

A SERVANT'S TESTIMONY

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles--Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:1-21 (NIV)

❖ My CALL to MINISTRY:

1. It's a call to faithful STEWARDSHIP.

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly... This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (vs. 1-3,6)

2. It's a call to faithful SERVICE.

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ... (vs.7-8)

3. It's a call that will include a measure of SUFFERING.

I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. (vs. 13)

❖ The PURPOSE of my MINISTRY:

1. There is a MISSIONAL Purpose.
... this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ... (vs. 8b)
2. There is a THEOLOGICAL Purpose.
... to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms... (vs. 9-10)
3. There is a PERSONAL Purpose.
In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. (vs. 12)

❖ My PRAYER for those in Ministry:

For this reason I kneel before the Father... (vs. 14)

1. The Prayer for GOD'S POWER.
I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being... (vs. 16)
2. The Prayer for GOD'S WISDOM.
And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ... (vs. 17b-18)
3. The Prayer for GOD'S PRESENCE.
... and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (vs. 19)

❖ Closing Truth: God wants to do more MINISTRY through us than we REALIZE.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (vs. 20-21)