

W379_The_Mystery_9.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book, and it is the series entitled The Mystery. It is our custom at these meetings to read a portion of scripture together. And I'm asking you to join us, if you will, while we read Colossians chapter two and three. We were looking at our last study at the references to the word mystery in the official to Ephesians. And at first it seemed as though Colossians marches so closely with Ephesians is a parallel epistle that we could say, Well, we don't want to go over all that ground again, so we'll pass on to some other aspect. But then, you know. If we're going to do that because. Two episodes marched together. You would have to do it with a lot more scriptures. I don't know whether any of you have seen Canon Girdlestone book called Dutra Graphs. This Ros means second time like Deuteronomy, and he gives a whole list of passages of scripture that are repeated elsewhere. One prophet quotes from another prophet. The epistle of Jude is practically lifted out, with the exception of an introduction and a conclusion from Second Peter. Or you can find any amount of passages. And then there's another thing that we must keep in mind that although they seem to be repeats, there's some little shade of difference that makes all the difference in the world. Now you think of the immense labor that could be saved if someone had said, Well, we've got the first of Samuel.

[00:01:53] The second Samuel, they've got the first of kings and the second of kings. We don't want to do it all over again. But they did. They started Chronicles and it starts all over again. But if you're a discerning reader, you read in the book of Samuel that Saul took his own life. That's all an historic fact. But when you read this story again in the subsequent parallel book, it was because he resorted to the Witch of Endor that he was slain. It just gives you the reason why. So you see, one part of the scripture gives you perhaps a solid fact and leaves it to work in your heart. And another scripture comes along and tells you the inner meaning. In case you missed it. So that I think you'll agree with me that if that's the case, we better spend another evening, don't you? On a parallel epistle. Even though there's much in Colossians which is similar, there are enough differences, different contexts, different way of saying it that will justify this second attempt to make it speak its message. Well, now, once more, before I go into the Epistle to the Colossians, I want to speak to those who were listening to this series when I touched upon one Timothy 3:16. I then told you that there was a difference of

opinion by some as to whether it should read God was manifest in the flesh or who was manifested the flesh.

[00:03:26] And you will see at the bottom of this chart. It's a little bit out of order, you see, but you can keep it in mind at the bottom of this chart. I've given you a good many doubts that are visible. Better than listening to. So will you notice at the bottom the well, it says the. This second idea. Does it read Theos or POS? That's the question. Theos would be the word for God and horse would be the word for whom. Whatever the next word which is printed in the Middle East. Ataroth Ethan wroth means to manifest. God was manifest. Well, now, if you know the Greek language, you never would say all that can't be phanerothyme because the the second letter from the end is the capital O. But that's simply because the bar in the middle has paid it out. Nobody has had foolish enough to say that cannot be. That's all that happens all all the time. Well, that's what happened to him. It just faded out in the course of several hundred years. And then I give you a 1 or 2 cases of testing the way in which this reading is distributed a little bit further down. There are 171 manuscripts which read God Manifest in the flesh. And. That is read from the first to the 12th century in 27 comments written by the so-called fathers. That's what they read.

[00:05:01] And there are 250 cursive manuscripts. They are written in smaller letters that read God out of 254. 252 out of 254 manuscripts which we possess all read. God was manifested in the flesh and they come from all parts of ancient Christendom. So I think that you see that the case is proved, that the statement is the parallel, the extreme opposite, that the mystery of iniquity is a man setting forth that he is God. And the mystery of godliness is that God was manifested the flesh in the man, Christ Jesus. So those two are walking together until the great day of manifestation comes. Well, now we'll come back to our epistle, to the Colossians, and here we have the first reference to the mystery is very similar, very similar to the one which we have in Ephesians three. Supposing we turn back for a moment and see what the Apostle said about the the mystery that was entrusted to him and then see the way in which he approaches it again when he's writing on the same subject, apparently within. You may say a month or two to this other company. Chapter three of Ephesians for this cause, I called the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If he have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you. Ward how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery. As I wrote before, in few words, whereby when he read, You may

understand by knowledge of the mystery of Christ, 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 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel 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 unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.

[00:07:06] Is this grace, given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the dispensation, the true reading of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hinted God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. You will see that he begins with being a prisoner in verse three, and he ends in verse 13, wherefore I desire that you faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. Now that is the way in which he introduces this subject in Colossians Chapter one. He says in verse 24. Speaking of himself as the minister who now rejoice in my sufferings for you. So he puts me first this time. He alluded to himself as a prisoner and he says these tribulations are being endured. They are for your glory. So here he says, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church whereof I was made a minister.

