

Ephesians 1:7-8

Grace Church of Gainesville
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Disclose the Secret

People **LOVE** secrets. Something about the mystery of the unknown....

or maybe it is **the attention** we get from having some juicy knowledge that we know others will want to hear....

For those of you that have **Top Secret** security clearance..... you have learned well the ability to be tight lipped about ANY information that is not intended for the public.....

I can imagine... it must be tempting at times to SHARE something you are excited about... but you **can't**.....

Your mind and your will have been trained to keep it to yourself.

I want to talk to you today about one long standing secret..... that all the top secret information in the world **pales** in comparison to;

It is a secret God **kept** (not only) from his own chosen nation Israel..... but even from men like Abraham whom he called His FRIEND....

The time has come, however, for this SECRET to be **revealed**..... for this long held MYSTERY to be **DECLASSIFIED**.

And God wants you to understand its importance..... **(first for your own life)**.....

Secondly, so that, **ALL PEOPLE** whom you come in contact with.....can benefit from you REVEALING the **GOODNESS** and the WONDER of this (previously hidden) information.....

Our charge (this morning) is to:

Disclose the Secret!

The lengthy song of praise that Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with.... is something akin to a theological 7 layer cake.....



The Cake is: Theological Truth.

The Frosting is: Praise!

After every phrase of TRUTH, Paul adds a layer of PRAISE.

So you get TRUTH.... PRAISE.....TRUTH.... PRAISE.....!

Last week... we heard him **rejoicing** in the everlasting LOVE God has displayed for the church in His choosing us from before the world was made.....

He did this.... Paul says... TO the praise of His glorious GRACE.....with which He has already BLESSED **us** with in His Beloved Son. That truth is designed to overwhelm you!

Now, Paul adds the next layer of glorious truth.....and another rich layer of cream...

Ephesians 1:7

"In him **we have redemption** through **his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,"

When Jesus was on earth.... the SECRET of who HE is...and what HE was going to do was still **classified** information.....

In God's wisdom, He chose not to send His Son into the world with all the pomp of a King's arrival...

Instead, Jesus came rather **incognito**.... born in a manger.... growing up as a tender shoot (in subjection to his parents...); with the Holy Spirit revealing to the elect of Israel....that the ONE they had been waiting for had INDEED come....

Jesus served, and taught.... and healed... and wept for His people.....and finally Jesus SUFFERED... and BLED and died upon the tree....

bearing in His own innocent body... **the PENALTY for OUR sin**... and for the sin of ALL who would believe in Him throughout the ages....

"He who knew NO sin..... **BECAME** sin on our behalf....

Jesus did not save you as a **gratuity**.... Your redemption was not the spare change he had in his pocket.....

He emptied himself....and gave EVERYTHING to completely exchange His perfection for your rotten, corrupt...pitiful...life.

So That **you could LIVE!**

It was through the SPILLING of His **lifeblood**..... onto the soil of the earth.... that The **DEATH PENALTY** of all the elect of every age..... was PAID IN FULL.....

That the wrath and the curse which we EARNED by our sin.... was EXECUTED upon Jesus Christ of Nazereth.

Why?

Because OUR souls were held captive by the devil to do his will.....

Not only did we inherit Adam's GUILT for our sin; not only is our flesh predisposed to live life our own way without God..... (because of this **virus** of rebellion built into our DNA).....

But we were totally unaware that the more we sinned.... the more ensnared by sin we became.....

We were in **BONDAGE** to iniquity.... and we did not even CARE....

We stood in need of **EMANCIPATION**.....

We stood in NEED of Redemption.....

We stood in NEED of atonement.....

Otherwise..... **We** would rightfully SUFFER and PAY for our own sin debt in **HELL** forever and ever.....

Worst of all.... we were as HELPLESS as **P.O.W.'s** without strength and without any means of escape....

So God sent His Son..... to **RESCUE** us!

So that WHOMEVER believes in Him should **not** perish... but have everlasting life.....

If you BELIEVE that.... say Amen!

Because God is **satisfied** with the **shed blood** of Jesus... as your atonement;

As proof that the REDEMPTION was complete..... God raised Him from the DEAD!

God wants you to realize afresh that your REDEMPTION is a DONE DEAL.

That is one reason the church gathers on the FIRST DAY of the week.... This is Resurrection Day!

We are children of the resurrection!

We are a people who can go by no better name than; THE **REDEEMED** of the LORD.

We are counted as JUSTIFIED through faith in **Christ's** redeeming work.

That mystery.... was hidden (it was kept secret) from before the foundation of the world. God kept it a secret.

But **NOW** it has been revealed to **the church!**

We exist to **PUBLISH** this secret! Do you see what a high calling that is? What a Stewardship we have?

So the first PRESS RELEASE.....to pass on to our generation.....

