

STUDY 3

"UNHIDDEN TREASURE"

COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:5

Andy Field was on vacation in Las Vegas when he bought five sketches at a yard sale for \$5. When he later reframed them he learnt one sketch was done by Andy Warhol when he was 10 years old, and is now valued at \$2 million! Don't you wish you had unearthed such a hidden treasure? Imagine how happy it would make you, how much care you'd take with it, and how much you would show it off to friends.

We have a much greater treasure in Jesus, who makes a massive difference to our lives both now and forever. Paul has unpacked how awesome Jesus is - Creator of everything, Lord of the church, completely sufficient saviour.

Share in twos or threes some things that make Jesus awesome (list them). Then discuss how knowing the good news about Jesus should make a difference to our lives.

MYSTERY MISSION

1. Paul sees himself as a servant of the church due to God's command. How was Paul to serve them and what does that mean? (i.e. What task did God give him?) (1:25)

2. Paul speaks of a 'mystery' which used to be hidden, but is now revealed. What is this mystery and how has it been disclosed? (1:26-27 and 2:2)

"Through the Saints"

A more literal translation of verse 26 reads, "...the secret that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now revealed to the Saints. Through them God has chosen to make known among the gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery..."

If you'd like to follow up this idea, there's an article on the Gospel Coalition website here:



3. "The Lord's People" in verse 26 are literally "the Saints" - Paul's usual term for Jewish Christians. And the "To" at the beginning of verse 27 is better translated as "Through". (See sidebar.) According to Paul, what was Israel's true mission in the world? What lengths has God gone to for people like us (if we're Gentiles) to know Jesus?

4. What lengths is Paul himself prepared to go to that people might know Jesus? (1:24,29 & 2:1)

"Fill up in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions"

Christ's afflictions here are not his suffering for our sin on the cross, but the afflictions of his people which he endures. Jesus is in heaven and before his return he suffers in his people, as they experience trials in spreading the gospel (see especially Acts 9:4, 15-16). In other words, it takes suffering for people to be saved - not just Jesus dying on the cross, but faithful Christians who suffer persecution for sharing the gospel.

5. Why does Paul think sharing Jesus is worth all that? What does knowing Jesus give you? (1:28 & 2:2-3)

6. What danger does Paul fear? (2:4) Why would he fear that?

7. From what Paul has said in this passage, what's the antidote to being tempted away from Jesus by other big ideas?

TAKE IT HOME

8. How can we ensure that we are regularly marvelling at all the treasures 'hidden' in Jesus?

9. What difference should knowing this mystery and treasure make to our lives?

As a group pray that we would never tire of the treasure we have in Jesus. Pray that we would always be eager to share this treasure with those around us.

D.B.W.