

## GLEANINGS FROM EPHESIANS PART 13

From George Wood

EPH. 3:7-13

Last lesson we learned of the "mystery of Christ"...that Jews and Gentiles were now "fellow heirs and fellow members of the body...fellow partakers" of the promises of Christ.

In 3:7 Paul announces that he was made a minister to preach this mystery to the Gentiles. He describes it as a "gift of God's grace"...bestowed upon him "according to the working of His power".

We know from 1Cor. 12 and from Romans 12 that God, through the power of His Spirit, has given each of us a gift. A "gift" in this context means "the ability to do something". And according to Rom. 12:6, we are each to "exercise them (our gifts) accordingly".

Do you see the connection between your "gift" and your "ministry"? Ministry is the area or setting in which you exercise your gift. In other words, your gift opens the door to your ministry...whatever your ministry, your gift should be at work. So KNOW YOUR GIFT! USE YOUR GIFT! DON'T LET IT REMAIN IDLE! God has given it as a gift specifically to you for the betterment of His Church. We all benefit when you use it.

It is interesting in verse 8 that Paul describes himself as "the least of all saints". This is an interesting description of himself and reflects a keen understanding of his fleshly nature...a far cry from the puffed up, prideful Pharisee he once was. He often described himself in similar fashion throughout his epistles and the closer he came to death, the more aware he became of his own unworthiness. Note the progression:

1. 54 AD: "I am the least of all the apostles" (1 Cor 15:9)
2. 60-61 AD: "I am the very least of saints" (Eph 3:8)
3. 63 AD: "I am the 'foremost' of all sinners" (1 Tim 1:15)

Like Paul, have you noticed how your awareness of sin increases as you grow older in faith and years? More acute becomes our sense of sin and weakness. We more clearly see ourselves for what we truly are apart from Christ. And as a consequence, we become more and more dependent upon HIS GRACE.

One last note. Paul speaks of "the unfathomable riches of Christ". We can easily change the word "unfathomable" to "incomprehensible" or "incalculable". In Christ we enjoy riches beyond our imagination...beyond our understanding. There is no limit...no measure...no boundaries to the blessings we have in Christ, no matter what our circumstances (remember Paul was in prison when he wrote these words). WE ARE TRULY BLESSED!!!

Even though in-person Sunday School starts this week, I still intend to continue this Ephesian study every other week. Many people still cannot attend in person, so this will be a way to stay connected. God bless. George