[00:08:22] So you notice here, extraordinary statement. The word fill up is a combination with anti in front of it. Anti means putting something in a pair of balances and weighing it. Corresponding. What is he saying? Well he says I've had one set of sufferings in connection with an early ministry. Do you remember when he was called the Lord told Ananias to say he is a chosen vessel unto me and I will show him how great things he must suffer. For my name's sake. He didn't explain what place suffering had in the scheme of things. He's never told us that completely. It's the puzzle to most of us still, but it's there. And the apostle, when he received his ordination, received this statement that he would suffer much for the truth for which he stood. Well, now, he says, in connection with his new ministry, not only have I robbed of my freedom and put into a prison to receive it, but I've got a bit more to make up my. If you read his early epistles, how he was beaten with rods and scourged and shipwrecked and fasting, I don't know what might have special to all men as though he was one of the gladiators led into the forum or led into the arena, last of all.

[00:09:42] And he says, I've got a bit more to make up yet. There are they fill up completely fill up that which is behind that which is left over. That which is awaiting me of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. Will you notice the extraordinary comparison here? Look back in Colossians one. Verse 22. This is speaking of Christ in the body of his flesh. Through death. In the body of his flesh through death to present you holy unblameable and approvable in his sight. Notice that now, he says. In my flesh. Verse 28. To present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. You've got to be watchful here, of course. Paul save nobody. He indeed threw down the challenge. Was Paul crucified for you? He said. But this man intimately walked in the steps of his savior. And in two Timothy, he says, for which I suffer many things. But he says, I do it that they may obtain that salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. So somehow in the estimate of God, the church of the one body was going to reap benefit by the extraordinary devotion of one poor little earthen vessel originally named Saul of Tarsus and beloved of us by the name of Paul the Apostle and called by himself an earthen vessel. It makes you humble in the presence of God to see that the Lord God Almighty has stooped down and used such vessels and linked them with a work of Christ so intimately.

[00:11:42] In the body of his flesh through death to present you. Holy. In my body. It says I suffer too. I want to present you perfect. You say, Well, isn't that going one better? Oh, no, no, no. See, the word perfect has lost its meaning that it had in the original here and the word perfect in the original image to go to the extreme end. He said, All I'm asking is that you should get and gain what Christ has bought and paid for. I haven't bought it. It's a precious blood of Christ that makes it available to you. But in my ministry, I'm seeking that you should stand perfect and complete as the prayer is at the chapter four in all the will of God. So what a link there is between the savior and his faithful servant. And after we've said that, then we can dare to say that it's true for every single one of us in our own limited capacity. You cannot serve the Lord in this day and generation. Very intimately and very faithfully without having a little bit of a comeback in some measure. You may not like to call it suffering. That a little bit of financial loss, a little bit of loss of time, a little bit of misunderstanding, but it all goes to make up the grit and the irksomeness of this falkovich.

[00:13:01] But all what a joy to think that however far off you may be, you are following his steps. Who did? Who was without guile? Who when he was reviled, reviled? Not

again, you remember. So he that little lesson coming out, he said, What's all this got to do with the mystery? Well, I'm glad you said that, because when we read chapters two and three, we weren't reading very much about the mystery, but we were reading tremendously about what sort of people we ought to be. And that's what it should be, so that we have no danger of being mystics because we happen to believe the dispensation of the mystery. For the Apostle Paul won't allow that to happen. Not if you read his Epistles and I'm sure you agree with me over that. Well, now we've come a little closer to this statement of his that is parallel to Ephesians three. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church. Whereof I am, made a minister. So there is no doubt that he is making a specific claim that the church of the one body belongs to that particular ministry entrusted to him as Paul the prisoner where I was made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you in the Epistle to the Ephesians, it was for you Gentiles.

[00:14:28] He and he says, given for me to you. And he says, as you remember, the correct reading is not the fellowship of a mystery, but the dispensation of the mystery. Here is back on the same subject. And then he adds another little word. And these other little words are useful because they supplement. You see what's already told us in Ephesians. To fulfill the Word of God. That's verse 25. Now, on the surface, that might mean that the prophet Isaiah said something and now Paul is fulfilling it. But then on the other hand, we read that this is a secret that was hidden in God and never revealed until it was revealed to Paul the prisoner. What it simply means if we got the word put around the wrong way instead of needing to fulfill, it needs to feel full. And it is the same word that you get in chapter two when it says verse ten and ye are complete in him. Because you see, he's already been speaking about fullness. In verse nine, for in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily and ye are filled to the full in him. You're not fulfilled, but you're filled full. And so he says, in effect, in those few words. There are so many of God's children who haven't got a complete Bible. Oh, I know that if you picked up their Bible, it starts with Genesis and it ends with the book of the Revelation.

[00:15:58] And then it's got a concordance and it got all sorts of notes and maps on that all at the end. But they haven't got a complete Bible. Why? Why? Because if you were to kindly speak to them and keep your Bible shut and you said to them, Can you tell me what epistles of Paul are stamped with the word prison? Not quite sure. Could you tell

me how words? The first 14 verses of Ephesians. Not the remotest idea. Can you give me a chapter of the Sermon on the Mount? Oh, yes, I give you that. All right. You see, they haven't got a complete Bible, although they possess it. It's one thing to have it all in print. It's another thing to have read it, believed it and appreciated it. So he says, look. This last revelation of God given to me as the prisoner puts the crown on the Word of God. It takes you up far above all principality and power. It's where Christ sits at the right hand of God is its place and its sphere. And if you do not know that unconsciously, consciously and unwittingly, you are in that so far robbing Christ of his glorious position and you are robbing God's people of their relationship to Him as members of the body of which He is head.

[00:17:14] And that body called the fullness of him that filleth all in all. So it cannot be a local church. So here we have in worthwhile pondering what he said all over again in Colossians, but he said it just that little differently to add points of interest. We go in again, verse 26. Even the mystery we've got to the word at last, this dispensation which was given to him for you. That completes the word of God. Even the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations. Now, you see, that's another side sidelight, if you will remember back in Ephesians three, he says it was hid in God. Well, he has two sides, then it's hid in God and it's hidden away from the ages and generations. Two ways of putting it. Either is complete, but the two. Or can you have two more complete than one? I don't know. But he even got two sides of the same thing. Taking either of them as God's truth. It's impossible for us to say that it's all written all over the Bible. If he said it was hid in God and only now revealed and entrusted to me, said Paul. And then he puts it the other way round. It was hidden away from the ages and the generations. So that goes right back through the Bible to digital. Adam. This is a claim which is questioned and refuted and argued against by some.

[00:18:37] But while it stands printed like that and you know it to mean what it says, this is an independently given ministry belonging to a calling that is new and associated only with Paul as the prisoner of Jesus Christ. Under the terms of a dispensation called a dispensation of the mystery, something hid in God and something revealed by the God who hid it and impossible to discover until the day of revelation came. Okay, we go on. But now is made manifest. Made manifest to his saints. But now. When is it now? Oh, yes, sir. That's at present. But what present? Oh, the time of writing. Its time of writing was a man in prison with Israel beginning to go out into their present blindness. And the

salvation of God sent to the Gentiles. Acts 28 is over. So that now belongs to that time. To whom God would make known. What is the riches and the glory of this mystery? Now, I was criticized once by a writer or a reporter. He said that there was too much emphasis on a word mystery in this particular book that we want to get shot of at. Well, that's because he didn't understand. I wasn't a mystic, I suppose about the last person in the world that anyone would say was a mystic. That could be a misfit or somebody with a mistake. But it is because that is the character and calling of this present dispensation that we want folks to consider that it was stressed and that passages were quoted and there they are in the book.

[00:20:18] But don't you see this mystery is not a thing to be lightly dismissed for. It says to make know what is the riches. And the riches of the glory. Oh, there are some riches. Which fade and leave and some riches which you would better to leave. But riches of glory and this glory, the glory of God. So here's something, then, that we dare not pass by with indifference. And what is what is the riches of the glory of this mystery? What is its sort of guarantee among the Gentiles? Oh, it is Christ. There are versions is in you. Christ in you, the hope of the glory. And that's a possible translation. But on the other hand. When you have a plural following the word in. It can and should be many times translated among you. That's the way it's translated over and over again in the New Testament. You see, if you have one cup, you put something in it. And if you've got 12. Well, it's among the whole lot in a sense, isn't it? You see, there's a difference. So Harry says, look, you're casting about in your mind to get some sort of external proof that this is a fact. What he said. The sheer fact that Christ is now no longer limited to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

