

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 25, Intercession for Unity (Eph 3) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 25, Intercession for Unity (Eph 3), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Darko's lecture, Session 25 on Ephesians 3 from his "Prison Epistles" series, explores Paul's prayer for unity within the church. He begins by reviewing previous discussions in Ephesians, highlighting salvation through grace and the unification of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. The lecture then focuses on Paul's intercession, emphasizing spiritual strengthening, Christ's indwelling, and being rooted in love. Darko unpacks the dimensions of God's love and the power available to believers through the Holy Spirit. He concludes by examining Paul's doxology and the call to maintain existing unity within the church through humility, gentleness, and patience.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 25 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).**



**Darko_PrisonEp_Se
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3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 25, Intercession for Unity (Eph 3)

Briefing Document: Dr. Daniel K. Darko on Ephesians 3 & 4: Intercession for Unity and Its Maintenance

Executive Summary: This briefing document summarizes Dr. Daniel K. Darko's lecture on Ephesians 3 and the beginning of Ephesians 4, focusing on Paul's intercession for unity within the church and the subsequent exhortation to maintain that pre-existing unity. Darko emphasizes the theological foundations of this unity established in Christ, Paul's prayer for the believers' spiritual strengthening and comprehension of God's love, and the practical implications for Christian living, particularly through humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Review of Ephesians 1 & 2: The Foundation of Unity

- Darko briefly revisits Ephesians 1 and 2, highlighting Paul's "breathless invocation" and his prayer for the church.
- He reminds the audience of the pre-Christian state as being subject to worldly influences and objects of wrath.
- "Paul was clear enough to state that in the pre-Christian past, one is actually subject to the detects of this world, to the prince of the power of the air, and to the flesh. Consequently, the one who is not a Christian stands as an object of wrath by their very nature."
- He emphasizes God's mercy, love, and grace in salvation through faith.
- "He would then make the profound statement that would be part of many doctrinal statements, that it is by grace we have been saved through faith."
- A key point is the sociological aspect of salvation, where Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ, becoming "one."
- "He brought the sociological part of salvation to emphasize and show them how their salvation should affect their sense of community. He showed some Jewish stereotypes that normally are ascribed to Gentiles, and he reminded Gentiles in reality of how their past would be described. Then he went further to show how, in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have become one."

- This oneness means Gentiles, once alienated, are now "members of the household of God," building together a dwelling place for God.

2. Ephesians 3: Paul's Intercession for Spiritual Growth and Unity

- Paul sees his role as a privilege to administer and reveal the "mystery" that Jews and Gentiles are "co-heirs and sharers in the promises of God."
- Darko stresses that Paul's prayers are genuine communication with God, not performances for the congregation.
- "When Paul writes a prayer, his intention is not to impress the congregation with his knowledge of how to pray... Paul will direct people about the need to communicate to God in prayer."
- Paul prays that God would grant them, according to the riches of His glory:
- **Strengthening with power through the Spirit in their inner being:** This is not about outward displays of spiritual gifts but inner resilience and strength.
- "No, his prayer is that, first and foremost, they may be strengthened with power so that their inner person will be a place where strength dwells. They will have the resilience and strength that God himself supplies his people..."
- **Christ dwelling in their hearts through faith:** This requires a personal choice to allow Christ to reside within.
- "Again, observe the inner dimension so that Christ may find a dwelling in your heart. If the heart is consumed or filled with darkness, that could not be the residence of Christ."
- **Being rooted and grounded in love:** Using botanical and architectural metaphors to illustrate a solid foundation for growth and stability against external pressures.
- "Using the architectural language, he uses the imagery of foundation in terms of building a house and how a solid foundation determines the integrity of the structure. Here, he says that they may find themselves in that place where they are so firmly established that as they grow in their walk with Christ, no storm can move them."
- **Strength to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth:** The object of these dimensions is debated among scholars, with possibilities including the power of God, the mystery of salvation, the manifold wisdom of God, and the

love of Christ. Darko leans towards the love of Christ but acknowledges the lack of a direct object in the Greek.

