

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

EPHESIANS 3 (KJV) · AUGUST 27, 2026

1. STUDY TITLE

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ: Grace, Mystery, and Prayer

2. FOCUS PASSAGE

Focus Passage: Ephesians 3:1–21 (Key Verse: Ephesians 3:8)

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Ephesians 3:8 (KJV)

3. BIG IDEA / MAIN POINT

God's eternal mystery has been revealed in the gospel, uniting Jew and Gentile into one body through Christ so that we might boldly approach God and comprehend His boundless love.

4. SESSION OVERVIEW (FOR THE LEADER)

- Suggested time: 60–90 minutes
- Goal of the study: To help group members marvel at the unsearchable riches of Christ, understand our place in God's eternal redemptive plan, and learn to pray for one another out of the boundless spiritual resources we have in Him.
- Special notes: This passage covers deep theological truths—such as the "mystery" of the church and God's eternal purpose—before shifting into a deeply pastoral, heartfelt prayer. Give the group plenty of time to unpack both the doctrinal wonder of verses 1–13 and the relational warmth of verses 14–21.

5. OPENING (10–12 MIN)

- Warm welcome: "Welcome everyone! It's so good to be together around God's Word tonight."
- Icebreaker question: "What is the most generous gift or surprise you've ever received, and how did it make you feel toward the person who gave it?"

- Opening prayer: "Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. As we open Your Word, open our hearts as well. Give us a fresh glimpse of the greatness of Christ and the depth of Your love for us. By Your Spirit, teach us how to encourage one another in the faith. In Jesus' name, Amen."

6. CONTEXT & SETTING THE SCENE (3–5 MIN)

In chapters 1 and 2 of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul laid out the staggering reality of salvation by grace alone, explaining how God has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles to form one new temple—the church. Now, in chapter 3, Paul is about to pray for the Ephesian believers, but he pauses to reflect on his unique calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. He marvels that God entrusted him—the "least of all saints"—with the privilege of proclaiming the gospel to the nations. Paul writes this letter while imprisoned in Rome for preaching these very truths, wanting to ensure that the believers do not lose heart when they see him suffer. Let's read the passage together.

7. READ THE PASSAGE

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ephesians 3:1–21

8. OBSERVATION QUESTIONS (“WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?”)

1. According to verses 1 and 13, what is Paul’s current physical and legal situation, and why is he experiencing it?
2. In verses 5 and 6, what is the specific “mystery” that was hidden in past ages but is now revealed by the Spirit?
3. How does Paul describe his own status in verse 8 compared to his calling?
4. According to verse 12, what do believers have “in whom” (Christ Jesus)?
5. When Paul begins his prayer in verses 14–15, whose name is invoked over the whole family in heaven and earth?
6. In verses 16–19, list the specific requests Paul makes for the spiritual well-being of the believers.

9. INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS (“WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?”)

1. In verse 6, Paul states that Gentiles are “fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” Why was this such a radical and revolutionary concept in the first-century world?
2. Verse 10 mentions that God’s manifold wisdom is made known “by the church” to the “principalities and powers in heavenly places.” What does this teach us about the cosmic significance of the local church in God’s eternal plan? (Hint: Consider how Ephesians 1:22–23 and 2:11–22 connect here.)
3. What does Paul mean when he speaks of the “unsearchable riches of Christ” in verse 8? How do these riches contrast with earthly wealth or status?
4. Look closely at verses 17–19. How is it possible to “know” a love that “passeth knowledge”? What kind of comprehension is Paul praying for here?
5. How do verses 20–21 serve as a fitting doxology (praise) to close out this section of the letter? How does God’s power at work in us (verse 20) tie back to the prayer for strength in the inner man (verse 16)?

10. APPLICATION QUESTIONS (“HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE US?”)

1. Paul considered himself “less than the least of all saints” (verse 8), yet he spoke with absolute confidence about his calling. How does recognizing our own spiritual poverty change the way we view our everyday opportunities to share Christ with others?
2. Verse 12 tells us we have “boldness and access with confidence” to God. Do you genuinely feel that kind of boldness in your prayer life, or do you often approach God with hesitation or guilt? What hinders that confidence?
3. Verse 10 portrays the church as a display case for God’s wisdom to the unseen spiritual realm. How does seeing your local church through this cosmic lens change the way you participate in it week by week?
4. (Group/Community question) Paul prays earnestly for the inner strength and spiritual maturity of his fellow believers (verses 16–19). How can our small group intentionally adopt this posture of praying deep, spiritual prayers for one another rather than just physical or surface-level needs?
5. (Gospel reminder) When we look at our own failures and spiritual weaknesses, we can easily feel disqualified or spiritually weak. How does the truth of Ephesians 3:16–19 remind us that our spiritual growth depends entirely on “the riches of his glory” rather than our own willpower?
6. This week I will... *[Invite group members to share one specific way they will rely on Christ's power or pray for someone else using this passage this week.]*

11. RESPONSE & CLOSING (10–15 MIN)

- Reflective prompt: Take 60 seconds of quiet reflection to read back over Paul's prayer in verses 16–19, inserting your own name or your family's name into the requests.
- Prayer requests: Invite the group to share brief prayer requests, especially focusing on spiritual strength and a deeper grasp of Christ's love.
- Closing prayer:

"Father, thank You for the unsearchable riches we possess in Christ Jesus. Forgive us for living as though spiritual resources are scarce when You are able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think. Strengthen us in our inner man by Your Spirit. Root us deeply in Your love, and let our lives—and our church—display Your manifold wisdom to a watching world. To You be glory in the church throughout all ages. In Jesus' name, Amen."

- Memory verse: Ephesians 3:8 ("Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...")