

OpenTheo

March 22nd: Proverbs 20 & Ephesians 3

March 21, 2021



Alastair Roberts

Navigating honour culture. Paul's apostolic mission and prayer to the Father.

Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

If you have enjoyed my output, please tell your friends. If you are interested in supporting my videos and podcasts and my research more generally, please consider supporting my work on Patreon (<https://www.patreon.com/zugzwanged>), using my PayPal account (<https://bit.ly/2RLaUcB>), or by buying books for my research on Amazon (https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/36WVSWCK4X33O?ref_=wl_share).

The audio of all of my videos is available on my Soundcloud account: <https://soundcloud.com/alastairadversaria>. You can also listen to the audio of these episodes on iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/alastairs-adversaria/id1416351035?mt=2>.

Transcript

Proverbs 20. Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise. The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion, whoever provokes him to anger forfeits his life.

It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling. The slugger does not plow in the autumn, he will seek at harvest and have nothing. The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find. The righteous who walks in his integrity, blessed are his children after him. A king who sits on the throne of judgment, winnows all evil with his eyes.

Who can say, I have made my heart pure, I am clean from my sin. Unequal weights and unequal measures are both alike an abomination to the Lord. Even a child makes himself

known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright.

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both. Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty. Open your eyes and you will have plenty of bread.

Bad, bad, says the buyer, but when he goes away, then he boasts. There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for foreigners.

Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel. Plans are established by counsel, by wise guidance wage war. Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a simple babblers.

If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness. An inheritance gained hastily in the beginning will not be blessed in the end. Do not say, I will repay evil.

Wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you. Unequal weights are an abomination to the Lord, and false scales are not good. A man's steps are from the Lord.

How then can man understand his way? It is a snare to say rashly, It is holy, and to reflect only after making vows. A wise king winnows the wicked, and drives the wheel over them. The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts.

Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld. The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their grey hair. Blows that wound cleanse away evil, strokes make clean the innermost parts.

Wine can be a great blessing. It can also be something that tests and reveals people's hearts. Wine intoxicates.

It loosens people's control over their bodies and their mental faculties. Lady Wisdom offers wine to her guests in chapter 9. But wine is a dangerous gift. One can only receive this gift well if you are not given to it.

It is a liberty that could easily take liberties with you. Proverbs chapter 20 begins with a warning against wine, against its power to serve as an influence over people. Wine and strong drink are personified as a marker and a brawler.

If you cannot maintain some mastery over your spirit in the presence of alcohol, the personality imputed to the alcohol itself will take you over. There are many people who have been ruined by drink, who become very different people as a result of the drink. The description of alcohol here might invite some understanding of drink almost possessing a person.

The person who gives himself to intoxicating substances will forfeit wisdom. We have warnings against drunkenness elsewhere in the book of Proverbs. In chapter 21 verse 17, whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man.

He who loves wine and oil will not be rich. In chapter 23 verses 20 to 21, be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty and slumber will clothe them with rags. And finally chapter 31 verses 4 to 5, it is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

In Proverbs chapter 19 verse 12, the king was compared to a lion. A king's wrath is like the growling of a lion, but his favour is like dew on the grass. There is a similar statement here in verse 2, although there might be a subtle difference in that it is the terror of the king rather than the king's wrath that is like the growling of a lion.

Here it is the fear of the king in potential enemies that serves as the growling of the lion. The fearsome might of the king, and the apparent danger of provoking him to anger, causes people who might otherwise rise up against the people to draw back. Although it can be unsettling to think of this, the security and safety of a society can often rest in large measure upon the threat of violence and effective vengeance upon all who would threaten the general peace and all who would break the law.

The ideal king is the one who can rule by means of his growl. He does not generally need to bite or to engage in violence. The terrifying might of his growl is sufficient to drive off any enemy.

In a society prior to the advent of modern policing, where the might of the king and other rulers were at some distance from the people, the maintenance of peace depended upon the dynamics of honour culture, upon the threat of effective vengeance upon those who unsettled the peace or who preyed upon others. Those who were not able to project a sufficient fear of what would happen to those who threatened them and their family could easily be doomed to be the prey of those mightier than them. Modern nations can still operate to a degree within some sort of an honour culture.