[00:21:54] The sheer fact that now with Israel gone in their blindness, this marvelous word is going out among the Gentiles. Does of itself is the indication that a door has been opened by God, that it was never opened before. No longer do we read in Ephesians and Colossians that the Gentiles were grafted like wild olives into the true olive stock of Israel. They're not grafted into anything. They're members of a body on equal terms. And so you see, I think it's been worthwhile letting Colossians speak to us because it's giving us sidelights, which otherwise we might miss. When this man, the Lord, was with this man, Paul was called by the Lord. The very first thing he comments in Galatians one is that he. Revealed. He studied me that I might preach him among the Gentiles. Will you say now let's cut in the ground under your feet? Because Galatians

was long before he was a prisoner. No, he was, first of all, a preacher of the gospel of salvation. And then when he became a prisoner, he put on top of that glorious foundation that was laid once and forever. Justification by faith without works of law. He then put this new thing which completed the Word of God. So all the way through Paul's ministry, the Gentile was particularly in view that I might preach him among the Gentiles. That's Galatians one. And now we have in Ephesians three that these Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members and joint partakers, absolute equality never known before.

[00:23:42] You do remember that when when Peter was constrained to speak a word to Cornelius, who had been sent to him when he did start preaching, you know how he put it. He said the word which God said to the children of Israel. He didn't preach to Cornelius. He let Cornelius hear what the Lord had said to the children of Israel. And he looked Cornelius up and down and said, you know, Cornelius, you're putting me in a fix. I'm a Jew. And it's a thing unlawful for me, a Jew, to have any dealings with a Gentile. Are you imagine Paul talking like that couldn't because he was specifically set apart to bear the name of the Lord to the Gentiles. So from his very beginning, he knew that was so. And he is the crown of his work. I don't think he needed any commiseration when he was in prison or of course he would suffer the irksomeness of it. He would feel the ordered discomfort and a good deal of misery about it. The same time. What a crown upon his work. What an honor to share with the sufferings of Christ if he could indeed measure, contribute to making that glorious work of Christ effective among these poor outside gentiles who had no hope, no fathers, no promises, no covenants, and came right in on the bare word of God through this chosen servant.

[00:25:11] Well, now we have further down. It's the hope of glory. We mustn't play fast and loose with this word hope. It's most important. You remember in Ephesians chapter one when he said, Now I'm going to pray for you. I'm going to pray for you, that you may know what is the hope. And he prefaced that by saying the eyes of your understanding, being enlightened, that he may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledgment of him that you may know what is the hope? Oh, it's not an easy thing. Then you see, you can't just casually say, Oh, yes, I know all about that. You'll know it. If God opens your eyes, you'll know it. If you acknowledge Christ, you'll know it if this is your calling. But if not, if not, you will find your hope expressed somewhere else. And that should not in any measure be strange to us. God has more callings than one. The

great Gospel of John, with its whosoever and its gift of eternal life, brings a hope to those folks who believe that who will never understand this. That doesn't mean to say that we are superior people. Oh no. It's only that God in his elective mercy has chosen some before the foundation of the world to have their eyes open. And if you say, And how is it I've come to hear about it? Well, God saw to it that you would.

[00:26:39] You don't believe, do you, that he's got all power and all wisdom and might from all eternity to plan a purpose. And then he didn't know how to get you into touch with someone who would drop a hint to make you see it in the book. Who is able to do that? Friends. And that's why you came here. You bumped into somebody else or you received a leaflet or you just found it to myself by looking at God's word. He's able. But to think that anybody can gatecrash into this calling or could be argued into it and blessed be God could be argued out of it. It's entirely removed from the story. Now, don't think about this and say all that means just a little elect a few or what's God going to do with the great outside world? Won't you leave it with a God of all grace and the God of all love to look after the outside world? I think God, as much as we can do to look after the calling God has entrusted to us, for He says in that Ephesians four, when they begin to walk worthy of this calling, when we begin to walk worthy of the calling. Well, if you don't know your calling, you can't walk worthy. And then when he enumerates it, he says there is one hope of your calling. So the hope is a very definite thing.

