, just for, for, for gospel. He can give up, anything, that he, he can.

He will, and, now, at that time, then we know, Paul actually, is one of the greatest, philosophers, at the time. Even though, maybe, outside the Bible, that you don't, you don't see much, about, about, Paul.

But actually, Paul is a student, from, one of the greatest, greatest, Greek philosophers, Jewish, Greek philosophers, at the time. So, he's, actually, is a, is a scholar, and a theologian.

But, for him, but, it is very, interesting, that he say, that he, was the least, than the, less than the least, of all, God's people.

[33 : 15] That is, when he, think of the gospel, the mystery of the gospel, and think of his identity, that he found that, he's, less than the least, of the people, because of the greatness, of the gospel.

Now, in, first, Carithan, Carithans, and chapter 2, Paul says, for I resolved, to know nothing, while I was, with, when I was, with you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Now, for, Paul, actually, nothing is important. For him, the, the only important thing, is Christ, and he, and him crucified.

That is, what the, grace that we know, is that the Christ, we know. Now, the gospel, of grace, Christ's, suffering, resurrection, and return, and the unity, of the believers.

Now, all these are, our prime beliefs. All those things, are very important, for us. As, some of the deacons, and the leaders, were having our meeting, last, one or two weeks ago, then we, we decided, whether we, the church will go on, under, level two, or whatever.

[34 : 32] And then, the people say that, a lot of people say, most of the leaders say that, oh, okay, then let us go, like, streaming, and so we don't have, a physical, worship here.

But then, one of the leaders said, no, but not for English service, because they, they like to meet each other. Is that true? So, they have to, even you say that, oh, you, we do, streaming, but, the young people, will still come.

You, you have no choice, then we have to, to go on. That's why last week, just last week, that, we don't have the service here, on Saturday night, and Monday, Sunday morning, but, English service, will still go on.

And some of you may know, that, it's very, more interesting, that English service, just keep on every morning, in this whole, whole week. You know that? Keep live streaming, for the whole week.

Because, people there, forgot to switch off, the camera. So, because, we like, we like, we like to come together, as Christians, actually, this is the value, of Christians.

[35 : 37] So, unity of believers, are our prime, belief here. So, in here, Paul says that, this is, the words here, in verse 8, he uses the word, unsearchable.

And then, in verse 10, he says, he uses another word, called manifold. Now, in, verse 8, and 10, so, this, it's telling that, the gospel, actually, it's, it's unsearchable, and, in manifold, to mean that, how big, how wide, the gospel is, and how deep, the gospel is.

Now, so, gospel, actually, is not, it's not, the message, that, the pastor, preached, in the gospel, really. It's not, not that one.

It's not, the testimony, that you tell the people, how you believe, a Christian. That is gospel, but it is not, not the, the big gospel, that we are referring to.

Gospel is, not even, that you, become a Christian, and you get a, heavenly passport, that make sure, that you get the citizenship, of the, kingdom of God, and you are sure, that you can enter the heaven, after this life.

[36 : 51] It's not just that. What, what is, what is gospel, and what is, what is the gospel message? Gospel message, is, your loving, in this world, and, in eternity.

Okay? Gospel, actually, is, your loving, in this world, and, in, eternity. Other than that, and, gospel also includes, your repentance, your repentance, of sin, and your discipleship, and, unity of believers, forgive, and forgiven.

Now, that is, a Christian living, we say that, a Christian living, to the fullness, to the fullness. Now, Jesus once, used a metaphor, of a pill, a pill, you like pills?

Maybe, modern people, don't like pills, you like diamond, maybe. But, at Jesus time, they, actually, they don't know, what diamond is. So, if he knows that, he will use diamond, but, but, at that time, a pill, a pill, actually, is the most valuable thing.

So, Jesus used the metaphor, of pill, to, explain the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew, chapter 13, he says, the kingdom of heaven, is like, a merchant, looking for, fine pills.

[38 : 11] When he found, one of great value, he went away, and sold everything, he had, and bought it. Now, sold everything, and bought it. That means, to pay the cost.

Is that, to pay the cost, of the, maybe you say, that is the price, pay the cost, of the, the pill, is the, metaphor, for the gospel.

That means that, now, actually, actually, we say, pay the cost, for the gospel, is what you, what you are willing, to pay, or what, how much, how much you are willing, to pay, for something, that you treasure.

Like this person, this merchant, that he, is worth everything, he had. Okay? Now, for the gospel, Paul is willing, to pay the cost, of being in prison. I said that in prison, at that time, is pain, and shame.

Both pain, and shame. He actually, pays more, more than, in prison. Now, you can see, in the second, second Corinthians, chapter 11, and Paul says, it's quite a long, long passage, he says that, I have worked much harder, been, harder, compared to the other apostles.

