Ephesians 3

God’s Splash Ball

I. Slide1 Announce:
   A. Slide2 Baby Ded 2nd: Maximillian Sanchez. Parents: Ramon & Lorena. (Sebastian 4yrs)
   B. Slide3-6 Kelly: Child@Rsk. Women’s Min Mtg. REAL Tues. R&R.
   D. Prayer: Loung Wi. CM. Lord, the world is the world. May the church be the church.

II. Slide13 Intro: God’s Splash Ball
   A. Remember there are 2 prayers in Ephesians (here and in 1:15-23) complement each other.
      1. The 1st, a prayer for enlightenment; the 2nd is for enablement.
      2. Paul wants the Ephesians to learn all they have in Christ and then live what they have learned.
   B. Last week: Paul unveiled the mystery of old...the new society, the combo of Jew & Gentile into one, a.k.a. the Church.
      1. The believing Jews & Gentiles are one & share the same spiritual riches.
      2. Jesus said, I will build My church (Mt.16:18). Paul reminds us, and God uses people to help get the job done.
         a) This week: Paul will explain his unique role in building up the church. Thus, the building of the church should be our motivation to pray & serve also.

III. Slide14 IT’S A MYSTERY (1-13)
   A. MYSTERY REVEALED (1-7)
   B. (1) Ever get interrupted in your prayers…Paul does here (see vs.1&14)
      1. He deviates on the subject of the divine mystery.
   C. Mystery - the ordinary English sense of this word implies knowledge withheld. The biblical sense is truth revealed. [mystery = formerly kept secret but now revealed]
      1. The mystery was made known only by divine revelation, to those illuminated by the Spirit.
D. (6) **Mystery summed up.** No one could have foreseen the inclusion of the Gentiles, but here it is plainly revealed via Paul.

E. The **content** of the mystery is Christ: Christ **for us** in giving *His life* on our behalf. Christ **in us** accomplishing *His purpose* by working in each member of His body.

F. Slide15a **MYSTERY’S PURPOSE** (8-13)

G. (8) **Unsearchable riches** – they far surpass our human ability to *understand*.

   1. Paul used same word in Rom.11:33 *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.*

   2. God’s riches are so vast *no one* can plumb their depths.

H. (9) From the beginning of the ages – Paul traced this mystery all the way back to creation

   1. Paul’s purpose: **To preach** (8) & **make plain**/*make all see* (9).

I. (10) **Manifold wisdom** – compound word (*many* + *many sided*).

   1. Slide15b Or, very many-*sided*, or very many-*faceted*, or very many-*colored*.

   2. (William Barclay) The idea in this word is that the grace of God will **match any situation** which life may bring us. There is nothing of **light** or of **dark**, of **sunshine** or of **shadow**, for which it is not triumphantly adequate.

J. (12) God’s plan was more than a **successful operation.** It became a *personal experience.*

   [in Christ we have a *free* approach to God - access]

   1. Slide15c Trifecta: **Boldness, access, & confidence** to come to God in faith.

   2. C.H. Spurgeon once said, **Prayer pulls the rope down below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give only an occasional jerk at the rope. But he who communicates with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.**

IV. Slide16a **POWER PRAYER** (14-21)

A. (14) Paul moves towards a powerful prayer. I think he’s placing this prayer in the greater *Roman* context. He does it by subtly kind of rewriting what the Romans called...*genius.*
B. **Genius** - How we define it today: an action so unbelievably creative, brilliantly, impressive. Or a person, he/she is genius.

1. **Slide16b Defined:** In Roman religion, the genius is the individual instance of a general divine nature that is present in every individual person, place, or thing. [picture a guardian angel, your protection spirit]
   a) The genius would follow each man from the hour of his birth until the day he died.

2. Each individual place had a genius and so did powerful objects, such as volcanoes. It was thus extremely important in the Roman mind to propitiate the appropriate genii for the major undertakings and events of their lives.

3. The Christian theologian Augustine equated the Christian soul with the Roman genius, citing the ancient Roman Scholar Varro as attributing the rational powers and abilities of every human being to their genius.

4. So, in every person, house, wherever you went, there was some kind of genius in it.

5. In the Roman Cults, the only genius that mattered, was the one that belonged to the father of the household.
   a) Genius manifested itself as the general life principle that governed the way families lived and how that life principle was passed on for generations. [where we get genes]

6. The only genius that mattered was the father.

7. The king of all geniuses belonged to [Slide17a no not Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius] but to the Emperor. The title for the father was pater familias (father of the family)
   a) Slide17b eg. this is the Bronze genius depicted as pater familias (1st century CE).
   b) Slide17c This is the Genius of Domitian. [Thus began the tradition of the Imperial cult, in which Romans worshipped the genius of the emperor rather than the person]
   c) Thus the Emperor was pater familias over all the Roman family. His genius was the most revered.