- **To know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge:** This love is so vast that it cannot be fully grasped intellectually but should be experienced.
- "The magnitude of God's love is hard to comprehend. In chapter 2, when he talks about the greatness of God's love, here he says that love surpasses all knowledge."
- **To be filled with all the fullness of God:** This speaks to a comprehensive indwelling and influence of God in the believers' lives.

3. Ephesians 3: Paul's Doxology - The Power of God at Work Within

- Paul bursts into a doxology affirming God's unlimited ability.
- "Now, now, to him who is able, note he is not disabled or unable, he is able to do more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us."
- He emphasizes that God's power is "at work within us," empowering believers to live out their calling.
- "According to the power at work within us... God is able to do this according to his power at work in you."
- The doxology concludes with glory to God in the church and in Christ Jesus forever.

4. Transition to Ephesians 4: Maintaining the Existing Unity

- Paul, as a "prisoner of the Lord," urges the believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called."
- "I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called."
- Crucially, Paul states that the unity of the Spirit *already exists*. His exhortation is to maintain or keep it.
- "No. He is saying the unity is already there. If anything, their life is disturbing the unity God has created. So, they should do everything to maintain or keep that unity."

- This unity is based on the fact that Jews and Gentiles have been made one in Christ (Ephesians 2) and are sharers of God's promise (Ephesians 3).
- "Chapter two, verse 19, they have become members of the household of God. Chapter three, the mystery of God, is that Jews and Gentiles are now sharers of the promise of God. They are members of the body. That unity is already there."

5. The Means for Maintaining Unity (Ephesians 4:2-3)

- Paul outlines specific virtues necessary for maintaining this unity:
- **Humility:** In contrast to classical Greek connotations of lowliness, Christian humility is a chosen attitude based on knowing one's identity in Christ and not needing to impress others.
- "But the early Christians would turn it around and make it a virtue, not that they feel weak in themselves, but that they know who they are and they have no reason to impress the world."
- **Gentleness:** A demeanor of politeness, meekness, and mildness.
- **Patience:** Perseverance and persistence, especially under pressure.
- "It is persistence that is expressed in more of a matter of conviction when one is under pressure or in difficult situations."
- **Bearing with one another in love:** Showing forbearance and compassion.
- **Eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:** Diligently working to preserve the spiritual unity through peaceful relationships.

6. Conclusion and Application

- Darko concludes by emphasizing that Christians are called to be "social engineers" who bring unity and peace to a world marked by dissension, drawing on the power of God at work within them.
- He encourages listeners to personalize these teachings and actively work to maintain the unity of the church.

Key Quotes:

- "it is by grace we have been saved through faith."
- "in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have become one."
- "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father..." (Beginning of Paul's intercession)
- "...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..." (Key elements of Paul's prayer)
- "...to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Culmination of Paul's prayer in this section)
- "Now, now, to him who is able to do more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us..." (Paul's doxology)
- "I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." (Beginning of Ephesians 4)
- "No. He is saying the unity is already there. If anything, their life is disturbing the unity God has created. So, they should do everything to maintain or keep that unity."

Implications and Further Considerations:

- This lecture highlights the foundational theological unity of the church established by God in Christ, preceding any human effort.
- Maintaining this unity requires intentional effort and the cultivation of specific Christ-like virtues.

- Understanding the depth of God's love and power, as prayed for by Paul, is crucial for the spiritual strength and unity of believers.
- The ongoing scholarly discussion regarding the object of "breadth and length and height and depth" reminds us of the complexities in interpreting scripture.
- The cultural context of the first century influences the understanding of terms like "humility."

