

His Mysterious Will Is Made Known: Really & Truly

Christ-centered Harmony ...

Blood-bought Union...

Forgiveness-driven Oneness...

Gospel-centered Community...

*The Glory of the Cross of Christ: Vertical union...horizontal union
ONE with God, one with one another!*

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By:

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EPHESIANS 1:7-10

The much anticipated births of our 2 children came with a degree of surprise: since we opted not to learn of their sex before birth. Our 2 children came into this world by cesarean-section. As they both were half-in / half-out of Cyndie's body, the mystery remained. (It was then that I said to her I truly love you from the inside-out, as I got a peek of her inerds!).

It was not until they were completely detached from Cyndie that their sex was revealed to us. We gave birth to girls! Samantha & Emma.

What was once unknown to us had become fully revealed. We were the passive recipients of this great surprise!

Before we dive into our text for this morning, let's take a look at:

Genesis 4:26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. **At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.**

Not much detail as to "the Name of the Lord." – What Name?

Here comes more detail...in time:

Exodus 3:13-15 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" (14) God said to Moses,

"I AM WHO I AM."

And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (15) God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Even more detail, as Moses cries out this request to God:

Exodus 33:18 Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

So God reveals more about Himself to Moses:

Exodus 34:5-8 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. **(6) The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."** **(8)** And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.

See the progressive "making known" of God to man...?

Once unknown...now known...

God making Himself known...REALLY & TRULY!

Let's turn to Ephesians 1.7-10

Ephesians 1:7-10 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, **(8)** which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **(9) making known to us the mystery of his will**, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ **(10)** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

BIG IDEA:

In Jesus, God has made known to us the mystery of His will:

Through the death of Jesus, particularly His shed blood for the forgiveness of sin, God has united sinners to Himself, (reconciled believing sinners to Himself) AND has united sinner to sinner, in uniting sinners to Himself!

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I want to look at 3 dimensions of this:

1. The truth that: GOD HAS MADE KNOWN...

Here is faith. He has made something really & truly known! This is no fairytale! This is no imaginary well wish! This is reality made known! Bank on this truth! Stake your life on it. Live on this reality, die on this reality. This is real!

This is not something we "figure out"...this has been made known for you to see, taste, experience...this is the gift of faith, seeing, hearing, believing...

This is revelation:

Matthew 11:25-27 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; **(26)** yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. **(27)** All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the

Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Galatians 1:11-12 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. (12) For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

"We shall now have a full definition of faith, if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit."

~John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 3, ch 2.7

2. What God makes known, He makes known initially, continually and eternally!

Ephesians 1:16-18 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, (17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, (18) **having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know** what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, God has made known...He will continue to make known.

John 17:26 I made known to them your name, and **I will continue to make it known**, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Romans 11:22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you **continue in his kindness**. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

2 Corinthians 1:10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and **he will deliver us**. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

Philippians 1:18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and **I will continue to rejoice**,

Colossians 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, **continue to live in him**,

The Eternal Gospel:

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had **the eternal gospel to proclaim** to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.

We do not move away from what He has made known...we move deeper in that which He has made known...so...on to the "practical-ness" of my thought here...where the theological rubber here meets the practical road...

3. What God makes known in the gospel (union with God and union with one another) impacts ALL area of life.

Let's just sample Ephesians...

The Practical Hinge in Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...

Gospel-centered (general) relationships:

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. (2) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Gospel-centered marriages:

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

The same gospel-centered heartbeat flows over to families: parents, children and workers.

The same Jesus-unified reality hold true for issues related to spiritual warfare:

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

CONCLUSION

God has made known to us the mystery of His will:

1. Redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of our sins
2. The uniting of sinners to this Holy God! ...AND the uniting of His now saints to one another!
3. The uniting of ALL things, things in heaven and things on earth!

Since we know this, and now are growing in this...recognize this takes time!

Individually, this takes time...

Family-wise, this takes time...

Corporately, this takes time...

He is building His church...this takes time...

HCC has called a new pastor just over a year ago. Why?

In the weeks to come, in the new year, we will be examining together where we are at @ HCC and more importantly where we sense God is leading us as a congregation. As I said last week, Mike and I are taking seriously God's call to us to:

Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

As you know, we have requested that the 2010 budget remain temporarily right where it is so that we can talk, as your pastors, about many foundational matters we are beginning to recognize. Our conversations will broaden to include the deacons, and then, as the leadership of this church, we will communicate what we see in terms of the future, and bring these discussions to the congregation for discussion, prayer and the seeking together, as one people of God, the face of God.

Anecdotes:

Horton: What specifically do you mean by “a gospel-driven life”?

Because I live in San Diego, I think of a sailboat decked out with all of the latest equipment that tells you where you are and where you need to be. It plots your course, but it's a sailboat, so you need wind in your sails. You start out, and it's a beautiful day with wind in your sails. You're out in the middle of the ocean when the wind dies down. You're just sitting there dead calm. And your radio tells you that a hurricane is approaching. But all of your sophisticated equipment will not be able to get you to safety. What you need is wind in your sails.

A lot of Christians, especially people who have had dramatic conversion experiences, go sailing out of the harbor with wind in their sails. They are so confident in Christ and what he has done for their salvation, and that gospel wind is in their sails. Yet after two years, they have heard just one imperative after another. They have lots of course plotting, lots of books on how to do this and that. They've read every manual on spiritual disciplines. They have heard their pastor tell them they need to pray more, to read the Bible more, to evangelize more. Now they are dead in the water. There's no wind in the sails.

Paul calls the gospel “the power of God unto salvation,” and I don't think he meant the power of God just unto conversion. The gospel remains the power of God unto salvation until we are glorified. Calvin once said we need the gospel preached to us every week, and the Lord's Supper to ratify that promise, because we are partly unbelievers until we die.