

## We Are One Ephesians 3:1-13

The Church is on display. The world is watching. Heaven is watching. What will we do with this mystery, this treasure of the gospel? Having been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, will we take up our calling to become reconcilers?

All the riches heaven has to offer belong to us! Eph 1:3

- Chosen, Redeemed, Sealed
- Are those riches available for everyone? Regardless age, race, socio-economic status?
- Real issue in the first century church

First century was a time of tremendous racial and social division

- Jews hated non-Jews
- Romans despised the Jews
- Slaves longed for freedom; women had virtually no rights
- Rich despised the poor; poor envied the rich

Not unlike the tensions we see in our world today.

- Same tensions that have existed since the dawn of human history.

Beginning of the first century, something dramatic happened. We mark time from event (AD)

- Eternal Son of God took on human flesh; lived, died, rose from the dead
- One new humanity; Ephesians 2:15
- New community in which all of these people are expected to become one
- How could it happen? God opened eyes and Church courageously obeyed.
- It wasn't easy

Acts 10:27-28

- 15 years after resurrection, Peter still thought he was racially superior
- "God has shown me"
  - Nearly impossible to see pride and fear in the mirror
- Acts 15. Five years later church has official moment (church council); both groups made cultural concessions
  - Philippians 2:3. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;
- Unity was experienced because of one thing: death, burial and resurrection of Jesus
- Church alone possesses this truth. There is hope for the world in the Church; not in secular culture

Ephesians 3:8-10

- The gospel is a mystery
  - God took on human flesh
  - God died for sins of His creatures
  - Father raised Son from the dead
  - Believe, just believe, and Christ dwells in you, the hope of glory

- The Church is a mystery
  - People don't have to come through the Jewish people, or through Law but directly to God through Christ
  - One new humanity created; all peoples equal in Christ
- The Church is the steward of that mystery
  - The Church is on display
  - Reconciling people to God – 2 Cor 5:18-20

**Application**

- Identify with Jesus – not race, education, wealth
- Initiate
- Invite people to Jesus