

引言 INTRODUCTION

We all have big and small secrets. You have to pay attention to whom you tell a secret because you cannot predict the outcome. Three pastors were fishing at a lake. While waiting for a bite, one person suggested they share their biggest sins and made a confession to each other. Phil said: “Since I brought up the idea, let me go first. I often watch too much sports on Saturday that I don’t have time to prepare my sermon. So I just find a message online and preach it the next day.” “I hope you feel guilty when someone comments: ‘Pastor, that was a great sermon!’” Bob teased. “Well, I envy the rich people. I often buy lottery tickets. But I have yet to win anything. Your turn, Steve.” “I guess my biggest issue is that I can’t keep my mouth shut. I just love to gossip. In fact, I can’t wait to get out of here.” Some secrets are better kept to yourself. However, there are some other secrets so important that you must tell others. In our passage today, Paul describes the gospel as a mystery. God shared His salvation plan in the Old Testament. Even though people could read every word, they could not make sense of its meaning. No one could imagine that God would become a man, died on a cross and rose three days later. God uses a way that is beyond anyone’s expectation to save us. We are blessed today because we have the whole Bible in our hands. God had made known to us the identity and works of Jesus. We should not hold onto this good news like a top secret. Instead, we must explain this mystery to others.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 奧祕的解開 Mystery Disclosed (v. 1-6)

First, Paul tells the Ephesian believers that God’s mystery had been disclosed. The Greek word for “mystery” means some information that is hidden until it is disclosed. What is that mystery? Paul tells us in verse 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.** The mystery is about God’s plan to save both Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ. The two people groups enjoy the same blessings. Paul emphasizes that truth by using the same prefix three times. We get the English word “sync” from that Greek term. You sync your headset with your phone, and you sync your phone with your car. Two objects will be in-sync after they are connected. Paul means that both Jews and Gentiles are co-heirs, co-members and co-partakers in God’s family. To describe God’s salvation plan as a mystery does not mean that God wants to keep it to Himself. Rather, it means that God withheld the information until the right time to disclose it. Actually, God had been giving the Israelites hints in various Old Testament passages. They knew that the Messiah would come as a glorious king, He would succeed the throne of David, and God would gather His children in eternity. They had the information but they did not know how and when God would fulfill His plans. Even Jesus’ disciples were confused. They figured that perhaps Jesus was the Messiah. But they were heart-broken when Jesus died on the cross. They thought it was over. After Jesus’

resurrection, they finally realized that He was the Savior God had appointed. Everything made sense to them when they read the Old Testament again. Better still, God's promise to Abraham was not only for the Jews. But it was also for the Gentiles. Paul says in Romans 4:16 – **That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring – not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.** Back in Genesis 12, God called Abraham out of his home country. He told Abraham that He would bless all nations through him. Abraham believed in God's words and so he left his home. The Bible says that God credited righteousness to Abraham due to his faith. In today's terms, we say that Abraham was saved by putting his faith in God. Since then, all who follow the faith of Abraham can be saved. His physical offspring are all the Jews. His spiritual descendants are all the Christians. They enjoy all the blessings God promised to Abraham. Whether you are born into an Asian or American family, the Jews call you a Gentile. Regardless of your background, you can be saved through Jesus Christ. There is only one true God, who created the universe. There is only one Lord, who died for the sin of mankind. Therefore, Christianity is not a western religion. It is the gospel for the whole world. God's mystery had been disclosed. People can only be saved by receiving Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The blessings that God had promised to Abraham are also ours. We will not possess Canaan. But we can become citizens of God's Kingdom. Married couples may only have a few biological children. But God intends to bless you with many more spiritual children. It happens when you lead people to Christ. Those new believers become your spiritual children. They will continue to multiply by sharing the gospel with others. God desires to bless many more people through you.

2. 奧祕的傳開 Mystery Dispersed (v. 7-9)

God's mystery was disclosed. Anyone can be saved through Jesus. Someone must disperse this mystery to others. God called Paul to be a messenger to the Gentiles. Paul felt humbled by this divine appointment. He shares in verses 8-9: **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.** Paul admitted that he was “the very least of all the saints.” He actually did a lot for God's Kingdom. He was the first missionary who took the gospel to eastern Europe. He was also the author who wrote thirteen New Testament books. Despite all those contributions, Paul states that he is a nobody. Fellow Jews envied Paul for being a great scholar before he became a believer. Paul also worked the hardest to suppress the Christian faith. Later, God saved Paul through His grace. Paul was just a redeemed sinner chosen by God. His job was to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. The word “unsearchable” does not mean something that cannot be found. Rather, it refers to some knowledge that is not straightforward. That is why Paul says in verse 9 that his goal is to bring to light God's mystery, so that people could understand it. Unlike the Jews, the Gentiles worshipped many gods. Their concepts of body and soul, and eternal life were also very different than the Jews. Paul relied on God's wisdom in his gospel ministries. He looked for some common-ground to connect with his audience. Once he went to Athens of Greece. He met people debating about various philosophical thoughts, and he saw idols all over the

