

Ephesians pt 6 3:1-13

1 For this reason – so we must go back into the last section of chapter two and find what reason he is referring to. He is talking about the oneness of Jew and Gentile, being fellow citizens, built into the same temple. That is the reason he is a prisoner – of Jesus. Not of Rome! We often blame circumstances that are difficult on the instruments instead of seeing it as the hand of God. When Paul was called, the Lord said he would have to do this. Acts 9:15-16 (NIV)¹⁵ *But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."*

It is for the sake of the Gentiles becoming a part of the Kingdom of God. Paul is there witnessing to the household of Caesar. He is Jesus' prisoner.

2,3 Paul may be referring to a letter that was lost, in which he explained God's call upon his life. Or he may be referring to 2:11-22. He calls it an administration of the grace of God given to him for them. God poured out His grace on Paul for ministry to the Gentiles. Your Christian leaders that are anointed by God are recipients of God's grace so that they can express God's love toward you in ministry. In the body, we all have received a measure of grace that we might minister to each other. (see 4:7)

The mystery which is defined in verse 6, was given to Paul by revelation. That revelation must have been described in a previous letter. We do have the revelation given to Peter in Acts 10. Though it was foretold by the prophets and modeled by Jesus, they still needed a personal revelation. Some of our prejudices and perceptions run so deep, that only a revelation from God intervening in our lives can shake us out them.

4,5 What he is writing is another explanation for them to understand this revelation. Previous generations did not perceive what God was going to do, even though they foretold it. Paul says that he is not the only one who has understood and received a revelation, other apostles and prophets (current time) have confirmed it to be true. Paul may be referring to Peter, but the plural indicates that others beside the two of them, had received the same revelation. When God is doing a new thing, others will confirm that God is at work. During this period of the church, what revelations have been confirmed that you can recall? The reformation was a renewed revelation of grace. The era of D. Moody could be called a revelation of the love of God. I think today there is a revelation of the house of God being a house of prayer. Certainly there are many more.

6 The mystery is described in three terms. 1. Gentiles are heirs with Israel. Israel inherited the promises of God, the promise of a Savior, the promise of an eternal King. The Gentiles share that inheritance. 2. Jews and Gentiles are members of one body. They are members of one body. They are now working together for the same head, and with the same goals. 3. Both share in the promise in Christ Jesus. The promise in Christ Jesus is our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, to live forever basking in the glory of the Father!

7 The gift of God's grace made him a servant of the good news of verse 6. The gift of God's grace makes you a servant of whatever ministry God has called you to. The working of God's power gives us that call and ability to carry it out. He described that power in his prayer in 1:19,20. It is the same power that raised Jesus. It is the power of resurrected life. There is an old you, and there is a new you empowered by the Spirit of God for ministry. It is the person that was raised with Christ at His resurrection. Are you living in that resurrected power?

8 Though Paul sees himself as the least of the saints, God is using him to share with the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. We will never discover all that we have in Christ. I think we can learn a lot by the way the Apostle describes himself throughout his ministry. The first time he gave a one liner about who he was is in 1Corinthians 15:9. He said he was the least of the Apostles. This Ephesians passage says he is the least of the saints (believers). The last time he wrote a description, he referred to himself as the chief of sinners (1Timothy 1:15). Do you see the increase of humility? As God draws us closer and matures us, we learn that every good thing through us is His workmanship (2:10). A greater revelation of His holiness means a greater revelation of our sin condition. The result is a greater appreciation for all He does in and through us.

9 Paul was given this grace to explain to the world the mystery that was kept hidden in God. This was not God's back up plan. God always intended to bring in the Gentiles. He kept it a secret until the days of the Apostle Paul.

10, 11 The church made up of Jew and Gentile made one, is demonstrating to the spiritual realms the multifaceted wisdom of God. Both the demonic and angelic forces are seeing that God has the details all in the palm of His mighty hand and brings about such amazing things that none could ever imagine. The spiritual world is witnessing the greatness of God when they see how God put the church together. They are marveling at His wisdom. It all came about through Jesus' work.

12 It is only in Christ and through faith in Him, that we can walk into the Holy of holies in confidence, and speak to Almighty God, laying our requests at His feet. We see that repeated phrase that means so much to Paul, "in Him." (2:18; Hebrews 4:16; Psalms 84:9) Paul seems to be saying that our redemption's greatest wonder is to be able to confidently stand in the presence of God. That is heaven! In that sense the work of Jesus makes you fit for heaven.

13 If Paul isn't discouraged, if he sees captivity as being a prisoner of Jesus to serve God's eternal purpose, should they be discouraged by his sufferings. Remember the call was to suffer many things for the sake of Jesus' name. You can empathize with what he is enduring and pray for his strength and health, but don't be discouraged. He is doing exactly what he was called to do, carrying out the sharing of the mystery hidden in God. Seeing things from a godly perspective can change our attitude toward even suffering of a loved one.

What has this passage show you about grace? Humility? Service? Prayer?