1. Jesus is **God's Sole Agent** of Redemption

Do you ever wonder.... why (as you disclose this) to others, they are **not quite as excited** and moved by it as we are?

Ever wonder why they quickly try to **glaze over it** and move back to more earthly themes...?

It is because they **don't KNOW** (or believe) **that they have a PROBLEM**.....

They do not know... or will not admit.... that they are SLAVES in a debtors prison!

As you go to **DE-CLASSIFY** this info to our society.....

Realize you will be doing so to people in one of two categories of people who are on their way to hell:

- 1) The **Non-Religious or secular** (completely underestimate the seriousness of sin)
- 2) The **Religious** (trapped in a works mentality of self-atonement)

I spoke with two men this week that well represent each of these categories:

First (I'll call **Claude**); an 87 yr. old, lifelong, non-religious man who lives just a few miles from here across the lake.....He lost his wife to cancer just a few years ago....

Nice guy... very amiable... easy to talk to; yet every time I begin to talk about his soul.... he hastens to assure me he **is covered**.....

He recounts how he fought on the beach in France in WWII. Besides that he was married in a Baptist church and believes his wife is in heaven praying for him right now....

Claude... is NOT seeking the redemption provided in Christ Jesus.....

he has been **deluded** by a lifetime of **intentional ignorance** that God does not really take sin seriously.

He chooses not to believe that our breaking of God's law makes God **ANGRY**... and that we need **forgiveness**.... more than we need oxygen...

Claude characterizes MUCH of secular, materialistic America right now...

Apart from us loving them enough to tell them they are **deceived**.... they will go to hell. In a sense, their blood will be on our heads.

Another man (I'll call **Rahim**) ; a Persian man I met at Costco. He came here from Iran with his parents who are devout Muslims.

If you are not familiar with Islam; their only hope for remission of their sin rests squarely on **their performance** of the requirements of the tenets of their religion.

Day by day this is manifested in salats (ritual prayers and genuflections) 5 times per day....

Rahim, like most of you...is an extremely **BUSY man**... (trying to make ends meet) As a result... he only practices his religion sort of **on the fly** (except during the month of Ramadan).

As I told him that God had given us the prophet Moses in order to show us that we would understand just **how** holy God is and that each of us QUALIFY as **sinner**s ...as transgressors.....(he was somewhat surprised to learn that is why we have the 10 commandments).

After going through them, Rahim reluctantly admitted that he **is** a sinner, and by God's grace I was able to help him recognize that (when you boil it all down)

He is not **really** trusting in Allah..... nor Muhammad (both of those would be wrong)...but Rahim... is trusting in

what millions of other people you encounter are; he is trusting in **HIS ability to DO** (to **perform**) what he thinks is required of him in order to be acceptable before God.

That is not ONLY true of Muslims, but is true of many people who find rest in other religious systems of WORK.

In spite of admitting his self-trust, Rahim was **not** willing to acknowledge that God sent JESUS for the forgiveness of our sins....

If the Apostle Paul would have been with me.... He probably would have proclaimed what he said to those of his generation who were in the same boat.....

Acts 13:37-39

"... Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man **forgiveness of sins** is proclaimed to you, and **by him** **everyone who believes** is **freed from everything** from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses."

Like the Pharisees of Jesus... day.... **no one** today will admit they are in need of being SET FREE (apart from the Holy Spirit applying God's Word to their hearts).

Instead, you will hear them say..... "Its all good....." "We got this"

No you don't....

God does not take our conspiracy to live independently of His rule....lightly.....

Treason against him is punishable by DEATH, (no exceptions).

So, God has put us (as a human race) on DEATH ROW.....

We stand in DIRE need of God's **FORGIVENESS!**

We need to be REDEEMED from our condition.....

In His **blood**.... we find that DELIVERANCE..... God has chosen to FORGIVE you of all your sins; through **your** faith in what Jesus **has done**....

Perhaps.... some of you are being reminded even now... of some area where you have **transgressed** God's Holy Law.....

You might have even sinned this very day against some of God's people.....

GOOD NEWS! Because of Jesus' blood... and God's mercy.... you can find grace right now to REPENT... and believe THAT very sin was atoned for on Calvary.....

You can be SET free from bondage to that sin!

As you trust in His payment... you are fully **absolved** of your guilt. You are united with Him in His **risen** life...

GOOD NEWS!

He who the Son sets free is free indeed!

Ephesians 1:7-8

"In him we **have redemption** through his blood, (the forgiveness of our trespasses), according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

There is a **word picture** here I don't want you to miss.....

"**riches** of his grace" – other places translated **wealth**... or abounding amounts.. overflowing supply....

It is the same word used to describe the overflowing baskets of fish and bread that the disciples picked up after Jesus fed the 5000.