[00:27:48] The hope is not a mere vague sort of. Well, I hope so. It's because your calling has now become real to you that you can look forward to it one day, as Colossians three puts it, to be manifested with him where he is in glory. Well, that, of course, is waiting for us whenever he goes on again here at the end of this series in chapter one, which is Christ among you, the hope of the glory, whom we preach. All that is characteristic of the apostle Paul and should be characteristic of us all. We preach Christ. We can preach Christ in all the Scriptures. As our brother Canning has reminded us in the comment on in the virion that outside the the. Chapel here. You've got a little notice board. It says, We preach Christ in all the scriptures. So rightly dividing the word of truth doesn't mean leaving out the word of truth. It's the whole word that it's got its different departments. But Christ. When he's there, you can't get any calling. You call that Israel blessed as a nation. You can't have any calling whatsoever if Christ isn't the center. That is the one thing that remains permanent. So he says whom we preach.

Warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect. That we may lead every one who is a believer in Christ and trusting in him to see his calling and go on to the end.

[00:29:16] The word Elias and all the derivatives of the word, which gives us a word perfect all come from the word telos end. Like the Apostle Paul says, I have finished my course. Whereas in Philippians three, he says, are not all red, not already perfect, but are running. So we want you to go to the end and reach that which you've been comprehended by. Christ Jesus. He's not able to save you. It's Christ who will present you without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And this, as I would very much like to present you right to the very end, not sort of finishing up halfway. And then he says, Whereunto I also labor striving according to the working, which worketh in me mightily. This was no sort of dilettante sort of preacher who got up into a pulpit, said his say, and then that was the end of it. This word striving is our word, agonizing. It cost him a lot. Well, he said that already, didn't he? He was filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, the church that they may, though they grow and may adorn this doctrine. Now chapter two of Colossians. For I would that she knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Latakia and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. Look at chapter four, because we shan't get to that otherwise.

[00:30:49] Verse 12. As a fresh who is one of you? A servant of Christ, sir, due to you always laboring fervently for you in prayers that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Is another one. One. Agonizing as the word is great conflict and its to do with a desire for I bear him record that he hath great zeal for you and then very glad to see you. So here we have layered us here in Colossians chapter two with Paul having a great conflict that they may stand perfect. And if Epaphras who is praying that the same thing may happen, don't you see here again the mighty preacher Paul. And I think we're right to say that although he wouldn't like us to say that the mighty preacher Paul admits in the last chapter that there's somebody else, Epaphras, who is a mighty prayer. One is preaching and the other is praying. And they're both converging on the same thing that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. As he said in Ephesians, I pray for you. Chapter one As he said in Ephesians, Would you pray for me? Chapter six. All, Paul needed the prayer of the believer as much as the believer needed the prayer for Paul of Paul. So here we are again. Every one of us dependent upon him and related one to the other.

[00:32:25] For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at the end of the year and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. And what are you going to pray this time? That their hearts might be comforted? The word parakaleo giving us the word Paraclete, which is the name for the comforter. Paraclete is made of two parts para meaning alongside by parallel lines, and Kaleo means to call. And it means someone who is always at hand when you're in trouble to call upon him for help. But someone who doesn't come and try to help you over every possible obstacle so that you never have a chance to test your own strength. Have you seen people? They won't give a child just a chance. Supposedly it goes down a little bit of a what? As long as it's a nice soft walk. Well, that's all right. It'll get up and stagger a bit more. But the Spirit of God is there, always at call Paraclete to call on him at any time of need. So he says. That their hearts might be comforted, not merely soothed. Our word comfort has now got a rather softer meaning. The word is found in the Old Testament, where it means to encourage anybody. Put courage into them. Supposing you divide an English word comfort up into two parts. Now you needn't be what they call an epidemiologist.

[00:34:00] Com and con and all those words and c, y, n and s y n They're all the word together with, like, sympathy, symphony synthesis and whatnot. Is he that's together with. And what does that mean? Well, it means strength, doesn't it. It doesn't mean comfort and pet. You ought to sleep. It means to invigorate and encourage and enable you to stand. That's comfort, friends. That's the work of the comforter. So our English word needs a little bit of changing now because of the way in which we used it in a smaller, lower sense. That their hearts might be comforted. See, the apostle doesn't merely appeal to the mind and the understanding, but to the heart. And some people are afraid to have their hearts appealed to. They're going to be rigidly logical. Well, they can be just cold as ice. And of course, it is all heart, as it were. And no head then I don't know what the figure they use there in the opposite, but there it is. It's a balance here. Balance that their hearts might be comforted. Then the word being knit together in love. Knit together. This word comes in Ephesians 4:16. Let's refresh ourselves and see that it is so. He's already used it. Speaking of Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supply maketh according to the effectual, working in the measure of every part, make it increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love knit together.

