

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —***

***The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 22  
Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules - Part 6”***

- ***We begin today by asking this question: Why are we spending some time in Ephesians when we were looking at the book of Acts and seeing the clear evidences of what I have called here in our studies “The Great Transition”? When the transition begins, when Paul goes forth to minister grace, God is still reaching out to Israel and he used Paul for that sending him to the Jews first. But as they progressively reject their own Messiah, he increasingly ministers to the Gentiles. The ministry in the assemblies is primarily to Gentile believers. But until the end of the transition marked by Acts 28:28, he is limited in his teaching also, “because of the Jews”. That changes dramatically in his prison ministry as we have been seeing here in the Ephesians letter.***
- ***We saw recently how Luke includes the main points of Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders in his Acts 20 account. They are important and fundamental, but as we have seen, the apostle of the Gentiles revealed so much more in his later “prison” letters written to the saints in Ephesus and Colosse. But this was the foundational teaching he gave earlier during those 3 years of training:***
  - ***Repentance and faith, the gospel of the grace of God, the whole counsel of God, the church purchased with Christ’s own blood, and the word of his grace as the instrument of building up the Body***
  - ***Paul’s warnings and exhortation to those Ephesian elders represents the end of his third missionary journey and the end of his face to face ministry to the Gentiles. After this he faced as had been prophesied years of bondage by magistrates of Rome and even finally the emperor himself in Rome itself. At that point his final message to the Jews assembled in Rome was that in light of their rejection of the risen Lord Jesus, their own Messiah, he would go only from that point forward to the Gentiles. That marked the end of his public ministry as recorded in the Acts account.***
  - ***The Post-Acts or Prison Ministry of Paul is primarily through his letters and especially the letters to the Ephesian and Colossian assemblies. Written after Acts 28:28, they contain the complete revelation of God to the Gentiles and the full teaching on the Dispensation of the Grace of God. No longer constrained by the***

*limitations on Paul's teaching when Israel was still a focus of the Lord and of his apostle, the fullness of God's abundant grace toward sinners, whether Jew or Gentile, is found there. So, as I have titled our studies here recently, they present "the Glorious Sweep of God's Abundant Grace" as the Great Transition Period ends and the Dispensation of the Grace of God reaches its maturity.*

*With this background, let's continue our studies here in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4, after a brief review of his teachings in chapter 3:*

**Review: "Blessings Untold for the Ephesians But As Always, Grace Rules — Part 4"**

- ***Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — Chapter 3 — The Revelation of the Mystery - Part 1***
  - ***Remember, Paul's letter is a song of praise to Almighty God. Let's sing along as surely the angels were as they first heard of these truths and as they continue we can be sure to do so today nearly 2000 years later. How many saints of God have joined them in this song? Have we? And now, chapter 3 with the revelation of the sacred secret given to Paul and called here "the mystery":***

***[REREAD ] