

THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY (Part II)
Ephesians 3:7-9

REVIEW OF OUR STUDY IN EPHESIANS 3 :

Stewardship, Source, Sum...now we're going to talk about the "servant" of the revelation of the mystery

Key verse : ***6This 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.***

STORY : A small town had experienced rapid growth, and the local church congregation had outgrown their building. The members formed a committee to plan and build a new church. The committee told the minister to take care of the flock and they would handle the details of church construction. The minister complied with the request and kept his distance.

As the new building was nearing completion, the committee chairman invited the minister to view their new house of worship. IT'S A HIGH-TECH CHURCH BUILDING. Entering through the main doors, the minister noted only the last row of pews had been installed.

"Since people always fill the last row of pews first, we had a special feature installed," the chairman said. He pressed a button on the wall and the pew moved forward and another popped up. The minister was impressed.

The big day finally arrived for the first service in the new church. The minister peeked out as the pews filled from the back and then moved forward. He was ecstatic.

When the time came for the sermon, the minister was so filled with joy and goodwill, he delivered his prepared message and then some.

At 12 o'clock, he was still sharing the good word when the church bells began to ring...and the pulpit and the minister slowly descended from view.

Read Ephesians 3:6-9

Pray

Our study for today :

How Paul looked at himself in connection with the revelation of this mystery.

"...this mystery is that through the gospel..."

What we need to do with the "good news" "gospel" God has given us?

Illustration :

On Tuesday April 21 will be the Boston Marathon. Where did the Marathon come from?

Legend tells us that around 400-500 B.C., the Persians were attacking the Greeks. The Greeks met their enemy in a village called Marathon and defeated them there. The general of the troops sent a herald named Phidippides to run and tell the "good news" to Athens (which was the center of Greek culture at that time). It's a 26 mile-

run. Upon reaching Athens, the myth or legend tells us that Phidippides was so exhausted but he still managed to tell the people, "Rejoice!" and then died.

God has given us the "gospel". What are we going to do with it?

Verse : Jesus says in *Mark 16:15* "Go into all the world and **preach the good news to all creation.**"

Sad to say : We have carried over some attitudes from our old religion. What is that attitude? Just as long as I go to church on Sunday (any church), listen to the sermon, give my offering, I have already done my "Christian" duty.

It's good to follow Godly examples:

Paul says *1 Corinthians 4:16* "Therefore I urge you to imitate me." And in *1 Corinthians 11:1* "Follow me as I follow Christ." (and this is always in connection with living and delivering the gospel)

What do we do now with the good news (Explain) that we have to deliver?

What do we have to know?

I. THE POSITION IN THE DELIVERY OF THE GOSPEL

7I became a servant ("minister" KJV) of this gospel...

Important : Again, the misconception on the word "minister". We think he's the pastor of the church and he's the one who's "called" to do all the "ministering".

Etymology : servant, minister – diakonos - WAITER, BUSBOY in our modern language.

Note : We are all MINISTERS of Christ here and we do it out of love for Christ.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus...

Etymology "servant" – doulos – "love slave"

Explain how they become "doulos"

Illustration : I remember one of the stories of Chicay's dad when he was just starting in the ministry. He was just a new Christian but he's background was a businessman, and was the "chairman" of different companies. So one day, he was invited to one of the Christians gatherings saying like, "we can use you... come early." Thinking he was going to speak in front of the congregation, he wore his nice suit. So he arrived early and the one who invited was happy he was there. Thinking that he will be asked to speak, he was surprised that he was asked to fix the chairs instead. And the chairs were heavy and he was in his suit. But he gladly did it and he did it excellently, making sure the seats were at a proper distance from each other so that the people who would attend would just have enough space for

worship and comfortable enough to listen to the gospel. He was happy enough to become the “chairman” at that time for the cause of Christ.

Emphasis : One of the first books I read when I became a Christian was “Spiritual Leadership by Oswald Sanders” One of the chapters of that book is titled “The Master’s Master Principle” (when it comes to leadership) and it came from Mark 10:43-44 *“Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.”*

What I love about that book and I agree with John McArthur on this, is that it emphasizes not on methods or the amount of Biblical, but it emphasizes on “character, passion and godliness” and that can’t be learned in Bible school but by being with Jesus our Lord through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

II. THE POWER IN THE DELIVERY OF THE GOSPEL

*“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.”*⁸*Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me*

How can we be effective or have power in our ministry?

1. Realize it is God’s gift. (*...by the gift of God...*)

Etymology : gift “dorea”

Note : Later on as we go on to Chapter 4 of Ephesians, we will touch on the different gifts the Holy Spirit has given. THESE GIFTS are for the gospel whether it’s a “speaking” gift (evangelist, prophecy, teaching) or “serving” gifts (pastor, administration, encouragement, mercy)

What does it mean? Gifts We have to realize that what we are doing doesn’t come from us. GOD GAVE IT TO US.

Question : What is the greatest compliment or pleasure you can give to the gift-giver?

Answer : To show the one who gave you the gift that you are using his/her gift.

Illustration : Two Christmases ago, Zak gave me a wallet because the wallet that I had was already dilapidated. So he decided to buy me a wallet. He thought I was using it already. But since I loved my old wallet, I just kept his gift in my drawer.

