

Series: Ephesians  
Title: Our Desire  
Text: Ephesians 3: 3, 10  
Date: December 22, 2013  
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Believer, do you have a desire—a hunger in your heart—to know the Lord Jesus Christ more fully than you do now?

**Our subject this morning is:** Our Desire.

First, we will see the desire of holy men from the past. **Ephesians 3: 3: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4: Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5: Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;**

Secondly, we will see the desire of holy angels in heaven—Paul says the gospel was revealed to me and I was sent to preach it—**Ephesians 3: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, 11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:**

Then, briefly, we will consider our desire. Believer, do you have a desire—a hunger in your heart—to know the Lord Jesus Christ more fully than you do now?

**Proposition:** If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious then above all else we should diligently seek to know more of Christ by desiring the sincere milk of the word.

**I. FIRST, THE DESIRE OF MEN IN THE PAST—Ephesians 3: 10: In other ages—[the mystery of Christ, the gospel of Christ]—was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;**

The apostle Peter said that prophets of old desired to know more of Christ.

1 Peter 1: 10: Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: 11: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12: Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;

### **Enquired and Searched Diligently**

Holy men of old did not have as full a revelation of Jesus Christ as we have in our day. They did not have the completed scriptures that we have. The prophets only had revealed to them what the Spirit of Christ revealed in them. They had to wait on the time when the Spirit of Christ revealed these things to them—*when it testified*—to them. And the things that were revealed were not made known to them as fully as they are now revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and in the scriptures. It was revealed to them that the things they spoke of, the things you have preached to you today, were not going to come to pass in their day.

1 Peter 1: 12: Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;

But with all their hearts, the holy men of old desired to know more fully the very things that you and I have revealed to us today.

1 Peter 1: 10: Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently,...

**Illustration:** Can't you just hear Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—enquiring of God—asking God to reveal these things more fully in their hearts. Can't you just see them searching diligently the things that God had already revealed to them. They enquired and searched diligently!

### **Moses Saw in Part**

The Spirit of Christ revealed to Moses in type and picture—"the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Moses saw in part Christ's sufferings in the lambs brought for sacrifice. Yet, it took so many various offerings just to typify all the accomplishments of Christ in his one body.

Moses saw in part in the scapegoat—He saw all the sins of all the children of Israel—only the children of Israel—were ceremonially put on the head of the scapegoat. Moses saw the scapegoat bear their sins away ceremonially into a land not inhabited. Now we behold that Christ did that literally, not in type and ceremony.

Moses saw in part the accomplished atonement which Christ would make: in the lamb slain in place of Israel—in the High Priest who entered the holy of holies by himself not without blood—in the blood sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat.

Moses saw in part the glory that should follow—in Israel's deliverance out of Egyptian bondage by a Passover lamb, in the day of atonement when Lord passed over Israel till another year

Yet, Moses did not look at these things in hindsight as we look back at the cross of Christ. He could not behold the express image of those types as fully as we behold Christ. He could not open the book of Hebrews as we can and read:

Hebrews 9: 11: But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

But how he diligently enquired and searched to know more of Christ.

### **Isaiah Saw in Part**

Isaiah saw in part "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." We have been going through Isaiah since 2008. We are now in Isaiah 53. The Spirit revealed to Isaiah the sufferings of Christ in part. It was revealed to Isaiah,

Isaiah 7:14: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel—Isaiah 53: 2: For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Yet Isaiah never saw, as we do, the Son of God born of that virgin and growing up as the GodMan, despised and rejected by the Pharisees, Sadducees, by his own immediate family. Isaiah saw in part the suffering of Christ on the cross.

Isaiah 53: 5: But he was wounded for our transgressions,...6: the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all....7: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

Yet Isaiah never saw by hindsight Christ's substitution for his people or his perfect suffering—not as we do. In part, Isaiah saw the glory that should follow—he wrote,

Isaiah 53: 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;...54: 1: Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear;... 2: Enlarge the place of thy tent,... 3: For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

Yet, Isaiah never saw as we do, Christ resurrected to his throne in glory. Christ going forth through Paul to the Gentiles—to us in our day—calling out all God's elect who he successfully redeemed by his own blood.