There needs to be some projection of might and a deterrent, warning and threat upon any who would think of attacking the nation. We might also think of the mob boss in a movie. If he does not project some dominance through might he will be in great danger of being taken out by rivals.

In such an honour culture there can be a great temptation for the powerful man to see every small slight as an excuse for violence. If he can blow up at the smallest defence, everyone will be extremely deferent to him and fearfully submit to him. One might also think of the quick-tempered father or husband who terrorises his household and

dominates them by the fear that he creates.

Verse 3 presents the flip side of such an honour culture. While it is a very good thing for the king to project a warning to adversaries, it is not good to seek a fight at every opportunity. The good man will not needlessly terrorise others through fear.

There is a truer honour found in those who can control their temper and having control of their temper can forgive. The sluggard once more in verse 4 is described as a character who does not act at the appropriate time and in his folly, having failed to act at the appropriate time, seeks in vain for the harvest that others are enjoying on account of their faithful and timely sowing. One might perhaps think of this in terms of the different seasons of life.

The man who, rather than sowing his wild oats in his earlier years, gave himself to diligence and faithfulness, will enjoy a bountiful harvest while the sluggard comes back empty. Verse 5 is a difficult one to understand. Bruce Waltke suggests it refers to the wicked and the conniving person, whose plans and schemes are hidden but can be wheedled out of him by the wise man.

William McCain suggests that it refers to the inner depths of people's thoughts. This requires a work of eliciting and drawing forth, a sort of Socratic process of asking the right questions, bringing that which is inchoate into conscious articulation. The wise man can draw out from the heart and place into words those things that are hidden otherwise.

Michael Fox suggests that the point is not that it is difficult to obtain, that these things are secret or profound, but rather that the water of the heart is abundant. The wise man is the person who draws wisdom out of himself and others by diligently attending to counsel and by taking counsel in his own heart. At various points in Proverbs we have seen the fickleness of many proclaimed friends.

Verse 6 describes the hypocrisy of many who proclaim loudly their faithfulness, but when the time comes are nowhere to be found. Much as the young man faces the challenge of finding a wise and a good wife, he faces the challenge of identifying faithful friends. Blessing passes down through generations.

The righteous, faithful and wise man sets up his children to succeed, whereas the children of the fool, even if they turn out to be wise themselves, will face a significant struggle in overcoming the legacy of their parents. Verse 8 returns to the theme of verse 2, the power of the king over the people of the land. Here it is described as the judgment that he brings, dividing people into wheat and chaff.

The king winnows, effecting this separation by means of his eyes of judgment. Verse 9 makes plain the fact that no one is without sin. The more closely we examine our own

hearts, the more apparent it becomes that they are stained with iniquity and rebellion.

Warnings against unequal balances are found at various points in scripture. Deuteronomy chapter 25 verses 13-16 You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small.

A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God has given you. For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the Lord your God. Verse 10 expresses this principle succinctly.

Our Lord teaches that by their fruit you will know them, and even a child is able to reveal his character if you attend to his actions. We can often focus upon people's character being revealed through the things that they say about themselves, but every person can say good things about themselves. What truly reveals character is action.

If you want to consider your own character, if you want to consider someone else's character, pay close attention to actions and to their fruit. Attentiveness and perception are a gift of the Lord. People can see and hear without truly perceiving.

The true opening of eyes is a gift of the Lord. And opposed to this is the love of sleep. The slugger does not want to exert himself.

In his failure to exert himself, to use his senses and his faculties to their full extent, he ends up coming into poverty. The person, however, who opens his eyes, by avoiding too much sleep, but also by training and exercising his eyes in attentiveness and in judgment, will find that he prospers. The Proverbs in verses 14-17 mostly concern economic affairs.

The first, the hypocrisy of the buyer, who will lie concerning the value of an item, but then boast afterwards. The second, the true value to be found in the lips of a wise man. The third, the danger of entering into a position of being security for another.

And then the fourth, the futility and foolishness of ill-gotten wealth. The description of the bread gained by deceit here should remind us of the woman Folly's invitation in chapter 9 verse 17. Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

Proverbs chapter 15 verse 22 declared, Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. Verses 18 and 19 are both speaking in their way to the question of counsel. The king is responsible to make the most momentous plans.

