

God is **all-wise**.

- Our need (James 1:5)
- Our tension (Genesis 3:6)

Ephesians 3:9-10 (ESV)

... to **bring to light** for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who **created** all things, ¹⁰ so that through **the church** the **manifold wisdom of God** might **now** be made known to the rulers and authorities **in the heavenly places**.

God's Wisdom:

- Manifold = intricate, rich, colorful
- Revelation ("*light ... made known ...*")
- Time, timing & the "long-view"
- Cosmic: individual, world, & spiritual domains
- On display through the church (v. 10)

God's Wisdom Defined:

God's perfect ability to achieve the most perfect end by the most perfect means, ... for His glory and for the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time □ **unites His other attributes**

The Clash:

- To live for something larger than here and now
- To live for something greater & better than me & mine
- To believe in order to understand

Key Point: God never **defends His wisdom**.

God's Wisdom is often found *and* walked in by **embracing the paradox**.

Ephesians 2:11-16

¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "*the uncircumcision*" by what is called the circumcision, which is **made in the flesh by hands**— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:13-15

¹³But now **in Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near by **the blood of Christ**. ¹⁴For **he himself is our peace**, who has made us both **one** and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that **he might create in himself one new man in place of the two**, so making peace

1) God's wisdom is displayed in the **creation and composition** of the **church**.

The church = the "3rd Race"

Apart from Christ, we derive our **self-worth** (+/-) in **comparison to others**.

In Christ, we root ourselves in something larger/greater/more than **EGO**.

Ephesians 2:16

¹⁶and might **reconcile us both** to God in one body through **the cross**, thereby killing the hostility.

Embrace the Paradox:

- The **Cross**: power & salvation **appear to be** foolishness & weakness
- **Humility** comes before **honor**

"I have a peace about it ..."

Ephesians 2:17-22

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we **both have access** in **one Spirit** to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are **no longer** strangers and aliens, **but you are** fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the **cornerstone**, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a **dwelling place for God by the Spirit**.

2) God's wisdom is displayed in the **cornerstone** of the church.

Embrace the Paradox:

- **Displace & Replace** → Gain by **losing**
 - New **center** ... new **orbit**
 - New **identity**
- The **invisible** counts more (weighs more) than the **visible**

Ephesians 3:1-6

For this reason I, Paul, a **prisoner** of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—²assuming that you have heard of the **stewardship** of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by **revelation**, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the

Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

3) God's wisdom is displayed in the life of Paul

Ephesians 3:7-8

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. ⁸To 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,

Embrace the Paradox:

- My life is not my life.
 - Grace-made, not self-made man
 - Stewardship paradigm

Ephesians 3:9-13

and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Embrace the Paradox:

- Do not lose heart: my problem is a servant of God

3 Types of People:

- Unblessed ...
- Uncommitted ...
- Committed ...