

Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday ~ Sunday, October 9, 2016

“Alive in Christ: The Mystery in Christ”

Ephesians 3:1-13

Paul was an _____ of Christ Jesus, bought with a _____, and given the special mission of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; and he therefore considered himself a prisoner of _____.

Paul believed that whatever he did and wherever he went, was all under _____ control—and without the Lord’s _____, he wasn’t subject to the plans, power, punishment, or imprisonment of any man or government

_____ is so important. And how we view and react to _____ is more important than the circumstances themselves. If all we can see is our immediate situation, then our circumstances will _____ us.

If Paul been only able to see his circumstances—if he thought his life was in the hands of his persecutors, jailers, or the Roman Empire, he would have long since have given up in _____.

Paul lived and worked by _____, not by sight.

“... God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

5 CLUES THAT REVEAL THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

Clue #1: The _____ of the mystery.

“This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit...” (Ephesians 3:1-5)

Commission = *oikonomia* =

Steward is someone who is _____ with something by another; a person who _____ another person’s property or financial

affairs; or who _____ anything as the agent of another; a superintendent, guardian, keeper, manager, representative, _____, caretaker, _____.

Paul is telling them that this new, unique way God has chosen to administer His grace is the mystery of the _____.

Throughout the Old Testament, God dealt almost exclusively with His chosen _____, the Jews. Because His chosen people _____ Christ, God began a new mysterious work.

A work that was _____ in the past, but was now revealed to him and the other apostles and prophets, through the _____. They, in turn, _____ it down in Scripture.

Since the mystery of the church has been passed to us in Scripture, it is becomes our responsibility to be faithful _____ as well.

“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

How trustworthy have you been in stewarding this mystery?

How trustworthy have you been with the message of the gospel?

Clue #2: The _____ of the mystery.

“And this is God’s plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God’s children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 3:6)

The wall that divided Gentiles and Jews is gone, and because of the shed blood of Jesus, all believers are fellow _____ with Him—entitled to the same inheritance.

We’re all _____. When we become part of this wonderful mystery called the church, we’re _____ into the family of God.

Verse 6 tells us that we’re not only fellow heirs, we’re also all a part of the _____. That’s why the church is such a wonderful mystery.

The Jews were heirs of the _____ and could be considered family in that way, however, no where are they ever said to be of the same _____, like the church.

When we submit ourselves to the _____ rather than the spirit of our own ideas, opinions, and feelings, we begin to act like the body we are.

The key to the mystery of us all being the same body is that we have to be _____ like, and in order to do this, we have to _____ ourselves.

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

How Christ-like are you?

Do you need to do a little decreasing or emptying?

Clue #3: The _____ of the mystery.

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ...” (Ephesians 3:7-9)

Minister = diakonos =

If you’ve been saved by the blood of Christ, God has empowered you to be His _____. He has given you the responsibility to pass on the wonderful _____ of the church to other people. The great thing is, when God calls us, He also _____ us.

Paul understood _____; he remembered who he was before Christ saved him; he understood that without Christ, he was a dead sinner. He realized that everything he was, was because of _____: His love, His grace, His mercy.

The world is watching us to see if we live what we profess to believe, and when we’re _____ and boastful, we not only show ourselves to be hypocrites, but even worse, we _____ God.

When we seek to be _____ like Paul—when we don’t brag about our righteousness, but instead, about God’s grace, we’re being effective _____ of the mystery.

Fellowship = koinonia =

We can impact the world for Christ if we show it the unselfish, self-_____ love we have for _____ and for God.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

Do you see yourself as a minister of the gospel?

How humble are you in your witness?

What impact are you having on the world around you?

Clue #4. The _____ of the mystery.

“God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10-11)

The wisdom of the mystery is that our _____ is a whole lot bigger than we might think.

God has chosen the church to demonstrate His _____ to all of creation—seen and unseen. The church is engaged in a _____ of cosmic proportions, and we are on the witness stand, as character _____ for God.

Is God’s manifold wisdom made known through you?

It is made known to this community, much less to powers and principalities?

Clue #5: The _____ of the mystery.

“Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God’s presence. So please don’t lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honoured.” (Ephesians 3:12-13)

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HEART

- A _____ heart.
- A _____ heart. God has given us a powerful tool called _____, that gives us access to the very throne room of God

“Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

- A _____ heart.

How would you describe your heart?