He is not the universal expert. Rather, he must be gifted in the testing of different voices of wisdom, weighing them up, perceiving their strengths and their weaknesses, placing them in conversation with other positions, and through all of this to arrive at wise,

prudent action, having deliberated carefully. To rule well, he must seek out many counsellors and know where they may assist him.

However, we face the danger of including the wrong people in our counsel. The person who goes around revealing secrets and slandering others is not a person into whose counsel you should enter, nor should you allow them into yours. The fifth commandment states, Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Verses 20 and 21 concern judgments upon those who fail to honor their father and mother. Exodus chapter 21 verse 17 says that whoever curses his father or mother shall be put to death, whether judgment comes by such human punishment or by other means. The person who curses his father and mother, who despises his parents, will find that his light is put out.

The lamp here probably refers to his own posterity. If you fail to honor your father and mother, how do you expect your children to honor you? A related point is in verse 21, presumably referring to the person who wants to gain the inheritance very quickly, who wants to snatch it from his parents, without actually receiving it appropriately, at the proper time and over time. This might be related to the proverb of chapter 19 verse 26, he who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach.

When you see the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering, it can be difficult to have confidence in the Lord's moral governance, particularly if you feel that you have been wronged. In such situations you might want to take matters into your own hands. The warning of verse 22 comes with a charge to be confident in the Lord in such situations.

Here we should consider the teaching of places like Romans chapter 12 verses 19 to 21. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he is thirsty, give him something to drink, for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. The providence in the moral governance of the Lord is also a subject of verse 24.

A man's heart may have its plans, but the Lord ultimately directs his steps. When we look back at our lives, how much have we actually planned? So many of the critical events of our lives, the events that have determined the course that our lives have taken thereafter, are things that we could never have foreseen, nor have controlled. Ultimately these things come from the Lord.

He is sovereign over all of our steps, and so we should commit our ways to him, knowing that we cannot truly understand our way. He is the one to whom we must look for guidance and protection. Our inability to understand or to control our way should also lead to circumspection and caution when we make commitments concerning the future.

Here the warning is against making rash vows. We can see a similar warning in Deuteronomy chapter 23 verses 21 to 23. If you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin.

But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth. The testing of people by the king and by the Lord is the subject of the verses that follow.

Earlier in the chapter in verse 8 we read, A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes. This process of winnowing the wicked, of separating them from the wheat of the righteous like chaff, might remind us of Psalm 1, where the wicked are compared to chaff that the wind blows away. Here there is also a wheel involved, which is almost certainly not an instrument of torture in the context, but an instrument to assist the winnowing, which we see also in Isaiah chapter 28 verse 27.

If the wise king divides the righteous from the wicked, the Lord's searching is far more intimate and intensive. Some have seen verse 27 as referring to the man's own spirit searching out his inner self, that the Lord searches him out by such self-examination. Michael Fox challenges this reading, pointing out that it is not the soul that is doing this, but the breath.

The breath is the lamp of the Lord and the Lord is the one that is searching out. Every place that the breath, the animating principle of life goes within a human being, the Lord is searching out by the light of that spirit. The point is that every single aspect of our lives come under the Lord's sight.

Nothing that we do is hidden from him. The righteous Davidic king is the son of the Lord. He expresses the Lord's character to his people, and this is seen particularly in steadfast love and faithfulness.

The king is kind and loyal to his people, and his commitment to them is the means by which his own throne is established. A king who oppresses and shows no covenant faithfulness to his people will have a very uncertain rule. As modern persons, we tend to think of society as formed of lots of individuals who have various differences, but those differences do not make a difference.

In scripture, however, a lot of emphasis is placed upon the differences between different

groups of people, between the young and the old, between men and women, between rulers and their subjects, and with many other people in various stations of life. A good society is one in which every member rises to their full stature and expresses their gifts and their strengths to the service of all. Verse 29 expresses something of this principle.

The glory of young men is their strength. The strength of a society more generally is primarily seen in their young men. A good society honors the strength of young men and employs it for the benefit of all, ensuring that young men do not use their strength in a cruel or oppressive fashion, nor that young men in their strength are just seen as disposable.

Old men should also be honored for their part. They should be honored for their wisdom. They should not merely be regarded as relics of some past to be swept away.