[00:35:45] And he uses the same word in Colossians 2:19. So we'll look at that for a moment. And not holding the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment. Ministered and knit together increases with the increase of God. That is a healthy body. Every joint of supply, every member functioning, every one doing its part. But there's very few of us have got a body like that in the flesh. And, you know, there's a marvelous compensation in the body that if you are suffering from some particular sort of disease and one organ of the body collapses very many times, another organ of the body takes on part of the job, but it's only half living. Or what a pity that some of God's people are only half living. And you know why? Because they're not knit together. We are glad to meet in this little chapel. We are all sitting in in rows and nice, orderly pews. And that's what should be. But what is a delight in this chapel is sometimes to find everybody all gathered around a little not. Or downstairs, perhaps. Even with a cup of tea. Manifesting that we are members one of another and we're interested in one another. We're asking questions about one another. As the apostle says, I'm going to send you a very valuable servant to find out all your affairs and how you do.

[00:37:18] And he'll tell you all my affairs and how I do it together, each one contributing his share, not one envying the other, not one trying to do the other one's work. Now this word knit together is a word of of great use and interest and thought for a moment. We would give it a chance to show you how useful it is to survey the use of a word so that we get a fuller idea of it. Will you do this rapidly with me? The Acts of the Apostles, The ninth chapter and verse 29. Acts of the Apostles, the ninth chapter and verse 29. Here, the Apostle is now only just converted. He has been three days blind. His eyes have been opened, and at last he comes out into the open and he speaks. Here we have it. And verse 20 and he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay. Now, I'm just wondering for a moment I want to look a little bit further up. At verse 22. That's all increased the more in strength and confounded the Jews, which dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ. You see the word to prove or to speak with Conviction is knitting together. Knitting together. Paul knitted together Old Testament prophecies with New Testament realities. Tracy Paul for the first time seeing for himself and then telling somebody else the glorious message of Isaiah 53.

[00:39:08] He was wounded for our transgressions. Think of it. He's knitting together prophecy and fulfillment all in Chapter 16, verse ten of the same book of the acts. You'll get this word knit together again. 16:10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia. Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Have we got it? Assuredly gathering. Well, how does that mean? Well, we knit together the vision of a man of Macedonia by saying, well, obviously that's what it means. We've got to go to Macedonia and preach to him. Knitting it together, vision and response. And so we have the word used in various ways, but it always has this sort of linking knitting together and functioning together. Well, now we come to the remaining references to the mystery in Colossians, and we haven't got a great deal more time to spare. In chapter two. He's leading on to this, that their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love. Now, this is a part of words unto all riches. Have the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment. What steps? So this is a very wonderful thing, isn't it, to have all this necessary preparation. Riches. Well, we got riches of glory. We have riches of wisdom. We have riches here of full assurance. Full assurance. The word is made up of two words that means to bear someone along.

[00:41:06] Carry them along. It's the word used of of Abraham when he was fully persuaded, he was completely convicted. And here we have their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding. To the acknowledgement or many a time in the New Testament, the word knowledge would be better translated as knowledge. Strictly speaking, in old English, the words were the same. I suppose you know, the the is it the the Te Deum where it says we acknowledge thee to be the Lord? Well, when it was originally written, it wasn't written like that. It says we knowledge thee to be the Lord. That's not good English. Now we don't knowledge anything. Same word. And you see, we haven't got the true knowledge of anything. If we've really got it in a book on a shelf and it's somewhere in our room. Well, that's, that's, that's like the minds of some of us. That isn't knowledge. That's really lumber. It's only when we take that book and we read that statement and we put it into practice and we stand for it and it needs to be suffer for it, then we are acknowledging it and it means something. So he says here. To the acknowledgement. As an extreme. Is there anyone listening to me who says, Well, I can't see it? Well, friends, that doesn't prove that this isn't true.

