

## For The Sake Of Others

April 18, 2019

### Ephesians 3:1-13 ESV

- 1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles--
- 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you,
- 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.
- 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,
- 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.
- 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
- 7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.
- 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,
- 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,
- 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
- 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.
- 13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

### Ezekiel 34:2-6 ESV

- 2 *"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?*
- 3 *You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep.*
- 4 *The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.*
- 5 *So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts.*
- 6 *My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.*

## Nothing of eternal value comes without sacrifice and suffering.

### Luke 13:23-27 ESV

- 23 *And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them,*
- 24 *"Strive (agōnizomai - labour fervently, fight, struggle with difficulties and dangers, endeavour with strenuous zeal) to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

25 *When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.'*  
26 *Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.'*  
27 *But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!'*

- *This striving is not to earn or merit our salvation, as though we are saved by works and not faith.*
- *This striving is necessary (few will be willing to pay the price) to overcome the opposition of:*
  - *satanic warfare from the kingdom of darkness*
  - *persecution from the world system*
  - *temptations of the world*
  - *sin in our flesh*

*Philippians 2:17-18 ESV*

*17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.*

*18 Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

**God uses our sacrifices and sufferings to not only accomplish His will in us, but that we can be used as vessels of salvation, healing, hope, mercy, deliverance and life to others. God never wastes the sufferings of His saints.**

*2 Corinthians 1:3-6 ESV*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

*5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*

*6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.*

*2 Corinthians 4:7-18 ESV*

*7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*

*8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;*

*9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;*

*10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.*

*11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*

*12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

*13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak,*

*14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.*

*15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.*

*16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.*

17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,  
18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

*"Believers keep up their walk with God, by watching and noting his providential dealings with them. If we believe the scriptures, we must believe what our Lord hath declared therein, 'That the very hairs of his disciples' heads are all numbered; and that a sparrow does not fall to the ground, (either to pick up a grain of corn, or when shot by a fowler), without the knowledge of our heavenly Father'. Every cross has a call in it, and every particular dispensation of divine providence has some particular end to answer in those to whom it is sent...If believers, therefore, would keep up their walk with God, they must from time to time hear what the Lord has to say concerning them in the voice of His providence."*

—George Whitefield

**Though it may appear that natural doors have been shut and opportunities do not exist, God's work continues on in ways that human wisdom would have never imagined.**

2 Timothy 2:8-10 ESV

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel,  
9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!  
10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

- Written AD 60-62.
- To the Church in Ephesus from Paul under house arrest in Rome.
- Ephesus (in modern-day Turkey) was a Greek, cosmopolitan, port city.
- The Temple to Diana (Artemis) is one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.

*The apostle could receive visitors but couldn't travel. Despite living in a home, Paul was more than likely chained to a Roman soldier 24 hours a day. Moreover, because he knew that a trial was years away, these were his living conditions for the foreseeable future—perhaps for the rest of his life."*

—Charles Stanley, "Joyful in Jail?"

Acts 28:16-24 ESV

16 And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.  
17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.  
18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case.  
19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar--though I had no charge to bring against my nation.  
20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain."  
21 And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you.

22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

Acts 28:30-31 ESV

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,

31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Philippians 1:12-17 ESV

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.

16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.