Yet, these holy men of old enquired and searched diligently to know the things that we know, the things that we take for granted.

**II. SECONDLY, THE DESIRE OF HOLY ANGELS**—Paul said that he was sent to preach the gospel—**v10: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:**

Peter said,

1 Peter 1: 12:...which things the angels desire to look into.

The Holy Angels learn the manifold wisdom of God, beholding God's eternal purpose unfolded, by beholding Christ's work in the midst of his church—*“which things the angels desire to look into.”*

**Illustration:** The angels desire is pictured in the cherubims overshadowing the mercy seat. With their faces covered—perhaps in amazement—they behold God's manifold wisdom, his eternal purpose, unfolded in Christ our Mercy Seat and his work for and in his church.

### **Throughout the Old**

Angels have been diligently watching God's work since the garden. They beheld God make man in his own image—perfect and upright. Angels beheld Adam fall and all mankind fall into sin in him. They stood in amazement, in wonder, as God slew animals and covered Adam and Eve's nakedness. The angels heard God declare the “seed of woman” is coming—Satan will bruise his heel but Christ shall crush his head. Throughout all the law and the prophets they diligently beheld God unfold his eternal purpose in all the types and prophecies.

### **To the Intent That Now**

Yet, Paul said I was sent to preach the gospel that NOW—**Ephesians 3: 10: To the intent that NOW unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:**

When Christ came into the world, God declared proclaimed from the throne of the Most High; “when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, “Let all the angels of God worship him;” (Heb 1: 6)

How do they do so? Believer, our text says, holy angels are diligently attending to the preaching of the gospel, the same as us, that they might know by the church the manifold wisdom of God, his eternal purpose purposed in

Christ Jesus our Lord. That is one reason Paul gives that Christ called him to preach the gospel. What importance this place upon the preaching of the gospel!

**Spurgeon**, “The church becomes as a museum which angels may visit with ever expanding interest and ever-increasing delight.”

The angels beheld the manifold wisdom of God by the church. When the angels beheld Satan outwit Adam in the garden using Eve, how they must have been astonished. But when they beheld Christ being made in fashion like unto his brethren—“made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death...that he should taste death” for each of God’s elect (Heb 2: 9) how they must have diligently paid attention to what was transpiring! Do you think angels roll their eyes as I preach this gospel now? Do you think they tire of hearing the same story repeated over and over?

Angels beheld God’s wisdom in declaring his righteousness while at the same time justifying his people from our sins. They beheld Christ the GodMan taking his people’s place to be his place, taking our sins to be his sins, taking our judgment to be his judgment. How they must have diligently looked into these things with baited breathe! How they must still love to hear the story!

Angels beheld the GodMan go into the tomb and the stone rolled upon it to seal it! But three days later, they beheld Christ raised from the dead triumphant over Satan, sin, death and hell! They behold him crowned with glory and honor!

Hebrews 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

How they must have been amazed at God’s wisdom to use Satan and sin to manifest his glory in declaring himself just and the Justifier of all who believe in Christ Jesus!

Now, the Holy Spirit declares this amazing thing, through the apostle Paul, the holy angels diligently attend the preaching of the gospel. They love to hear the story of how God is just—how every elect child satisfied divine justice, not by our doing, but by Christ’s one offering on the cross. Angels desire to look into how God is the Justifier in Christ who is God providing himself to be the Lamb. They rejoice in the wisdom of God with us when they hear this declared,

Romans 8: 33: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. 34: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

I can hear the holy chorus sing with rejoicing—this is what he meant back in the garden when he said Satan would bruise his heel but he would crush Satan’s head. And angels admire the wisdom and eternal purpose of God which was hidden—in that how Christ is now sending forth his gospel to call out all his redeemed sheep—not only among the Jews but also among the Gentiles. They admire Christ’s wisdom to prevail over every kind of gate that hell puts up to prevent him calling his lost sheep. Christ said,

Luke 15:10...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Angels admire with us, God’s wisdom in how the Lord afflicts and how he comforts; how he upholds us, how he keeps back that which cannot yet be endured, how he gently leads us, and how he makes us to lie down in green pasture.

