

Cheer Up - You're on Display!

Intro:

1. **ILL: Invitation to the Covenant Players Summer Showcase.**
2. **ILL: God showcasing Job before the heavenly hosts (Job 1:6-8)**
3. Did you know that you are on display?
 1. **1 Cor 9:24 - Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.**
 2. **Heb 12:1 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**
4. If God showcases you, shouldn't you behave yourself as Christ-like as you can?

Ephesians 3:1-13

I. What is This Mystery?

- A. **Gal 4:1-5 - It was hidden until a specific time in history.**
 1. **v4-5 - Mystery (μυστήριον) = that which only the initiated, or "perfected" ones, know.**
 - a. Greek society had "mystery" cults - religious groups similar to the Masons where formulas, rites & ceremonies were practiced only for the group members.
 - b. **v5 - The mystery here was revealed by God to the apostles & prophets of the New Testament for us.**
 2. Why?
 - a. **ILL: The polytheistic world during the New Testament period.**
 - b. To provide an environment from which God could become a man.
 1. Only Israel, at this time, could be that environment.
 2. Then - the church became the environment through which the gospel message could be proclaimed.
- B. What's the mystery?
 1. The Lord Jesus Himself!
 - a. **Col 2:2 - My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ!**
 - b. God would become a man & live a perfect life.
 - c. **v11 - Jesus would, then, die on the cross to redeem us from our sin which would fulfill the mystery of the ages.**
 - d. **1 Tim 3:16 - Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.**
 2. The gospel, the word of God, is the vehicle through which this mystery is made known.
 - a. **Col 4:3 - And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.**
 - b. **v6 - The good news of the mystery is that Gentiles could be saved!**

II. How Does God Benefit from the Mystery?

- A. v10 - God gets to showcase you before the authorities in the heavenly realms.
 - 1. How did God showcase Job? **Job 1:8 - Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.**
 - 2. Could God say the same thing of you? He wants to!
- B. God is proud of you when you exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit! (**Gal 5:22-23**)
 - 1. "Look Gabriel! See that group from 1st Christian Church inspiring Juliet & her family on Wednesday evenings!"
 - 2. "Look Michael! See the women's ministry singing to the shut-ins."
 - 3. "Look Satan! See Jun & Val fixing their neighbor's car so they can drive to work!"

III. How Do You Benefit from the Mystery?

- A. You can understand this mystery - the world can't! **I Cor 2:7-8 - No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**
 - 1. v4 - You are the "initiated", the "perfected" (**Col 1:28**). This mystery was revealed to you.
 - 2. The more complete (mature) you become, the more God can showcase you.
 - 3. v6 - You are heirs of God, members of His body & sharers of His promises.
 - a. The best the world can come up with for life is evolution & humanism. Eternal life for them is hell!
 - b. You have the secret of life (the Holy Spirit) & eternal life for you is heaven!
- B. v10 - You can proclaim the mystery through the church to the world.
 - 1. **Col 1:27 - To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**
 - 2. **Rom 16: 25-26** says this mystery will lead people to the obedience of faith.

**You need growth in Christ to be your priority of life!
Develop His fruit - live His life before others!
After all - you're on display!**