city. Then he spotted an altar dedicated “To An Unknown God.” An idea popped up. He told people: “Guys, you’re so religious that you even worship a god you don’t know. Let me introduce to you the one true God you need to know. He created and sustains the whole universe.” Paul then continues in Acts 17:28 – “For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’” Paul quoted a poem that they knew well. Then he referenced it to the Creator God. Paul explained that this one true God was unlike a statue made of gold, silver or stone. He called people to repent because one day He would judge the world. This judgment would be carried out by the resurrected Christ. On hearing all that, some people laughed at Paul and walked away. But a few others showed interest and wanted to know more. Today, we will face similar responses when we share the gospel. Our responsibility is to tell people about Jesus. The Holy Spirit will work in their hearts and lead them to repentance. God may not call you to be a missionary to a foreign country. But He sends you to various “Gentile regions.” Your listeners may be your classmates, colleagues, stay-home moms or retirees. They may believe that there is a God, they may worship many gods or they may be atheists. The gospel message may sound like a foreign language to them. You may have to treat them like kindergarteners in the faith even if they are well-educated. We can learn from Jesus’ approach. He used parables when teaching people. He says the Kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden under the ground to be found. God rewards everyone who comes to Him like a generous landlord who pays every worker equally. The Bible is actually full of figure of speech. Sin is like a debt. People are held in bondage by sin like slaves. Jesus’ death paid a ransom to set us free. You can come up with other analogies to explain the gospel in ways that people can relate. Pray that God will turn people’s knowledge into faith.

3. 奧祕的展開 Mystery Displayed (v. 10-13)

God’s mystery was disclosed. God’s mystery was also dispersed to different parts of the world. God has a special goal in mind. Paul continues to tell us that God’s mystery is also displayed through the church. He says in verse 10: **...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 is displayed when He includes both Jews and Gentiles into His church. They used to be hostile to each other, but now they became brothers and sisters in Christ. This mystery is showed to “rulers and authorities.” Who are they? They include both good and bad heavenly beings. God gave angels certain power to do His works. However, angels do not have infinite knowledge like God does. They do not know the full details of God’s salvation plan. They rejoice when they see Jews and Gentiles worship God together. Besides angels, there are some heavenly agents who work against God. Satan’s goals are to divide and destroy God’s people. Satan and other evil spirits will be surprised to see God’s works in the church. Only God can unite different people as one family. The first Jerusalem church is a good example. Jewish people from everywhere came under the same roof. They sold their belongings and gave the money to the church. People then shared the resources with one another. As the gospel was taken to Gentile regions, more people were saved. Jewish leaders in the Jerusalem church finally realized that God intended to save foreigners too. They joyfully embraced Gentile believers as brothers and sisters. Satan who loves hostility surely

hates to see harmony. He never stops his attack as the church continues to grow. That is why Paul concludes with these words in verse 13: **So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.** That echoes with verse 1 when Paul calls himself as **“a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles.”** Paul was despised, beaten, imprisoned and sued in courts. Despite all those hardships, Paul had determined to take the gospel to places where it had not been reached. He fearlessly appeared before Jewish religious leaders and Roman officials. He even hoped to testify before Caesar. The more resistance believers face, the stronger the church stands. After all, it is not just a human organization. It is a divine corporation. Jesus is the Head. He encourages us in Matthew 16:18 – **“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** Jesus, rather than Peter, is the rock on which God builds His church. Both Peter and Paul affirm in their letters that Jesus is the foundation of the church. He will protect His church against the assaults of Satan. The devil can damage the church but he cannot destroy it. Persecutions do not prove that we believe in the wrong things. Quite the contrary. Satan will only attack those who speak God’s truths. Jesus and His disciples suffered. Christians throughout history to this day are also persecuted. Many of them cannot openly worship God. They are under constant threats from the government. Today, we will be intimidated by laws that limit our religious freedom or we will even face outrageous lawsuits. But no matter how dark the society may become, God’s church will continue to shine. The secular world does not accept what we believe because it does not believe in God. We should not be surprised that some people may not be friendly to us when they realize that we are Christians. Persecution is part of Jesus’ calling for us. Pursing a comfortable life by staying silent and even compromising our faith are not God’s intents. God will give us courage when we are in fear. He will be with us when we are with Him.