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of Dr. Darko's insights on Ephesians 3 and the beginning of Ephesians 4, emphasizing the divine initiative in creating unity and the human responsibility in maintaining it through spiritual growth and virtuous living.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 25, Intercession for Unity (Eph 3)

Study Guide: Ephesians 3 - Intercession for Unity

Key Themes:

- The Mystery of the Gospel: Inclusion of Gentiles as co-heirs in Christ.
- Paul's Ministry: His role as an agent to reveal this mystery.
- Intercession for Unity: Paul's prayer for the Ephesians focusing on inner strength, Christ's indwelling, being rooted in love, and comprehending God's love.
- God's Power and Glory: The boundless ability of God to do beyond what we ask or imagine, according to the power within believers.
- Maintaining Unity: The pre-existing unity in Christ and the call to live in a manner worthy of this calling through humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

Review Questions (Short Answer):

1. According to Paul in Ephesians 2, what was the pre-Christian state of both Jews and Gentiles, and how did God intervene in this state?
2. Explain the "mystery" that Paul discusses in Ephesians 3 and its significance for the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.
3. What are the key elements of Paul's intercessory prayer for the church in Ephesians 3:14-19, and what does he ask God to grant them?
4. Dr. Darko discusses different interpretations of the "width and length and height and depth" in Ephesians 3:18. Briefly outline at least two of these interpretations.
5. What does it mean for Christ to "dwell in your hearts through faith," according to Dr. Darko's lecture?
6. Explain the significance of the botanical and architectural language (rooted and grounded) used by Paul in his prayer for the Ephesians.
7. According to Dr. Darko, what is the meaning and importance of knowing the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge?
8. In the doxology of Ephesians 3:20-21, what does Paul emphasize about God's ability and where is God's power at work?

9. How does Paul transition from the theological discussion in Ephesians 3 to the practical exhortations in Ephesians 4 regarding unity?
10. According to Ephesians 4:1-3 (as discussed by Dr. Darko), is Paul asking the church to create unity or to maintain an existing unity, and what virtues does he emphasize in this regard?

Answer Key:

1. In their pre-Christian state, both Jews and Gentiles were subject to worldly influences, the prince of the power of the air, and their own flesh, making them objects of wrath. God intervened with his rich mercy, love, and grace, saving them through faith.
2. The mystery is that Gentiles are now co-heirs with Jews, members of the same body, and sharers in the promises of God in Christ Jesus. This breaks down previous divisions and creates a new unified community.
3. Paul prays that God would grant them strength through his Spirit in their inner being, that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith, that they would be rooted and grounded in love, and that they would comprehend the immeasurable dimensions of Christ's love and be filled with the fullness of God.
4. One interpretation suggests that the dimensions refer to the vastness of God's power available to the church. Another view posits that it refers to the manifold wisdom of God, connected to the preceding discussion of the mystery. A third, favored by many scholars, suggests it refers to the immeasurable love of Christ.
5. For Christ to dwell in their hearts through faith signifies an inner residence of Christ, requiring individuals to open themselves up and allow him in. This implies personal responsibility in making space for Christ within.
6. The botanical language of being "rooted in love" signifies a fertile ground for spiritual growth, allowing roots to deepen and the believer to reach their full potential. The architectural language of being "grounded in love" depicts a solid foundation ensuring the stability and integrity of their faith against external pressures.
7. Knowing the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge means experiencing and understanding God's profound and incomprehensible affection for them, both intellectually and spiritually. This knowledge should bring security, pleasure, and peace, overcoming feelings of loneliness and being unloved.

