

Living In Resurrection Power
(Week 4)
Ephesians 3
“Turning The Power On”

Introduction

“For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—you have heard, haven’t you, about the administration of God’s grace that He gave to me for you? The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. By reading this you are able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.”
Ephesians 3:1-4

When the Apostle Paul wrote his famous letter to the church at Ephesus, he was being held prisoner in a Roman dungeon. Yet, he did not see himself as a prisoner of Rome. He considered himself a prisoner of Christ. For it was his preaching that in Christ the Jew and the Gentile were made one, that had landed him in prison. Paul had been called to preach the message of the gospel to the Gentiles, and although some Jewish believers were fine with the message being preached to the pagan Gentiles, the thought of them being considered as “spiritual equals” in Christ was unacceptable to many of them. Orthodox Jews considered Gentiles to be no better than dogs, and while Jewish Christians were a bit more accepting, they still regarded themselves as God’s “favorite sons”, as it were. The preaching of Paul that all are made equal into one body had in fact made him an offense to the majority of his own people. So much so, that there were many Jewish leaders that were seeking to take his life.

Paul made no apologies for his message, however, for he knew that his conviction of preaching oneness in Christ had come from Christ Himself, and there was no way that Paul would have been willing to compromise the message that God had entrusted to him just to save his own skin. He was willing to lay down his life for the cause of Christ. This is what the conviction of a true believer is supposed to look like, an unwavering commitment to the gospel of Jesus, no matter the consequences. No one could ever accuse Paul of being a “fair weather” fan of The LORD Jesus Christ!

He had assumed that the Ephesian believers were aware of his imprisonment and would no doubt have questions as to why he was in chains, if he was truly following God’s command. Why would God allow his suffering? But the fact is that God had a bigger plan for Paul than even the old apostle could understand. Paul had longed to preach in Rome, and no doubt he longed to preach to the Ephesians in person. If he had been able to do so, then only they would have heard his teaching. But because of his imprisonment, Paul was forced to write down the sermons that he desired to preach for them. These sermons have given the church through the ages access to incredible riches of God’s wisdom.

Were it not for Paul’s imprisonment in Rome, we would not have in our *Bibles* the books of *Ephesians* or *Colossians*. And, had Paul been able to freely go to Rome when he wished, we would not have in our possession the book of *Romans*! Can you imagine how the loss of these great writings would have impacted the church? You see, we do not always understand what God is up to in our lives, but it is often through our hardship that He does a tremendous work. Paul fully understood that he belonged to Christ, and as such, nothing could happen in his life the Christ had not allowed. He accepted his imprisonment as part of God’s plan, and in fact, it truly had been! Paul was a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of the Gentiles.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wanted the church to understand that they have access to great power in Christ Jesus. He describes this power in chapters one and two. It is the Power of The Holy Spirit, the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead (**1:18-20**). In chapter three, he tells them how to access this awesome power. We, as believers, need to have complete working knowledge of just how to utilize the Spirit’s power, for we are called to be **Stewards** of Grace, **Sent** to **Show** God’s wisdom, **Saturated** by The **Spirit**, and **Sown** in the **Savior’s** love.

Stewards of Grace

“You have heard, haven’t you, about the administration of grace that He gave to me for you? The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. By reading this you are able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. This was not made known to people in other generations as it is now

revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by The Spirit: The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of His power. This grace was given to me—the least of all the saints—to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of Christ, and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”
Ephesians 3:2-9

Paul is fairly certain that the Ephesians are aware of his imprisonment, but he wants them to fully understand the reasoning for it all. It was all a part of God's plan. He was a prisoner because of his unrelenting message of the oneness that all believers share in Christ. This was his calling, to preach this great message of hope and inclusion to the Gentiles. The phrase translated “administration of grace” is better translated “stewardship of grace”, for Paul had been entrusted with this great revelation from God that all peoples are equal in Christ Jesus, for:

“There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
Galatians 3:28

This is the very heart of the gospel of Christ. It is what Christ Himself prayed for in the Garden of Gethsemane, before He went to the cross. No one had ever before seen this coming for it had been hidden by God as a “mystery” to be revealed by the birth of The Church. The prophets of old had not known of this truth. It was a new revelation, and Paul had been entrusted with the dispensing of this truth.

