Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – September 29, 2019

**The Mystery and Majesty**

**of**

**Jesus Christ**

*How God’s Glory and Promises Find Fulfillment in His Son*

Exploring Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians

***Celebration: Becoming God’s New Temple***

***Ephesians 2:11-22***

 Our text for today develops the themes of the previous verses, just as Paul’s prayer in the latter part of chapter one enhanced themes he had listed in the first half. But what is going on in this book? Paul doesn’t correct bad doctrine (as he does in Colossians) or warn warring factions (as he does in First Corinthians and Galatians).

 Simply, in Ephesians, Paul showcases God’s Mystery, for ages hidden, but now made manifest by the coming of Jesus. He explains why Jesus is “a big deal,” the biggest of deals, because in and through Him God is regaining control over an out-of-control, rebellious world.

 We saw in verses 1-10 that God has awakened us dead sinners and forgiven us, giving us spiritual life by His grace. Now Paul shows us what has become of us now-forgiven sinners, and it is truly glorious.

 In Jesus, God transcends anything in the Prophets or the hopes of pious Jews. God’s plan is not to restore ethnic Israel to a narrow strip of land. He is building the redeemed from every nation into a New Temple for His dwelling place in the New Creation. The New Jerusalem is His redeemed people who reign with him forever. Revelation 21

***How do we celebrate God’s redemptive love? By confessing that. . .***

***In Jesus, The Nations have been brought near to God.*** vv. 11-13

 The temporary distinction between Jew and Gentile brought about in the Law has been eternally obliterated in the Cross. That distinction could never last, since God’s intention always has been to save people from all nations. Gentiles no longer are outsiders.

***In Jesus, people from all nations are reconciled as One.***  vv. 14-17

 Jews had no spiritual privilege due to their ethnicity. So the rift between Jew and Gentile caused by superficial cleanliness laws was taken out of the way by Jesus’ death. Colossians 2:13-15, 20-23

***In Jesus, a New Humanity becomes God’s dwelling place.*** vv. 18-20

 Jesus’ purpose was never to perpetuate Jewishness, but to unify the diverse nations in Himself as God’s Temple. He established a new Kingdom Culture in which all peoples are equals. Each person is part of God’s household, with access to God through the same Spirit. These things should fill us with joy at God’s glory. Do they?

***What are the relational results of Jesus’ Cross?***

 1. While we talk about and seek racial harmony, in Christ we are called upon to acknowledge the reconciliation that already is there!

 2. Every part of the Law which separated Jew and Gentile has been made permanently obsolete, leaving no kosher commandment.

 3. Each believer’s destiny is to be a vital member of God’s household.

***Why it matters. . .***

*If the Law is obsolete, why do many want to live under it? Gal. 3:10-14; 5:1-6*

*How might our attitude and actions towards others change if we truly consider them as part of the*

 *same body? How does forgiveness fit here? Compassion? Heb. 13:3*

*What can derail our efforts to act out our unity in Christ? Ephesians 4:17-32*

*Why does God’s glorious plan not move believers to greater joy? 1 Peter 1:8*