



“Effective Ministry”

The Church’s Calling
Ephesians 3:8-13

Ministry requires :

I. Filling - “Unto me...is this grace given” (v. 8)

We are empowered to:

A. Prostrate (Humility) – “*who am less than the least*”

B. Proclaim (Passion) – “*I should preach ...Christ*”

C. Produce (Consistency) – “*to make all see*”

II. Faith – “that I should” (vs. 9-11)

We are committed to a :

A. Display – “*might be known*”

B. Design - “*according to the eternal purpose*”

C. Dependence - “*He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*”

III. Fight - “which is your glory” (vs. 12-13)

We embrace :

A. Confidence – “*boldness & access with confidence*”

B. Courage – “*ye faint not*”

C. Cost – “*my tribulations for you*”

Sentence Sermon:

“Ministry benefits others when done in God’s Power and for His Glory!”

Additional Verses

Purpose – “prosthesis”

- Acts 11:23; 27:13
- Romans 8:28; 9:11
- II Timothy 1:9; 3:10
- Matthew 12:4
- Hebrews 9:2

Faint – “ekkakeo”

- II Corinthians 4:1, 16
- Luke 18:1
- Galatians 6:9
- II Thessalonians 3:13

Boldness – “parrhesia”

- II Corinthians 7:4
- John 7:26
- Acts 14:13, 2, 31
- Hebrews 4:16

Questions to Ponder:

- 1. What reasons would Paul use to support him being the leaster of the saints?
- 2. What percentage of the knowledge of God do you possess?
- 3. How do we show that we do not understand the manifold wisdom of God?
- 4. How was Paul’s tribulations the Ephesian’s glory? Whose trouble been your glory?

INTRO:

Lots of Infinitives of purpose in this passage! Most importantly it is “to minister”

Who is suppose to do ministry? The answer is simply, “all those who have received the gift of grace of God.” Ephesians 3:7

READ

1 Corinthians 12:6, 7, 11, 12, 25, 26

Ephesians 4:1, 2, 11, 12, 13a

To do ministry...we must be equipped...to be equipped...we must first understand how ministry works...that is the subject of today's passage.

V. 8

- Unto me is this grace given = indicating not only a gift but a stewardship, not only a delight but a deep sense of responsibility
- Who am less than the least = Comparative Superlative = “leaster” or more least
 - word here used--\~elacistotero\~---does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - Spurgeon explains how Paul attained as well as how every believer can obtain humility, “If you seek humility, try hard work; if you would know your nothingness, attempt some great thing for Jesus. If you would feel how utterly powerless you are apart from the living God, attempt especially the great work of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, and you will know, as you never knew before, what a weak unworthy thing you are.”
- of all saints = considers himself as part of the saints...obviously not in some people's mind because he is still alive !!
- That I should = Paul is going to lay out his responsibility as he understands it:
 - To Preach
 - Among the Gentiles = to Whom
 - The unsearchable riches of Christ = The What
 - The Gospel
 - Unsearchable = literally means untraceable, can not track the footprints, fathomless, never fully

comprehended (cp. Romans 11:33 – God’s wisdom.

- Perhaps like the good deed done by

- **The stewardship of the mystery.** — The apostle felt that whatever had been communicated to him was not for himself alone, but for all his fellow-disciples. Hence he was ever accounting himself a steward of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1). This is the clue, also, to his assertion that he was a debtor to all men for Christ’s sake. What was given him was on deposit for others. See to it that you count nothing you possess or know as your own; look on all as a sacred trust.

- **The exercise of his stewardship.** — “To preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men know.” It is not enough to proclaim, as a herald might; we must stay with the dull of wit and slow of thought, elaborating, explaining, and insisting, till we have made them see what a Savior Jesus is, and how rich the soul may be that uses his unsearchable wealth. (Meyer, F. B.)

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- **V. 9**

- To make all *men* see = to “to shed light or illuminate”
 - What is the fellowship of the mystery
 - Which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God = infinitive...on purpose
 - Who created
 - all things
 - By Jesus Christ

- **V. 10**

- To the intent = for the purpose of
 - Unto the principalities and powers = who is the audience = angels and demons
 - Might be known = to be made recognizable or be made known
 - By the church = through (means of) the church...it is an example
 - The manifold = many sided, variegated, varied (robes and hems) embroidered pattern or variety of colors in flowers
- Possibly better rendered “ so that through the church, the complex beauty of the wisdom of God throughout the ages might be recognized by everyone.

V. 11

- According to the eternal purpose =” to accomplish the purpose that runs through the ages” = to bring glory to God !
- In Christ Jesus Our Lord = Jesus is sufficient For:
 - Our Salvation
 - Our Sanctification
 - Our Glorification
 - God’s Eternal Plan and Purpose

V. 12

- In whom we gave boldness and access with confidence = Jesus delivers
- By faith = means for laying hold of what He delivers
- Of Him = in Him ...where our faith becomes effective.

- Which is your glory = It has been not only for their gain but for their glory...they should not regret Paul's painful work with them but allow his suffering to make them shine in reflecting the awesome working of God in their Lives !!

V. 13

- Wherefore = based on this BIG PICTURE :
 - It is not Paul's greatness that makes him effective
 - It is Paul's calling to preach the Word and help others "get it" when it comes to God's wisdom and will.
 - It is God through Jesus who has created everything with their complexities
 - It is the church that God chose to use to help everyone recognize His wisdom
 - It is by faith in Jesus that there can be boldness, access, and confidence.
- I desire that you = I want you to:
 - Faint not = to grow weary, to be discouraged, to be a coward, to give to in to evil.
 - At my tribulation for you = at my pressure or trouble I deal with in helping you.

Author Bob George has observed that it's possible for a Christian to live as a "practical atheist." That's a person who, despite right doctrine, "approaches life as if he were the only resource available." Such an approach is as unnecessary and impractical as buying a powerful car and then pushing it.