We, too, have been entrusted (given stewardship) with this wondrous message, that in Christ all are made one. There is no room for division of any kind within the body. To view others in any way as “less than” is blasphemy against the very cross of Christ. He died... to make us ONE. We must be, if we are to be anything like what God intended..., stewards of God's grace! Paul was willing to lose his freedom and his very own life to proclaim this truth. The question is... are we?

It is important to note that Paul calls himself “the least of all the saints”. Here is this wonderfully Spirit-filled man, arguably one of the closest men to God who ever lived (after all he wrote more books of *The Bible* than Moses!), referring to himself as the least of all believers! This is the same guy who wrote most of *The New Testament*. He had an incredible pedigree of religious instruction, and yet, the closer he got to Christ, the less that he thought of himself.

This is exactly how true humility is found. The closer we get to The LORD, the more that we are made aware that we have nothing to be proud of. We are all but sinners saved by grace. Paul had learned to love the Gentiles so dearly, because he had finally been able to see himself for what he was. Do you know how you can tell if someone is “really spiritual”? They won't be impressed with themselves! I've know so many within the church who thought they were so very wonderful, haven't you? Well the simple fact is, the more that you think of you, the less you know of God!

Having trouble viewing other brothers and sisters as your equals in Christ? Get closer to God, and you'll start to think a lot less of yourself and more of others! It worked for Paul. The word translated “administration” in **verse 9** is actually “*Koinonia*” (koy-nohn-ee'-ah) in the Greek, and it means fellowship, a fellowship where all are one, and all are the same. It is a fellowship that only comes by the grace of God. Fellowship with God makes us humble, which allows us to have fellowship with one another. Only a believer can fully understand this truth. We have been entrusted to share it. We, like Paul, are called to be the “Stewards of God's grace”.

Sent to Show God's Wisdom

“This is so that God's multifaceted wisdom may now be made known through The Church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. This is according to His eternal purpose accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In Him we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. So then I ask you not to be discouraged over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory.”
Ephesians 3:10-13

There is some amazing information revealed to us in this passage of scripture. God chose that "His multifaceted wisdom" (The word actually means multicolored) would be revealed to the heavenly host THROUGH THE CHURCH! Do not miss the significance of this statement. The mystery of all being made one in the body of Christ wasn't disclosed in past ages. God waited to reveal his grand plan through the Church of Jesus Christ. We have been sent out into the world, so that all will see by watching us what God is actually up to! Talk about being entrusted with something. God has entrusted to The Church the revelation of His wisdom and not just to the angels in heaven.

You see, when Paul speaks of the "rulers and authorities in the heavens", he is actually referring to ALL creatures that exist in the spiritual realm, including the devil and his demonic hosts. They all can see what God is up to by watching The Church! The Church has been sent out to display the wisdom and intentions of God. We are sent out into this fallen world to show His wisdom, for all to see!

Now, I want you to ask yourself one question this morning. If the angels in heaven, along with Satan and all his demons, and all of mankind were to keep a close watch on Freedom Fellowship, would they all see the very wisdom of God in how we conduct ourselves? Would they see that in God's "multicolored" wisdom, that He is using us to reach out to everyone, so that they are made one in the body of Christ? Would all who observe us, see us living according to God's wondrous plan for His children? That's a lot to think about isn't it? Would we see the wisdom of God being lived out in your everyday life? This is exactly what we have been called to display.

Paul reminded the Ephesians not to be discouraged by his own circumstances, for through them God's wisdom was being shown. He, as a prisoner of Christ, was displaying God's wisdom by showing His grace to the Gentiles. Paul had totally accepted his lot as part of God's plan, and he wanted the Ephesians to do the same. If we truly have the "boldness and confident access" to God's throne at all times, then we must understand that whatever our circumstance, we are to first and foremost concern ourselves with God's glory. When we are close to Christ, then He will determine just how to best utilize us to show the wisdom of God. Paul had not been forgotten in that Roman prison! No. He was exactly where God had wanted him to be. He was making a difference in the world, even though he was not even free to move about in the world. We are studying this wonderful book of God's Word here today, because Paul was put in jail to write it! God always has a plan. And in this age of grace, He uses The Church to carry it out! When people look at us, they should see God's wisdom revealed!