C. **Slide18,19 Now I’ll read vs.14,15.** [note: the Father...whole family...is named.]

1. Paul communicates...there is a higher, new (to them), bigger than Caesar, One who is The Pater Familias in whom everyone derives their name.
a) Every identity given...comes from The Father (heavenly). And in Him is in whose name I am praying.

b) Dads give people their identity & meaning. And thats who I am kneeling before...the Father.

D. Slide20a PRAYER FOR 5 THINGS (14-19)

E. Finally back to the prayer – let me start over…For this reason...

1. This prayer is for spiritual vision, to see & lay hold of the greatness of God’s love & power.

F. Now he lists 5 resources which His people may draw upon in prayer.

1. Slide20b 1st we need Inner Strength/Power/might (16) which comes via His Spirit in the inner man. [inner man = the center of a person’s life]
   a) This is where we get our real strength. It comes from God, who is present & active in the believer’s life. His power works in & through us.
   b) A story is told of a woman who lived in a remote valley. She went to a great deal of trouble to have electrical power installed in her home. They noticed she didn't use very much electricity at all. In fact, her usage was minuscule. They sent a meter reader out to check on the matter. The man came to the door and said, "We've looked at the amount. Don't you use electricity?" "Oh yes" she said. "We turn it on every night to see how to light our lamps and then we switch it off again."

   (1) This sounds like the way many Christians apply the power of God in their lives. [turn it on, switch it off again]

2. Slide20c Next we need Faith (17a) that Christ may dwell in your hearts thru faith.
   a) may dwell - the Greek word used here, carries the sense of residing permanently.

3. Slide20d Next we need Love (17b) rooted & grounded in love.
   a) Rooted and grounded - Paul uses these 2 metaphors: 1 agricultural (rooted) the other architectural (grounded/a foundation) reminder of the stability that Christ provides

   (1) Too many Christians want the fruits of the Spirit without being rooted in spiritual things. wiersbe A new orientation toward others.
   (a) Love is the foundation of the believer’s life.
4. **Slide20e** Next we need **comprehension**/spiritual understanding (18,19a) of Christ’s love.
   a) Comprehend the dimensions of Christ’s love [wide/long/high/deep]
   b) Passes knowledge – compound word, beyond & to throw.
      
      (1) *To throw over & beyond.* Not hitting the baseball over the fence, but knocking it deep into the stands.

5. **Slide20f** Next we need **the Fullness of God** (19b) of God. *Here is God’s ultimate purpose for the lives of His people.* [Oh to experience the fullness of God]
   a) This could refer to the **blessings** of God, or to His **perfection and completeness**.

G. **Slide21** PAUL’S DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE (20,21) *a stirring benediction*

H. (20) **Exceedingly abundantly** – compound word made up of **3 words** to show the highest form of comparison imaginable.
   1. Paul connected: **above, out of, exceedingly**...to form this word.
   2. It means **exceedingly abundantly, superabundantly**, quite beyond all measure.
      
      It goes beyond **the expression of language.** Shepherd’s Notes, Ephesians, pg.41
   3. **God’s power** at work **within us** is able to **carry out His work** more abundantly, than we can even imagine.
      a) **Slide22-24** Behind right field of San Francisco’s AT&T Park is **McCovey Cove**, where fans sit in their boats & kayaks, waiting for a **splash ball**.
      b) So, this phrase **exceedingly abundantly** isn’t hitting the baseball over the fence, nor deep into the stands, but knocking it out of the park...this here is God’s **splash ball**!

I. **Slide25a** God gives us more than we **ask**:
   1. **Abraham** – said, *I can’t expect Sarah to bear a child in her old age. God promised a seed. It must be in this child of Hagar. Oh that Ishmael might live before You.*
      a) God granted him *that*, but He gave him **Isaac** as well, & all the blessings of the covenant.
2. David – in Ps.21:4 David asked life from God. And God gave him more than length of days for himself, but a throne for his sons throughout all generations.

3. Man w/palsy friends brought him to Jesus & asked for a physical healing. Jesus said, 1st healed him spiritually, son…your sins are forgiven. Then healed him physically.
   a) God gives greater things than we ask for.

4. Dying thief – asked, Lord, remember me. Jesus’ reply, today you will be with me in paradise.

5. The Prodigal – I'm not worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants. His father answered: Bring forth the best robe & put it on him; put a ring on his hand, & sandals on his feet.
   a) Once you get into the position of an asker, you shall have what you never asked for & never thought to receive. Spurgeon

J. Slide25b He says to ask
   all that we ask
   above all that we ask or think
   abundantly above all that we ask or think
   exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think
   able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.