

Get Me to the Church On Time; Eph 3:7-13

I. Late for Dinner

- A. "You can call me anything, just don't call me late for dinner"
- B. "In the age of etiquette (good manners) it was considered [sic] extremely rude to be late for a meal-especially dinner. It was better to be called a name than to be the social out-cast who was "late for dinner". This social rule began to break down in the late 1950's when war and work began to break up the traditional family and the ritual of having **family dinner** together." Unknown
- C. Some cultures being late is the norm, for some it is considered very rude
- D. Can you imagine inviting friends over for dinner only have them arrive an hour late?
- E. "church" - an assembly, a congregation
 - 1. It is made up of two greek words; "to call or invite" and "from out of"
 - 2. We have been invited (called) out of this world and into God's kingdom
- F. I am not talking about making it to the Sunday or Wednesday worship on time
- G. I am talking about being added to the church before it is too late
- H. We often get mixed up in our thinking; church is the building
 - 1. Earning "points" by "going to church"
 - 2. "I am going to church" meaning we are going to the building
 - 3. "Where are we going to eat after church?" meaning when we leave the building
 - 4. This word is used 114 times in the New Testament. It is never used as a structure or building
 - 5. Every time this word is used, it means people. Specifically, those who have been called out of the world and into God's Kingdom
 - 6. It is also translated "assembly" and "congregation"
- I. The church is not Sunday or Wednesday assembly. It is the people who are assembled!
- J. When we leave this building, we are still the church!

II. Make All Men See

- A. Ephesians 3:7-9; ⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,
- B. The very least of all the saints doesn't quite capture what Paul is saying
 - 1. Less than the least; he is not putting himself on the same level as the saints
 - 2. He is shining the light on God's grace that was given to him even though he fought against the saints; even though he was party to murder of the saints
- C. The hidden mystery
 - 1. Ephesians 3:6; This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
 - 2. While Paul's task was to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles (everyone but Jews), he spent an awful lot of time in the synagogues trying to reach the Jews

3. Acts 17:1–2; ¹ Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

4. Acts 13:46–47; ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “ ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”

D. Paul was concerned with letting everyone know about the Messiah and His saving Grace

E. To make known

1. Different translations

a) Make all men see

b) Make plain to everyone

c) Bring to light for everyone

2. The Greek word means to enlighten (from the Latin “morning star”)

3. Revelation 22:16; “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

F. Paul’s idea here is that God’s word needs to reach everyone before it is too late

III. On Time

A. There will be a point in time when it is too late

B. Matthew 25:1–13; “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹² But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

C. Is there anything more important in our lives than our eternal souls?

D. Paul didn’t think so, he made it his life’s work to tell everyone he came across about the saving power of the Christ

E. Paul tells us it our mission, the church’s mission, to make known the “manifold wisdom of God”

1. “manifold” - many colored, variegated, iridescent

2. “Since wisdom has no literal color, it is clear that Paul was speaking figuratively in this passage.” Coffman

3. Coffman thinks that verse 10 is a “rhetorical burst of eloquent hyperbole.” (hyperbole is an exaggerated claim or statement not meant to be taken literally)
 4. “We shall shout the gospel message to the highest heavens and extol the glory of the church as the demonstration of God’s manifold wisdom to the highest beings in the universe” Coffman
 5. Remember verse 9; “to bring to light for everyone,” “make all men see,” “make plain to everyone.”
- F. Since there is a point in time when Christ will say “I do not know you,” and since it is our task to “make all men see” the wisdom of God, shouldn’t we be shouting God’s grace from the rooftops?
- G. According to the eternal purpose
1. Literally translated “purpose of ages.” A set plan
 2. Ephesians 1:9–10; 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.
 3. From the very beginning of time God set his plan in motion
 - a) To have His son be our sin-bearer
 - b) To have His church make all men see
 - c) To unite all things in Him (Christ)

IV. Urgent

- A. Get me to the church on time
- B. No, I am not talking about making it to our worship assemblies at a specific time
- C. I am talking about making it to heaven, being added to the church before it is too late!
- D. 2 Corinthians 6:1–2; Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
- E. Saul of Tarsus
 1. Something must have been making Saul wait, something must have been holding him back
 2. Even after experiencing Jesus on the road to Damascus, after being blinded
 3. Even after receiving his sight
 4. Listen to Ananias
 5. Acts 22:16; And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’
- F. Is there something holding you back?
- G. Why do you wait?