Rather, their particular insight should be attended to. The young men should learn from the old men and attend to their counsel. As they exercise their strength with the direction and the guidance of the older men, they will be much more effective and also more beneficial for the rest of society.

Likewise, it is the duty of the older men to honor the younger men and to build them up, not just to exploit the strength of the younger men for their own power. In a society of mutual honor between the generations, between parents and children, between husband and wife, between the sexes more generally, all should be built up. The strengths of one party are not used purely for their selfish interests, but for the benefit and empowering of all.

The chapter ends with a proverb declaring the importance of correction. Corporal punishment is not the first resource, but properly applied it can be that thing that holds someone back from going all the way into folly. The person whose lost sensitivity to wisdom can be startled into awareness by corporal punishment.

A question to consider. Within this chapter there is a lot of teaching concerning the task and the wisdom of the king. Considering the character of King David, where in his life can we see these principles exemplified in both their positive and their negative aspects? Ephesians chapter 3 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.

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. 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, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have

boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen. In Ephesians chapter 1 Paul described the long-purpose plan that God accomplished in Christ and its cosmic scale and implications. In chapter 2 he spoke of the way that it brought both Jews and Gentiles from death into life and overcame their separation from God and from each other as one new people is formed in Christ.

Now in chapter 3 he turns to his part in the purpose of God. For a man who exalts his message over everything else, Paul can speak a surprising amount about his role as a minister in his epistles. This is because for Paul his role is not merely that of a commentator from the sidelines or a messenger whose role is entirely incidental to the message that he bears.

Rather in Paul's understanding his apostolic mission is a participation in the apocalyptic work of the gospel itself. Paul has a key role to play in the fullness of time, akin to the way that John the Baptist had a key role to play in the transition from the Old Testament prophets to the ministry of Christ and the new covenant. In a like manner Paul is one through whom the transition of the gospel to the wider Gentile world truly occurs.

As in chapter 1, much of this chapter from verses 2 to 13 is a long single sentence. It's a parenthesis. Paul begins a thought in verse 1, develops his parenthetical discussion of his ministry in the next 12 verses and then picks up and completes the thought in verses 14 and following.

Paul describes himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He conceives of his imprisonment as part of his service of Christ Jesus. Indeed he speaks as if Christ himself were the jailer.

He is not just imprisoned for Christ Jesus but is also a prisoner of Christ Jesus. And he is a prisoner on behalf of the Gentiles. It is his service of the Gentiles that has occasioned his imprisonment.

As Darrell Bach notes, there is a particular irony when we consider the false charge on which Paul was arrested in Acts chapter 21 verse 28. The claim was that he had brought

a Gentile, Trophimus the Ephesian, into the temple. While Paul had not in fact done this, the charge had an ironic truth to it as Paul was bringing Gentiles into the house of God in the new temple concerning which he teaches here and elsewhere.

He now begins his digression explaining the nature of his ministry. He had been granted a stewardship of God's grace for the sake of the Gentiles. His stewardship was a gift graciously given in order that he might be an active participant in God's giving of his grace to the Gentiles.

In Galatians chapter 1 verses 15 to 17 Paul declares that his message was received directly from God, not through the mediation of any other apostle. But when he who had set me apart before I was born and who called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son to me in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. The mystery that was made known to Paul and has been revealed through the apostles and the early church prophets is one that hadn't previously been known, but only became apparent in the fullness of time.

At the heart of this message is the fact that God's purpose involves Gentiles as full participants and beneficiaries, not merely as those enjoying the offcuts of the blessings of Israel. A new body is being formed in Christ and Jews and Gentiles alike are members. They are fellow heirs, both in line to receive the realisation of God's promise and needing to recognise their kinship together in the new family that this entails.

They are both participants in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. In God's powerful working he took one of the greatest enemies of his church and overcame him by his grace, making him who was once an enemy into his greatest servant. In Paul God manifested the extent of his grace so that Paul might be a fitting instrument and a worked example of the wonder of the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul is a minister or a servant. He is one commissioned by his master, who now represents his master and acts in his master's name towards others. Paul is keenly aware of how exceptionally unworthy he was of being set apart for such great mission.