[39 : 21] He said that, I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been fought more severely, and been exposed, to death, again, and again. Five times, I received from the Jews, the 40 lashes, minus one.

Why 40 lashes, minus one? Because, according to the law, the Old Testament law, that you beat up someone, that you can't beat, more than 40. If you beat up to 40, if the person dies, that is murder.

If you beat up to 39, then the person dies, then, there is no guilt. If you beat to 40, or 41, if the person dies, then, you are murdered.

You are murdered. So, so, so, so, so, that is why, the people, they count, the lashes, up to 40, but, in case, they count it wrong. So, to safeguard them, then they beat up to 39.

So, make sure that, if they make a mistake, they still have one reserve. So, they won't, make sure that, they won't commit, into that type of murder. So, 40, minus one.

[40 : 24] Now, three times, I was beaten with Ross. Once, I was stoned. Now, actually, it's very interesting to say, that it's, once I was stoned. According to the Old Testament law, that once got stoned, then, you have to, stone to death.

Remember that, in Acts, Book of Acts, it says that, Paul once got stoned, and the people thought, he was dead. He, he dead. So, took it out to the, outside the city, the city wall.

Because, according to the Old Testament law, that a Persian, criminal dies, that must not be, inside a city wall. So, he has to, bring it out, bring him out.

So, take him, but, Paul, wake, and stood up, stood up, and went back to, into the city. So, he stoned, once, and three times, I was shipwrecked.

I spent a night, and a day, in the open sea. I have been constantly, on the move. Where am I? And then, is that, yeah.

[41 : 23] I have been in danger, from rivers, in danger, from, bandits, in danger, from my own countrymen, in danger, from Gentiles, in danger, in the city, in danger, in the country, in danger, in danger, from false brothers.

I have labored, and toiled, and have been, often gone, without sleep. I have, nowadays, without sleep, is not really that bad. Especially, if you have your, cell phone with you.

I have known, hunger, and thirst, and have, often gone, without food. I have been, cold, and naked. So you can see, the poor actress, paying the price, even more, than in prison.

They say, that he paid more, than the other apostles. That means, poor actress, willing to pay, the prices, that no one, can pay. Now, Paul encourages, not just himself, but encourages his, we call his spiritual son, Timothy, and you know that, Timothy, actually is a poor student, and his disciple, and so called, his spiritual son.

And he, tell Timothy, that so do not be ashamed, to testify about, our Lord, or ashamed of me, his prisoner. But join with me, in suffering, for the gospel, by the power, of God.

[42 : 41] You know, if you love your son, or your child, that you won't, ask him to suffer. But, Paul tells Timothy, that is, don't feel ashamed, to testify, for the Lord.

Don't feel ashamed, to be in the prison. Now, so, when we consider that, think it very carefully, that what price, are we willing, to pay, for the gospel?

Now, maybe you'll say that, in Louisiana, when we pray, preach the gospel, we don't need to pay, that much, is it? We don't have to, suffer that much. But, nowadays, that we, when we are preaching the gospel, we tend to, down pray, down pray, the cause of the gospel.

So, people can, accept it, some of the people, when they listen to the gospel, then they can accept the gospel, much easier. Like, when you become, they say that, when you become a believer, then everything will be good for you, and it won't, you won't suffer anymore, you have no pain, and everything like that.

So, like, Mona, and, on the love feast, and I said, what will you say to the people, when you preach the gospel, and say, oh, you'll be, you'll be fine every day, and you can gain, you'll become the richest person, in the world, and even you bring, you drink poison, and you won't die.

[43 : 59] Is that true? No? Are you sure? Are you sure? The Bible did say that. In the gospel of Mark, in chapter 16, verse 17 and 18, it did say that, even you drink poison, and you won't die, like that.

But, but, think it very carefully. The whole gospel of Mark, it got only two words, saying like that. But the whole book, we usually use a metaphor, to say, the symbol, to tell, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, because it's a lion, lion is the king, is it?

And then, a bull, a cow, actually, it's a buffalo, it's for Mark, and then, a person, a human being, for Luke, and eagle, and eagle, for John, because eagle, finds high, it's like that.

So, for gospel of Mark, it is, a buffalo, it's a, it's a, it's a cow, that, that means, in Chinese, we know that, that means what, it works very hard, to be a disciple, to be a worker, and you need to work very hard.

So, there are only two verses, in the, in the gospel of Mark, telling you that, oh, you have the benefits of like this, and like that. So, you can see that 99% is telling that, you need to work hard, for the gospel.

[45 : 28] So, something quite, quite interesting, you have never imagined that, is it? The Bible will, will ever say, verse like that. Now, in Ephesians, chapter 2, that is supposed that, the week before last, that you have heard of, that in, verses 8 to 9, it says, for it is, by grace, you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from, ourselves, it is the gift, of God, not by, works, so that, no one can boast.