We find fault sometimes with the way of Providence, because we do not understand what God is doing; but eventually we see that it was all for our good and God’s glory—so do the angels—they diligently look into these things and learn and admire God’s wisdom! Even in the death of martyrs, angels behold God’s infinite wisdom and

purpose in Christ. How amazing! Paul says that Christ sent him forth to preach the gospel of Christ and him crucified, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Eph 3: 10-11)

### **III. LASTLY, BRIEFLY, WHAT ABOUT OUR DESIRE TO LOOK INTO THESE THINGS?**

If holy men of old desired to know more of the things that are given to us, if angels continually diligently look into God’s workings in his church to learn more of God’s wisdom and purpose in Christ, shouldn’t we? We have so many more privileges, so much more given, than the prophets and saints of old. Shouldn’t we take advantage and diligently search these things?

#### **Mt. of Transfiguration**

The apostle Peter wrote about being in the Mt. when Christ was transfigured when they beheld his majesty and heard God glorify him.

2 Peter 1: 16: For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17: For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18: And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

What a sight that must have been! To see Christ transfigured in all his majesty must have been some sight to see. What revelation to hear firsthand, to hear Christ Jesus speak to Moses and Elijah of the death he would accomplish at Calvary. What a sound to hear firsthand, God the Father glorify his beloved Son!

#### **A More Sure Word**

Brethren, God the Holy Spirit says through Peter that right here in our day we have something just as good—even more sure—than that. We have the scriptures.

2 Peter 1: 19: We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Do we desire to know more of the mystery of Christ? Do we do as holy men of old, search diligently to know more of him? Do we desire like the holy angels to know these things more fully? The knowledge of Christ, the words of God, are more valuable than anything else in this world.

Psalm 19: 10: More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

What do we seek with more diligence: earthly riches or the unsearchable riches of Christ?

#### **Great Privileges Given Us**

Think of the great light and the privileges God has granted to us in our day. Most of the prophets of old did not know each other. Isaiah could not ask Jeremiah then compare the things God revealed to himself with the things God revealed to Jeremiah. But we can! We can look at what Isaiah wrote then compare it with what Jeremiah wrote with what Moses wrote. Then we can read Paul’s commentary on those things or Peter’s or John’s. So we not only get the full story, we get a divinely inspired commentary on the gospel.

God has given us the complete scriptures. All the mysteries of Christ, all the fellowship of the mystery is contained in the pages of this book.

God has put you and I in a country where we are free to diligently search this book. There are countries where men and women risk their lives just to pick up the bible and read these words.

4. God has given us much light: a church where the gospel is preached in truth and in spirit, brethren and a pastor who know the gospel by God's grace, who pray for you to know Christ, who are willing to teach you as God enables us. God has given you who believe a new heart and divine revelation to understand the mystery of Christ. He has given us access to him who wrote this scriptures,

Ephesians 3: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Matthew 5:6: Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Brethren, holy men of old desired to know Christ so they diligently enquired and searched. Holy angels desire to look into these things so they diligently seek. Do we?

What would you do if your child died next week without Christ and you knew you spent this week teaching them the world rather than Christ?

Someone might say, "Preacher, I just don't understand the scriptures." Well, God has given me to guide you. And Christ says to us both to come to him, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Mt 7:7)

Make this your preeminent desire. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" (Mt 6: 33) I pray God give us the desire he gave to the holy men of old and to his holy angels!

**Amen!**