He is the very least of all of the saints. He makes a similar point in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 9-10. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. His calling is to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles, unveiling to the whole world the mystery of the Creator God's purpose from before time began.

Now in the formation of the church, this mystery is being unveiled to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. What is revealed through this is the manifold wisdom of God, the mind of God that surpasses understanding. The revelation is made to the great forces and powers of the cosmos, so that in the steady unveiling of God's purpose in the church, all of the angelic and demonic powers of the cosmos might be amazed at the greatness and majesty of God.

It is all too easy to forget the presence and the importance of other forces and parties in the narrative of salvation. Yet Paul is often keenly aware of the way that God's work is addressed not just to humankind, but to the natural world and to the angelic powers. The church is at the heart of this revelation of the wisdom of God.

All of this is according to the purpose that God has realised in Christ Jesus our Lord. The church is being formed before the watching angelic forces, and as we saw back in Ephesians chapter 1, this is occurring as God's purpose before the foundation of the world. It's a plan that centres on Christ.

In Christ we now enjoy a new access to God's presence, something that we can enjoy with confidence on account of either our faith in him or his faith. The expression is ambiguous in meaning, although a robust theological case could be made for either. When we have a firm sense of God's purpose in Christ and its effectiveness, we will be much less troubled by seemingly threatening or contrary circumstances.

Paul wants the recipients of his letter to have a confidence in God's purpose when they consider his imprisoned condition. Paul, whatever his enemies and captors might plan for him, is exactly where the Lord intends for him to be. The Lord's purpose for him has not failed, and while he is suffering, he is suffering in the performance of his calling as the apostle to the Gentiles, and the outcome of it all, as he follows the pattern of Christ himself, will be the glory of the churches to whom he is ministering.

They will be benefited by him. Now Paul finally returns to the dangling half-started thought of verse 1, which preceded his long digression concerning his ministry. In what follows he shares his prayer for the readers and the hearers of his epistle.

The for this reason with which it begins returns to verse 1 of the chapter, but verse 1 looks back to chapter 2 verses 19-22. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. They are members of a new building, and more importantly for Paul's prayer here, a new family, the household of God.

Paul addresses the prayer to the Father, bowing before him in reverence, dependence,

homage and fealty. He describes the Father as the one from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. Although it may be theologically attractive to translate this verse as the ESV does, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, and a linguistic case can be made for it, it seems most likely to me that it refers to the naming of the whole family in the heavens and on the earth, not every family.

We all bear the name of the Father, are all members of a single household, and must acknowledge each other accordingly. His prayer is that he might by his Spirit empower them within, returning to the themes of riches and might that he mentioned in his earlier prayer in chapter 1 verses 15-23. God will enable them, in a supernatural way, so that Christ will reside in their hearts by an enduring faith that is brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit within them.

Once again we should observe just how fundamental the Trinity is to Paul's understanding of the pattern of salvation. The Father grants the Spirit, who is the means by which Christ abides within us. As we are rooted and grounded in love, as we grow out of the security of God's enduring love for us, a love from which our own love for God and our brothers can develop, one of the results will be understanding.

God will give us the strength and the capacity to perceive things that we would not otherwise. As a collective act of the people of God, Paul wants his readers to come to a grasp of the true scale of the love of Christ that, as he goes on to acknowledge, surpasses any capacity of our understanding. The result will be that we are overwhelmed by a growing sense of God's unfathomable goodness, and as this occurs, be filled with all of the fullness of God.

Once again, Paul has in view a collective growth in knowledge and filling here. This isn't just for solitary Christians, but is something that we grow in together, in fellowship with each other, and as we minister to each other. He concludes this section with a doxology.

God's power and goodness exceed both our requests and our understanding. In his work within us, he has a far more wonderful and glorious purpose and intention than we could ever hope to appreciate. The result should be the glory of God in the Church and in Christ Jesus, both in what he is doing in and making of us, and also in our joyful response of praise.

This glory should grow with the passing ages and never come to an end, as the glory of God is ever more fully and wondrously made known. A question to consider. When we talk about salvation, we tend to focus upon things from a very human perspective, thinking about what God's deliverance does for us.

How might Paul's profoundly God-focused and God-centered portrayal of salvation in the book of Ephesians change the way that we think about things?