Saturated by The Spirit

"For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." **Ephesians 3:14-17a**

After reassuring them that they are equal to all other believers in every way and are indeed full heirs to all the riches of Christ, Paul prays that the Ephesians will be able to access the power that they have been given. It is within this prayer he actually explains for every believer what they must do in order to "turn on the power" that we have all been granted in Christ. It is the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead, the wonder working power of The Holy Spirit. The first thing that Paul prays for the Ephesians is that they be strengthened with power in their inner being through The Holy Spirit allowing Christ to "dwell within their hearts through faith".

The key to understanding this verse can be found in the word translated "dwell". It is actually a combination of two Greek words and literally means to "settle down". Allow me to explain. If Sandi and I invited you to our home, we would most likely confine your visit to one or two rooms in our house. The doors to the rest of the home would more than likely be shut. You would not be invited into these rooms for various reasons. Possibly because they had not been cleaned, or because they are considered our own personal space and as such we are not willing to share. You more than likely have the similar arrangements when guests are invited into your home as well.

Therefore, when a guest is invited into our homes, they are not given full access. They are not allowed to "settle into our homes", as it were. If they were to be given complete access, then they could come and go as they pleased. If they entered a room that was not clean, then they could clean it out, throwing away anything that they felt was refuse or unnecessary. They wouldn't be just a guest. They would live there just as if the home was theirs, to coin a phrase often used in Southern hospitality we would say to them, "Make yourself at home."

This is exactly what Paul is saying that we must do in order for us to have access to the power of The Holy Spirit. We must completely yield ourselves over to Christ's control. He is to be given full access to every room in our hearts as it were. As we read His Word and pray, we open ourselves up fully for His inspection. Anything that we harbor within us that He feels is unclean, He must be allowed to clean out. Nothing can be held back from Him in our "spiritual house".

I am reminded here of our precious daughter in law. When she comes over to our home, if she sees that Sandi has left unclean dishes in the sink, she will immediately go and wash them! She is a bit OCD, and when you go into her house, it is always spotless. I truly believe that if you surprised her with a visit at any time of day, you would find her house spotless. My house on the other hand... not so much. Oh, if we know that you are coming, we will go through and tidy up a bit, but if you were to ever catch us by surprise with a visit, make no mistake, you would find some serious untidiness!

The LORD Jesus can only feel "settled down" in a spotless house. In heaven, rest assured that everything is immaculate. Therefore, He must be allowed to come into our place at any time and clean as only He can. He has every right. That's the privilege you gave to Him when you confess Him as LORD. If we hold nothing back from Him, giving Him the freedom to clean as He sees fit, then we will have access to The Power of The Holy Spirit. Without holiness, there can be no power within us! Oh, we have been given this power as part of our inheritance, but unless we allow The Spirit of God to sanctify us (make us holy), then we will only be going through this life operating in our own strength. We must be thoroughly **Saturated** by The Spirit in order to **turn on the power**. And trust me, He will never feel at home in a dirty house!

Sown in The Saviors Love

"I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." **Ephesians 3:17b-19**

When you turn over every "room" in your life to Christ, when He is able to "settle down" in your heart as you obey His commands, then you will be fully planted in His love. You will finally begin to experience the great love of God in your life. Christ reveals Himself to us as we obey:

"The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal myself to him." **John 14:21**

You see, to fully comprehend the love of Christ, you must first allow Christ to have control over all of your life. You must let Him come and "settle down" within you, allowing Him to clean what needs to be cleaned. For only as we are fully surrendered to Him can we ever fully realize just "how long, how wide, how high, and how deep is the love of Christ", as He reveals more and more of Himself to us.

I just love that verse! I love it, because when I think of just what kind of tool that you would need to measure the length, width, height, and depth of something, I always think of a cross! The cross is the perfect measuring stick for us to see all the dimensions of the love of Christ. We cannot even begin to scratch the surface of such great love in our own human way of thinking! But yet, here is Paul praying for us to fully experience it. It can only be fully realized, when we are completely yielded over to The Spirit. He is our power source. He is able and willing to fill us with Christ's boundless love, as only He can. We must completely surrender every access of our lives over to Him, in order to turn the power on. Only then can we live according to The Spirit. We need a supernatural transformation that only The Spirit can give. Or as Paul would say:

"Now to Him Who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us—to Him be glory in The Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." **Ephesians 3:20-21**

And Let all of God's people say... **TRUTH!!!**