結論 CONCLUSION

God calls us to explain His mystery to others. We should not hold onto the gospel like a top secret. It is not some classified information reserved only for insiders. The movie “Windtalkers” is based on a true story about secret codes. The background is World War II. The U.S. was fighting against Japan in Saipan, an island in the Pacific. The military recruited some native American people from the Navajo tribe. Their language was so rare that no one else other than their own people could understand it. These code-talkers conveyed intelligence from the frontline to the base using their mother tongue. They told comrades where the enemies were, what weapons they had and where to strike them. Each special agent who went into the battlefield was accompanied by another soldier. Besides providing protection, the guardians were given orders to kill their code-talkers if they were about to be captured by enemies so as to preserve the code. The U.S. military had success in the region because the code was never broken. In comparison, the mystery of the gospel must be spread to different places. People must understand the good news before they will be saved.

引言 INTRODUCTION

我們都有大大小小的秘密。你必須注意向誰透露秘密，因為你無法預計結果。有三位牧師到湖邊釣魚。在等待魚上鉤的時候，其中一個人建議他們分享自己最大的罪。老張說：「既然是我提出建議，那我就先說吧。我經常在星期六看太多的球賽，甚至於沒有時間準備講道。所以我就在網上找一篇信息，第二天拿到教會講。」小陳開玩笑回應：「我希望下一次有人讚賞你說：『牧師，你這篇道真棒！』時，你會有罪惡感。」小陳繼續說：「我很羨慕有錢人。我常去買彩券，但我到目前為止從來沒有贏過。輪到你了，阿明。」「我想我最大的問題是我無法閉嘴。我就是愛講別人閒話。事實上，我迫不及待想要趕快離開這裡。」有些秘密還是留在心中比較安全。然而，有另外一些非常重要的秘密，你必須告訴其他人。在我們今天的經文中，保羅將福音形容為一個奧秘。神在舊約中分享了祂的救贖計畫。儘管人們能讀懂每個字，但他們無法理解其含義。沒有人能想像神會成為一個人，死在十字架上，三天後復活。神用一種出人意料的方式來拯救我們。今天我們很蒙福，因為我們手上有整本聖經。神告訴我們耶穌的身分和工作。我們不應該隱藏這個好消息。相反，我們必須向其別人解釋這個奧秘。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 奧祕的解開 Mystery Disclosed (v. 1-6)

首先，保羅告訴以弗所信徒，神的奧祕已經被解開。希臘文「奧祕」這個字是指一些隱藏的信息，直到信息被解開。那是什麼奧秘呢？保羅在第 6 節告訴我們：**這奧秘就是外邦人在基督耶穌裡，藉著福音，得以同為後嗣，同為一體，同蒙應許。**那個奧秘是關於神透過耶穌基督拯救猶太人和外邦人的計畫。兩批人都能享受同樣的祝福。保羅三次使用同一個字首來強調這個真理，中文聖經翻譯為三個「同」。我們從這個希臘文的字得到英文「同步」這個字。例如你把耳機與電話連接，或是把手機與汽車連接。兩個機器便能同步運作。保羅說猶太人和外邦人都能成為神家中的共同繼承人、共同成員並享受共同的祝福。保羅將神的救贖計畫描述為一個奧秘並不意味著神想要把它隱藏。他的意思是神保存那些信息，直到適當的時間才把它解開。事實上，神在舊約聖經中一直在給以色列人暗示。他們知道彌賽亞會以榮耀君王的方式出現，祂會繼承大衛的王位，而神會在永恆中招聚祂的兒女。他們知道那些訊息，但他們不知道神