Get that picture in your mind.....overflowing baskets of God's Provision...

If you recall.... they gathered these overflowing amounts of what God had supplied after everyone's hunger was completely **SATISFIED**.....

So it is in your redemption.....For God did not merely **meet our need** in paying our debt.... to bring us back to a ZERO balance.... He credited our account with a **superabundance** of grace.... an OVERFLOWING amount of His life changing MERCY.... He **LAVISHED** it on us as a SHOWER, that we could be credited with the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And we could REVELL in His **forgiveness** forever....

Lest you sin against God by getting bored with the **precious** nature of these truths;

Keep in mind..... these are things... into which **ANGELS long** to look.....

They are realities that the prophets of old spent their whole **lives** INQUIRING about; as to WHEN this work of redemption would be accomplished.....

And they had to learn to be content to wait; serving **US**... (the church)...

Upon whom **ALL the wisdom and insight** (spiritual intelligence if you will)... has been DOWNLOADED to us in full measure... as a free gift from God..

God wants you thinking about this!!

The SECRET has been Disclosed to Us..... so that we can now probe the depths of God's eternal goodness, through exploring the wonder of the gospel!

And THEN, **publish** it (in all its beauty) to the World!

As we do that.... the demonic rulers and authorities who think they are in charge are SHAKEN to their core.....

See, when you witness to someone.... it is not just another human conversation at the mailbox..... or at the check out line.....

The reason you are often so scared to do it, the reason you feel such tension in the air as you begin to talk about Christ.....

Is,

You are **making MANIFEST** the wisdom and the saving LOVE of God for people.... in the presence of their enemies.....

It is LIKE you going into a P.O.W. camp and announcing out loud the combination to the lock.... on their cell door....

That is why.... **we** want to be ALL about DISCLOSING the Secret!

To charge the gates of hell.... with the TRUTH and set the captives free....

2nd Piece of Info that should be GOOD NEWS to a generation that is worried to death about our environment....

2. Disclose the secret: The Universe is being re-ordered

I think it is by design that in our day, in THIS generation, God Is making it increasingly apparent that the world is out-of-order.

That disorder did not begin when this administration took office. It did not begin to decline with the decline of the Euro or the oil Spill...it began when man first sinned...

Prior to the fall of man into sin.....there was NO disorder whatsoever, in the world.

One reason God could look at Creation and declare it to be **VERY good**, the reason God was pleased to REST on the 7th day.....

Was **EVERYTHING** He had made was functioning in beautiful harmony with Himself.

That's proper order: God...Man....Creation.

We usurped God's authority... placing ourselves in charge....and the world has been upside down ever since!!

You and I continue to experience that in our lives don't we? And in our environment.

Man's answers always fall short!

Sin wrecks all sense of harmony and order in our thinking... we become utterly confused..... our relationships are in constant turmoil....
.....until we ultimately fall apart or are destroyed.

That is NOT God's will for His creation.... such disorder brings Him no pleasure...

So.... it pleased God.... to have in place; **a plan**.....that in the fullness of time.....

when He would begin to reconcile ALL things to Himself through the cross of Jesus Christ.

So that.....ultimately... that everything in the universe could be **summed up** and **united** under the headship of our Lord Jesus...

Paul says.... God has now disclosed that mystery to the church!

Ephesians 1:9-10

"making known **to us** the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan **for the fullness of time**, **to unite** all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."

RIGHT NOW!

God is re-ordering creation through the Gospel!

He is re-ordering YOU, through the Gospel. He is reordering family structures, Family priorities are being re-aligned through the true knowledge of the Gospel.

Nothing exists in creation right now.... that DIVIDES people more than **DEATH**. Loved ones are taken away.... and we see them no more.....

Children even die in the womb.... and we are painfully reminded of how OUT of ORDER this corrupted creation is....

Yet, because of what Jesus did on the cross, even DEATH (which is the last enemy) will one day be destroyed....

So that all the church of God, from every age; those now in heaven and those currently residing in these bodies on the earth.... will forever be **UNITED** around the throne of our Redeemer.....

Gladly enjoying the HARMONY... and the UNITY... and the ORDER.... of all things, being ordered aright, SUMMED up in Jesus Christ..

The One for whom all creation exists....

He **began** to implement this plan.... when Jesus came and said:

Mark 1:15

"and saying, **“The time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”"

And it will continue until HE returns and makes ALL things new!

God has DISCLOSED these things to us now.....in the gospel.....

What is it in your life that needs to be re-ordered...., that we might ORDER every aspect of our lives under the headship of Jesus....

And Publish His good news.... to all the earth, and bring about **the obedience of faith**.... so that all His people could be gathered into ONE... as His Holy Bride....the church....

That Christ might be all in all.

Rejoice in Our Redemption!