[00:42:39] It may prove you're blind. That you see. To the acknowledgement of it. The mystery of God. Now, our version says the mystery of God and of the father and of Christ. And there's quite a variety of ways in which these last few words are distributed. And the one that seems to come out most clearly, and the one that it seems to me is what the apostle said is just this simple statement to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God. And in a dash, that's all. And he says, Christ. Now we speak about God as though we know what we're talking about and who we are talking about, But we can't envisage him is beyond our scope. How God can be a person and be here in this very chapel, as we believe by his mercy he is. And yet he is right beyond the Milky Way. And I don't know where else. It's beyond our ability to envisage such a person. But he doesn't ask you to. He says, Look, we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If there's any more glory to be seen in the day that's coming, well, all right. But for the moment, that's going to be all sufficient for us and as much as we should encompass. So he says to acknowledgement of the mystery of God, which is Christ. So in chapter two, the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles was Christ among you.

[00:44:18] And all this glory comes to you by acknowledging that fact, in whom are hid all the treasures, all the whole treasury of wisdom and knowledge. I suppose you know the word desirous. I often. I even hope you've got the book, The Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language. If you haven't. Well, it's worth getting. And the word thesauros means a treasury. And the word thesauros means in its original makeup to lay up for tomorrow. It's made up of words that mean to lie up for tomorrow. That's a treasury, isn't it? And here he says, You've got this treasury in this his head, all the treasury of wisdom and knowledge. And then he says, and this I say, Lest any man should be guide you with enticing words, all you say, don't you see what a proof you have against all this vanity and vexation and false philosophy? If only Christ is dominant in your scheme of things. So after going right through chapter two, as we did warning us about tradition and philosophy, he says, Here's the secret verse 19 and not holding the head as sure as you hold Christ as the head and you are knit together with the members, your proof against the inroads of all these speculative doctrines. But if you leave God, Christ the head and you're not knit together with the fellow members, then you lay yourself open to all these dreadful things touch, not taste, not handle, not and whatnot until you may give it all up in despair.

[00:45:56] Well, then finally you have the mystery of God, which is Christ in chapter four, where he very much on the same lines as he as the epistle to the Ephesians. Pray for me that I may make this known as I should. Verse three, Chapter four. Chapter four, verse three. By the way, we're reading just now chapters two and three. And we discovered that in that reading, the wives were told, the husbands were told the children and the servants. And the one verse had to be omitted because it happened to be put to the first verse of chapter four. Don't ask me why. So we'll let that have a word, shall we? Masters Give unto your servants that which is just and equal. I remember once at a trade union meeting when the name of God was being vilified as though Christianity was absolutely contrary to lifting up the working class and all this business. Some one quoted that, and it caused a little moment's hesitation and stop. You mean to say that's in the Bible? Yes. A good many things in the Bible that would be better known if only they would give it a chance to speak to them. Friends both politically and nationally and with regard to the Middle East and with regard to all developing at it. However you pronounce the name of the middle state just now, it's all there in the book.

[00:47:27] And as they pass by, this book, they see. So he says, Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven. And then we have in verse three with all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door. I always feel I must stop there. I'm sure if I were put into prison, the one thing I'd be scheming and planning would be to get out. I don't know whether I'd have pluck enough to soar through bars or dig up floors, but the one thing that we dominate all to get out. And he is this man who was a champion of liberty, if ever there was one, in prison. And he's asking prayer for a door to be opened. And believe it or not, he's forgotten all about getting out. He's only concern is a door of utterance. Isn't that lovely? A door of utterance. And so we have him to speak the mystery of Christ. For which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak. I'm speaking from memory. I may be wrong. I think this is about only about two passages in all Paul's writings when he says about ought to do anything. 2 or 3. But at least two of them. It's about himself, as I ought.

[00:48:51] To speak. There is a consciousness of a responsibility as well as a great privilege. I put these words, which may be known to you from a poem that was written some, I don't know, 30, 40, perhaps more years ago, are part of the poem reads like this. It's written about the apostle Paul and some of you anticipate. Now what I'm going

to read you through life death. Through sorrow and through singing. He shall suffice thee, for he hath sufficed. Christ is the end. For Christ was the beginning. Christ. The beginning. At the end is Christ. And anybody who can endorse that with a full heart is getting very, very near to the heart of the mystery and very, very near to this faithful servant who rejoiced in his sufferings that the church of the one body may be helped along the road to appreciate the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, which gave them all spiritual blessings in heavenly places and reckoned they were seated together with Christ, where He sits at the right hand of God. Far above all, what a wonderful message. What a wonderful book, What wonderful people we should be. If only we could say out of a full heart. And we are walking worthy of that calling. What if we can't say we are? We can at least express the hope we should be and seek Christ that we may approximate more to the character and the pattern which God has given us in this great servant.