8. Paul emphasizes that God is able to do far more abundantly than believers can ask or imagine. This power is not external but is at work within the believers themselves, equipping and empowering them to live out their faith.
9. Paul transitions by stating "therefore," linking the theological truths of unity established in the preceding chapters, particularly chapter 3, with a practical call to live in a manner worthy of that calling in chapter 4.
10. Paul is urging the church to maintain the unity of the Spirit that already exists in the bond of peace. He emphasizes the virtues of humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love as the means to preserve this pre-existing unity.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan as presented in Ephesians 2 and 3, and explain how this contributes to the theme of unity in the letter.
2. Analyze Paul's intercessory prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21, identifying the key petitions and explaining what they reveal about Paul's desires for the church and his understanding of God's power.
3. Evaluate the different interpretations of the "width and length and height and depth" in Ephesians 3:18, arguing for the interpretation you find most convincing and supporting your reasoning with evidence from the text and Dr. Darko's lecture.
4. Explore the relationship between the theological truths presented in Ephesians 1-3 and the practical exhortations for Christian living, particularly regarding unity, in Ephesians 4:1-16.
5. Examine the role of humility, gentleness, patience, and love as essential components for maintaining unity within the Christian community, drawing from Paul's instructions in Ephesians 4:1-3 and Dr. Darko's insights.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Breathless Invocation:** Dr. Darko's term for the extended and enthusiastic opening of Ephesians where Paul heaps praise and blessings upon God.
- **Mystery (in Ephesians):** God's previously hidden plan, now revealed in Christ, to unite Jews and Gentiles as equal members in the body of Christ and co-heirs of his promises.
- **Co-heirs:** Sharing equally in the inheritance or promises of God, specifically referring to both Jews and Gentiles in the context of the Gospel.
- **Intercession:** The act of pleading or praying to God on behalf of others.
- **Doxology:** An expression of praise and glory to God.
- **Inner Being/Inner Heart:** The spiritual and emotional core of a person, the locus where God's Spirit works and Christ dwells.
- **Rooted and Grounded in Love:** Metaphorical language (botanical and architectural) describing a deep and stable foundation in God's love, essential for spiritual growth and resilience.
- **Fullness of God:** A complex expression referring to the complete measure of God's divine attributes, presence, and power with which believers can be filled.
- **Manifold Wisdom of God:** The multifaceted and comprehensive wisdom of God displayed through the church to the heavenly realms.
- **Worthy Walk:** Living in a manner that aligns with and reflects the high calling that believers have received in Christ.

5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 25, Intercession for Unity (Eph 3), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Ephesians 3 & 4 (Darko's Session 25)

1. According to Dr. Darko, what is the primary focus of Paul's intercession in Ephesians 3:14-19?

Dr. Darko explains that Paul's intercession in this passage centers on the unity of the church, building upon the earlier revelation in Ephesians 2 and 3 that Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ, co-heirs and sharers in God's promises. Paul prays for the believers to be strengthened inwardly by the Spirit, for Christ to dwell in their hearts through faith, and for them to be rooted and grounded in love so that they can grasp the vastness of Christ's love and be filled with the fullness of God. This intercession aims to solidify the spiritual foundation necessary for Christian living and community.

2. Dr. Darko emphasizes that salvation has a "sociological part." What does he mean by this, and how does it relate to the unity Paul desires?

By "sociological part," Dr. Darko means that salvation is not just an individual experience between a person and God. It inherently involves the transformation of relationships and the creation of a new community. Paul emphasizes how believers, once alienated from each other (Jews and Gentiles), are now brought together in Christ, becoming members of the household of God and a dwelling place for God's Spirit. This unity is a direct consequence and expression of their shared salvation and should actively shape their sense of community.

3. What are the key elements of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:16-19 that Dr. Darko highlights?

Dr. Darko unpacks several crucial aspects of Paul's prayer:

- **Strengthening with power through the Spirit in the inner being:** This is not about outward displays of spiritual gifts but about an inner resilience and strength supplied by God for daily Christian living.
- **Christ dwelling in their hearts through faith:** This signifies an intimate and personal presence of Christ at the center of their lives, requiring their active choice to allow Him in.