That is the, the verse that we, memorized last, last month, is it? That, we are saved by grace, and saved by faith. Now, and, of course, this is absolute, it is, it is the truth, but, we are saved by faith, by grace, not by what we've done, but, but, don't use this, as an excuse, so that, we don't, we have, we don't need to do anything.

Now, but we say, oh, salvation, that we don't need to, do anything, but, now, Christianity, is not, is not a religion, of works, so, we don't rely on work, but, Christianity, is pretty much, a religion, of action, okay, it's not a religion, of works, but it is a religion, of actions, you know the difference? No, action, is what, no, not quite, is that, so, this is, I'm not saying, that it's all, it's all the meaning, of Christianity, but it's pretty much, quite much, that, it is a, action, did, ask us to do something, it's not do for our salvation, but as a Christian, that you need to do something, okay, so, you see the difference, now, and, a lot of people say that, oh, you need to, so called discipleship, is to learn, to grow, to grow spiritually, that you, you have to learn the Bible, and know how to, work for, Christ, like that, and a lot of people say that, you don't, you don't, it is, it is quite true, that you say that, you, you do as much, as you know, don't try to be a saint, in one day, okay, don't try to be a saint, in one day, but you do, as you know, now, if this is true, if this word is true, then, you can say that, the modern church, actually, knows nothing, think carefully, if, it is true to say that, you do as much, as you know, if this is true, then the church, the modern church, including all the Christians, most of the Christians, actually, know nothing, that means, we are not, doing anything, here, is that correct, quite largely, is it, now, we often say that, serving the Lord, is the gift, we give to the Lord, do we say that, we do, yeah, we serve the Lord, so we give, it is a gift, we give to the Lord, so we have to do our best, is it, we, we offer the best, to the Lord, but, this passage, we read today, tell us that, serving the Lord, is actually, a gift, from the Lord, it's not, our gift, to the Lord, but, a gift, from the Lord, now actually, in English, this word is quite, quite good, translation, God gave us, what, gave us the spiritual, gift, what does he mean by gift, gift is a gift, is the present, from the Lord, as in, so, you have the chance, to serve the Lord, actually, is a gift, it's not, the things that you, give to the Lord, but, from the Lord, especially, during lockdown, then you know, it is quite, very true, so, you will understand, that, serving the Lord, actually, is the grace, that God, gave us, and the Lord, will bless us, bless the other people, through us, so, this is a grace, from God, if you think, that, we served the Lord, well, or maybe you'll say, that we served a lot, not well enough, but Paul says, in verse 8, although I am less, than the least, of all God's people, this grace, was given me, to preach, to the Gentile, the insurmountable, riches of Christ, so, that, that means, what, it's not how good, we do, it's not how good, we do, but, how good, is your attitude, to serve, others, to serve, the Lord, that is, more important, so, the attitude, to serve, is more than, what, exactly, what we have done, now, this passage, actually, reminds us, to live, a church life, of unity, because,

[50 : 22] Jews, and Gentiles, they are on the same footing, we need to unite, with them, now, this message, actually, will, actually, is, this message, this about unity, will be, more, talked more about, in chapter, four, and five, of Ephesians, so, I'm not going, to spend, too much time, on it, here, and we live, in a unity, does not mean, that we like, other people, we like, other Christians, or we talk, same, similar, like the other Christians, or you, we do the same job, as the other Christians, or we don't even, agree, with the other, other Christians, but, we need to know, that, we have the same Lord, we have the same life, from the Lord, and we share, the same benefits, from the gospel, so, without Christ, there is no unity, without Christ, there is no unity, we have to, be united, within Christ, and, within Christ alone, like a song, that we have to sing, and, so, that, we, we actually, the gospel, we own, actually, is the greatest, love, of God, he sacrificed himself, and then, to give us the salvation, and give us, the gift, to serve him, now, so, the challenge here, in this passage, as I said, from the beginning, it looks, not really that, significant, not so important, but actually, the challenge brought to us, is really significant, now, we are not allowed, to ignore, ignore it, it is more or less, like a command, that, from Paul, that asks us, to live, live out this, now, just as, verse 8 says, this is the, unsearchable, riches of Christ, so, that's our prayer, that is the Lord, will reveal to us, his mystery, which, actually, in the age past, was kept, hidden in God, who, created all things, so we may, approach God, with freedom, and confidence, so, let there, let this, be our vision, truth, and, women,

I ask you, to lift it up, what? I tell, I was not allowed to walk, but I say, so, I am a gentleman, I am a far changer, the way, I am a mother, I am a father, a woman, I mean, I don't know what, I am, you know, unless, my law, I am a father, I am the law, to bring it, I am of sedan, I am,