One day, after I guess 3 months after he gave me the gift, he saw that the wallet he gave me was still in the drawer. Of course, sumama ang loob niya ng unti.

Important : If we say, we want to please God, then let's USE THE GIFTS that God has given us.

Gifts categorized into two :

If it's a "speaking" gift...speak. If it's a "serving" gift...serve.

Heard from the radio : I have heard Chuck Swindoll say which he learned from Ray Stedman that if one becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit gives you at least one gift. If you don't have a gift, it means you are not a Christian.

So if you are not showing your "speaking" or "serving" gift, it's either you are not using your gift or you don't have a gift.

2. Realize it is by God's grace (*...by the gift of God's grace...this grace was given me* (Paul emphasized it)

My favourite expression (my wife and kids know this) : *"by God's grace..."*

Etymology - grace "charis" goodwill, favour, kagandahang loob

In short, we have done nothing to deserve it or to receive it.

That's why Paul says in *verse 8, "Although, I am less than the least of all God's people..."*

Note : Truly humble people are the ones who truly understand the Gospel

Biblical basis :

Paul calls himself the "chief of sinners"

*1 Timothy 1 ¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, **the worst of sinners**, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Full circle:

And truly humble people have a heart of a servant.

Quotation : Remember, one can never consider himself humble if he is not willing to be a servant of all.

What is this grace? Enabling grace

“... the gift of God's grace given me through the working (effectual working KJV) of his power.”

Etymology : working “energia” – energy

What is energy? The capacity to work or for vigorous activity

Sample : We sometimes say if a friend asks you to go out but you just came from work, “I want to but I’m so tired, I don’t have the energy anymore.” In short, even if you are willing and even if you have the body or the money to go, but you don’t have the energy, nothing will happen.

Etymology : power – dynamus – dynamite - effectual power

In short : If we want to have an effective ministry, we have to use God’s energy. Even if we have the gift but if we don’t use God’s energy, we won’t have an effective ministry.

In church setting : Even if we have the facility, the people, the money and etc, if we don’t depend on God’s Spirit, we won’t be effective in our calling

Sample : Some churches, ano ang pang-akit: maganda ang church (building) nila, maganda ang programa, kumpleto sila sa instrumento or maganda ang children’s ministry or ang youth and etc. etc.

Nawa’y tayo ano ang pang-akit natin : THAT GOD IS IN OUR MIDST!!!!

III. THE PURPOSE IN THE DELIVERY OF THE GOSPEL

“...this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”

“...this grace was given me :”

You know it’s a gift done in God’s energy if you use it, two things happen:

1. People know God more.
2. People love Jesus more.

Sample : I know that Butch is using God’s gift and God’s energy simply because everytime, pag tipak pa lang ng gitara, yung puso ko nag-aapoy na sa Panginoon. Butch doesn’t have a great voice but the difference is he has a great God that is working through him.

Lyrics :

I feel quite sure if I did my best
I could maybe impress you

With tender words and a harmony
A clever rhyme or two

But if all I've done in the time we've shared
Is turn your eyes on me
Then I've failed at what I've been called to do
There's someone else I want you to see

[CHORUS]

Will you love Jesus more
When we go our different ways
When this moment is a memory
Will you remember His face
Will you look back and realize
You sensed His love more than you did before
I'd pray for nothing less
Than for you to love Jesus more

Quotation : May mga taong kapag nakita mo pa lang, naaamoy mo na si Kristo.

1. To preach the Gospel to the lost

“...to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...”

Etymology : preach “eugelizzo” – to bring good news

Lovely : You don't have to be a preacher "bringer of good news" in order to share the good news.

Quotation : *The church is the only cooperative society in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members. - William Temple*

Question : And what is the good news :
“...the unsearchable riches of Christ...”

Etymology : unsearchable “anexichniastos” - can't be comprehended.
It doesn't mean, you won't find it..it just means you can't grasp it.

Sample : Electricity, we know it's there because we use it everyday, we see the benefits (riches) of it but we can't see it. We see the wire but we don't see electricity. We know where it comes from but we can't see it. You see the effect (sparks, current) but we don't see electricity.

Just like when we trust Christ as Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit is in us and we become God's children. We can't comprehend how it works but we know where it came from, we see the benefits and we see the effect.

2. To make plain the Gospel to everyone.

and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”

Etymology : make plain (to see KJV) – photizo - to give light

Two tasks of a preacher :

1. To share to you the abounding love of Christ
2. To make you understand the abounding love of Christ (by explaining it, making it simple to digest and etc.)

Etymology : administration (fellowship KJV) – koinonia – means fellowship but also means “communication”,

Question : When does communication happen?

Answer : A person sends a message, another person gets the message and then understands the message and then responds to the message.

What again is the mystery? Everyone can be included in God’s family (the church)

“...which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”

In short, it was always there (ages “aion”) but it was just during the New Testament that it was revealed.

Application for today : Don’t get weary of sharing the gospel or inviting people to church to hear the good news and that person doesn’t respond, it is all in God’s timing...as we have learned earlier. IT IS ALL BY GOD’S GRACE. Our job is to share the abounding love of Christ to the lost and to everyone.

CONCLUSION :

Quotation : People may not remember what you said or what you did. But they will always remember how you made them feel.

Continue to show Christ’s life that is in you to everyone. Encourage them, serve them, love them, care for them.