將如何以及何時實現祂的計劃。連耶穌的門徒也是一頭霧水。他們猜想耶穌也許就是彌賽亞。但當耶穌死在十字架上時，他們的心都碎了。他們以為一切都完了。耶穌復活後，他們終於明白祂是神所差遣的救主。當他們再讀舊約時，一切都變得清晰了。更美的是，神對亞伯拉罕的應許不僅是給猶太人的，也是給外邦人的。保羅在羅馬書 4:16 節中說：**所以人得為後嗣是本乎信，因此就屬乎恩，叫應許定然歸給一切後裔；不但歸給那屬乎律法的，也歸給那效法亞伯拉罕之信的。**在創世記第十二章，神呼召亞伯拉罕離開他的家鄉。神告訴亞伯拉罕，祂要透過祂祝福萬國。亞伯拉罕相信神的話，便離開了家。聖經說神因著亞伯拉罕的信心把他算為義。用今天的話來講，我們說亞伯拉罕因信神而得救。從此，凡效法亞伯拉罕信心的人都可以得救。根據亞伯拉罕血統的後裔是猶太人。而他的屬靈後裔是所有的基督徒。他們享受神應許給亞伯拉罕的一切祝福。無論你出生在亞洲或是美國，猶太人都稱你為外邦人。但是無論你的背景如何，你都可以透過耶穌基督得救。只有一位真神，祂創造了宇宙。也有一位救主，祂為全人類的罪而死。因此，基督信仰並不是洋教，而是普世的福音。神的奧秘已經被解開。人們唯有接受耶穌為他們的救主和生命的主才能得救。神應許給亞伯拉罕的祝福也是屬於我們的。我們不會擁有迦南地，但我們可以成為天國的公民。已婚夫婦可能會生幾個親生的孩子，但神希望賜給你許多屬靈的孩子。當你帶領別人信主時，你便能享受這個祝福。那些新信徒是你屬靈的兒女。他們可以和別人分享福音而繼續開枝散葉。神希望透過你祝福更多的人。

2. 奧秘的傳開 Mystery Dispersed (v. 7-9)

神的奧秘被解開了。任何人都可以透過耶穌得救。但是必須有人將這個奧秘傳開給其他人。神呼召保羅成為外邦人的使者。保羅對這個神聖的召命感到謙卑。他在第 8-9 節分享：**8 我本來比眾聖徒中最小的還小，然而他還賜我這恩典，叫我把基督那測不透的豐富傳給外邦人，9 又使眾人都明白，這歷代以來隱藏在創造萬物之神裡的奧秘是如何安排的。**保羅自認為他是「眾聖徒中最小的」。他實際上為神的國做了很多事。他是第一位將福音帶到東歐的傳教士。他也是寫了十三封新約書信的作者。儘管保羅有那麼多的貢獻，他認為自己是個微不足道的人。猶太同胞羨慕保羅在信主之前是一位偉大的學者。他也極力逼迫基督信仰。後來，神拯救了保羅。保羅只是神所揀選的一個蒙恩的罪人。他的使命是向外邦人宣講基督那測不透的豐富。「測不透」不是指一些找不到的東西。它乃是指不是那麼直接容易搞懂的信息。因此保羅在第 9 節說，他的目標是使人明白神的奧秘。外邦人與猶太人不同，他們敬拜許多神明。他們對身體和靈魂以及永生的概念也與猶太人的理解不同。保羅在他的福音事工中依靠神的智慧。他尋找一些共通點來與聽眾建立橋樑。有一次他去了希臘的雅

典。他碰到一些人在辯論各樣哲學思想，他也看到滿城都是偶像。之後他發現一座獻給「未識之神」的祭壇。保羅靈機一動。他告訴人們：「朋友，你們真是虔誠，甚至敬拜一位你們不認識的神。讓我來介紹一位你們需要認識的真神。祂創造並維持整個宇宙。」然後保羅在使徒行傳 17:28 接著說：「我們生活、動作、存留，都在乎他。就如你們作詩的，有人說：『我們也是他所生的。』」保羅引用了一首他們熟悉的詩，然後他把那個概念連繫到創造的神。保羅解釋說，這位獨一的真神和金、銀或石頭製造的偶像不同。祂呼召人悔改，因為有一天祂會審判世界。這個審判將由復活的基督來執行。聽到這裡，有些人嘲笑保羅並走開了。但是有一些人感到興趣並想了解更多。今天，當我們分享福音時，也會面對類似的反應。我們的責任是向人們講述耶穌。聖靈會在他們心裡作工，引導他們悔改。神可能不會呼召你到海外當宣教士，但是祂把你送到不同的「外邦地區」。你的聽眾可能是同事、全職媽媽或退休人仕。他們可能相信有一位神，他們可能拜許多神，或者他們可能是無神論者。福音信息對他們來說可能聽起來像是外語。就算他們受過高等教育，你可能需要把他們看為信仰的幼兒園學生一樣。我們可以學習耶穌的做法，祂使用比喻教導人。祂形容神的國好像隱藏在地下的珍寶，等待人去發掘。神獎賞每一個來到祂面前的人，就像一位慷慨的地主，給每個工人相同的薪水。聖經裡其實充滿不同的形容。罪就像債務。人們像奴隸一樣被罪束縛。耶穌的死支付了贖金，使我們得自由。你也許能夠想出其他類比，用聽眾能理解的方式傳福音。也祈求神幫助人從知識中產生信心。

