

Prisoners For Christ?

Ephesians 3:1-13



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“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles” - v1

“I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.” - v13



Prisoners For Christ?

1. Paul's Calling
2. Paul's Transformation
3. Paul's Mission



Ephesians 3:1-13

NIV - God's Marvellous Plan for the Gentiles

NASB - Paul's Stewardship

ESV - The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

“The mystery of the gospel revealed in
God's marvellous plan for the Gentiles and
assigned to Paul's stewardship”



God's Calling

- Basic calling for all believers
- Specific calling at an individual level for certain tasks or seasons of that individual's life



“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” - Ephesians 1:11

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” - Ephesians 1:13



Ephesians 3:1

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles”



Ephesians 3:2-3

“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.”



Acts 9:15-16

“But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”



Ephesians 3:2-3 (The Message)

“I take it that you’re familiar with the part I was given in God’s plan for including everybody. I got the inside story on this from God himself, as I just wrote you in brief.”



What is God's call
for your life?



2 Samuel 23:3-4 (ESV)

“The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me: When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.”



God's calling for your life in every season is a call to live for His eternal purposes and not for the mundane and temporal.



Ephesians 3:7

“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power.”



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Ephesians 3:7

“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power.”



2 Corinthians 5:23-29

“Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move.



2 Corinthians 5:23-29

I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?"



Ephesians 3:8

“Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ”



Paul

“I am the least of the apostles...”

- 1 Cor 15:9

“I am the very least of all the saints...”

- Eph 3:8

“I am the *foremost of sinners*...”

- 1 Tim 1:15



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Ephesians 3:9

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



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Ephesians 3:9

- “to make plain” – photizo (Greek)
- bring to light, or give light, to enlighten, to illumine, to instruct, inform, teach and imbue with saving knowledge



Ephesians 3:9

- “administration” – oikonomia (Greek)
- stewardship and dispensation of duty around the management of a household or household of affairs



Ephesians 3:10

“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”



Mission of the church: Everyone on earth has a right to:

- hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- have a Bible available in his/her own language
- have a Christian fellowship available nearby, to be able to meet for fellowship regularly each week, and to have Biblical teaching and worship with others in the Body of Christ
- have a Christian education available for children
- have the basic necessities of life: food, water, clothing, shelter and healthcare
- lead a productive life of fulfilment spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally and physically



It starts with...

- Does everyone in your life know that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ? At home, at school, at work?
- For those that do, do you share your faith openly telling them about your values, hopes and beliefs?
- Do you desire for them to come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour?
- Do you pray for them?
- Do you pray for the workplace and for God to establish His Kingdom here on earth?



Ephesians 3:11-12 (NIV)

¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”



Ephesians 3:11-12 (ESV)

“¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.”



Ephesians 3:11-12 (The Message)

“All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God and then executed in Christ Jesus. When we trust in him, we’re free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go.”



Ephesians 3:13

“I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.”



Ephesians 3:7-8 (The Message)

“This is my life work: helping people understand and respond to this Message. It came as a sheer gift to me, a real surprise, God handling all the details. When it came to presenting the Message to people who had no background in God’s way, I was the least qualified of any of the available Christians. God saw to it that I was equipped, but you can be sure that it had nothing to do with my natural abilities.”



What is your life work?



“I found myself increasingly drawn to the idea that God had put me in prison for a purpose and that I should do something for those I had left behind.” – Chuck Colson



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