- **Being rooted and grounded in love:** Using both agricultural and architectural metaphors, Paul prays that their lives will grow deeply in love (the fertile ground) and be firmly established on the foundation of love, making them устойчивыми against external pressures.
- **Comprehending the breadth, length, height, and depth:** While the object of these dimensions is debated among scholars (possibly God's power, wisdom, the mystery of salvation, or most likely, Christ's love), Dr. Darko emphasizes the vast and immeasurable nature of what God offers.
- **Knowing the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge:** This highlights the paradoxical nature of God's love, which can be experienced and felt deeply even though it cannot be fully grasped intellectually.
- **Being filled with all the fullness of God:** This complex expression signifies a complete and pervasive presence of God in the believers' lives, influencing their character and interactions.

4. Dr. Darko discusses the lack of a direct object for "breadth and length and height and depth" in Ephesians 3:18. What are some scholarly views on what this might refer to, and what is Dr. Darko's leaning?

Dr. Darko mentions several scholarly interpretations for the missing object:

- **The power of God:** Some suggest these dimensions refer to the vastness of God's power. Dr. Darko finds this unconvincing as power isn't the central theme at this point, and Paul is usually explicit.
- **The mystery of salvation:** Others propose it refers to the comprehensive nature of the mystery revealed in Ephesians. While plausible due to the preceding context, Dr. Darko notes the lack of clear immediate reference.
- **The manifold wisdom of God:** This view suggests the dimensions describe the vast and comprehensive nature of God's wisdom. This has some support from the preceding verses about the mystery.
- **The matchless love of Christ:** Many scholars, and Dr. Darko's inclination, believe the object is Christ's love, inferred from the immediate context and the subsequent phrase about knowing Christ's love.

5. What is the significance of Paul's doxology in Ephesians 3:20-21 according to Dr. Darko?

Dr. Darko emphasizes that this doxology highlights God's limitless ability to do "more abundantly than all we ask or think," according to the power at work within believers. It underscores that God is not restricted in what He can accomplish in and through His people. This power is not external but operates within them, enabling them to live out their calling. The doxology concludes with a declaration of glory to God in the church and in Christ Jesus forever, emphasizing the eternal impact of God's work.

6. In Ephesians 4:1-3, Paul urges believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling." According to Dr. Darko, what does this calling entail, and what are the practical ways to live up to it?

Dr. Darko explains that this calling is a call to unity, rooted in the reality that God has already made them one in Christ. Living worthy of this calling involves moral behavior, community interaction, and maintaining the unity that God has created. The practical means for maintaining this unity, as outlined by Paul and highlighted by Dr. Darko, include:

- **Humility:** Recognizing one's true position before God and choosing not to boast.
- **Gentleness:** Exhibiting politeness, meekness, and mildness in demeanor.
- **Patience:** Persevering and bearing with one another, especially under pressure.
- **Bearing with one another in love:** Showing love and understanding in their interactions.
- **Eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:** Actively striving to preserve the spiritual unity that already exists through peaceful relationships.

7. Dr. Darko points out that Paul states the unity of the Spirit already exists in Ephesians 4. What is the implication of this for the believers in Ephesus (and for Christians today)?

The implication is that the unity of the church is not something they need to create from scratch but rather something they are called to maintain and live out. God has already united believers in Christ. Their actions should reflect this reality, not disrupt it. Dr. Darko uses the analogy of siblings who are expected to get along because of their shared blood. Similarly, Christians, sharing the Spirit, are called to live in harmony and resolve conflicts, as unity is their inherent spiritual DNA.

8. How does Dr. Darko connect the theological truths of Ephesians 1-3 with the practical exhortations in Ephesians 4:1-3?

Dr. Darko explains that the theological foundations laid out in the first three chapters of Ephesians concerning God's grace, salvation, and the unifying work of Christ in bringing Jews and Gentiles together serve as the basis for the practical call to unity in chapter 4. Because of who they are in Christ and what God has done for them (the theological truths), they are now urged to live in a way that reflects this new reality by maintaining unity through humility, gentleness, patience, and love (the practical exhortations). The "therefore" in Ephesians 4:1 signifies this logical connection – their identity and blessings in Christ necessitate a corresponding manner of life.