3. 奧祕的展開 Mystery Displayed (v. 10-13)

神的奧秘被解開了。神的奧秘也被傳開到世界各地。神心中有一個特別的目標。保羅繼續告訴我們，神的奧秘也在教會中被展開了。他在第 10 節說：為要藉著教會使天上執政的、掌權的，現在得知神百般的智慧。當神將猶太人和外邦人都歸入祂的教會時，祂的智慧就彰顯出來了。他們曾經彼此敵對，但現在他們在基督裡成為弟兄姐妹。這個奧秘藉此向「天上執政的、掌權的」展開。他們到底是誰？他們包括天上善與惡的使者。神給予天使一定的能力來執行祂的工作。然而，天使不像神有無限的知識。他們不知道神拯救計畫的全部細節。當他們看到猶太人和外邦人一起敬拜神時，他們會很高興。除了天使之外，還有一些與神作對的使者。撒但的目標是分裂和毀滅神的子民。撒但和其他邪靈看到神在教會中的作為，一定會感到驚訝。只有神才能把不同的人組成一家人。耶路撒冷的第一所教會就是一個很好的例子。來自各地的猶太人聚集在一起。他們變賣了自己的財產，把錢捐給教會，然後他們共享資源。隨著福音傳到外邦地區，更多的人得救。耶路撒冷教會的猶太領袖終於意識到神也定意要拯救外邦人。他們高興地接納外邦信徒，成為主內的弟兄姐妹。撒但喜歡

製造紛爭，他肯定不希望看到和諧的景象。隨著教會的不斷發展，撒但從未停止他的攻擊。因此保羅在第 13 節中這樣總結：**所以，我求你們不要因我為你們所受的患難喪膽這原是你們的榮耀。**這與第 1 節相呼應，保羅稱自己為「**為你們外邦人作了基督耶穌被囚的**」。保羅被蔑視、毆打、監禁並在法庭上被起訴。儘管經歷了這些困難，保羅仍然決心將福音帶到尚未傳揚的地方。他無所畏懼地出現在猶太宗教領袖和羅馬官員面前。他甚至希望能在凱撒面前作見證。信徒面對的攔阻越大，教會就越興旺。畢竟，它不只是一個人間組織，也是一個屬神的群體。耶穌是教會的元首。祂在馬太福音 16:18 節中鼓勵我們：**「我還告訴你，你是彼得，我要把我的教會建造在這磐石上；陰間的權柄，不能勝過他。」**耶穌，而不是彼得，是神在其上建造教會的磐石。彼得和保羅都在他們的書信中確認耶穌是教會的根基。祂會保護教會免受撒但的攻擊。魔鬼可以破壞教會，但他不會摧毀教會。迫害不是證明我們信錯了。恰恰相反。撒但只會攻擊那些傳講神真理的人。耶穌和祂的門徒受苦，歷史上的基督徒也受到迫害。許多人無法公開敬拜神，他們也不斷受到政府的威脅。今天，我們會被限制宗教自由的法律所嚇倒，甚至會面臨離譜的官司。但無論社會變得多麼黑暗，神的教會都會繼續發光。世界不接受我們所相信的，因為它不相信神。當有些人意識到我們是基督徒時，他們可能對我們不友善。我們不應該感到驚訝。逼迫是耶穌對我們呼召的一部分。神的心意不是要我們為了追求安逸的生活而保持沉默，甚至在信仰上妥協。當我們害怕的時候，神會給我們勇氣。當我們與神同在行，祂就會與我們同在。

結論 CONCLUSION

神呼召我們向別人解釋祂的奧秘。我們不應該把福音當作最高機密。它不是為內部人員保留的機密信息。電影《獵風行動》是有關軍事密碼的真實故事。它的背景是第二次世界大戰。當時美國在太平洋的塞班島與日本作戰。美軍招募了一些納瓦霍族 (Navajo) 的美國土著。他們的語言非常罕見，除了他們自己人以外，沒有其他人能夠理解。這些密碼員用他們的母語將情報從前線傳到後方基地。他們告訴戰友敵人在哪裡，他們有什麼武器以及應該從那裡攻擊他們。每個進入戰場的密碼員都有一名士兵陪同保護。但是如果密碼員快要被敵人俘虜時，守護者要殺死他們，以保存密碼。結果，美軍在那個地區取得了成功，因為密碼從未被破解。相比之下，福音的奧秘並不是軍事情報。我們必須把信息傳到不同的地方。人們必須明白好消息才能得救。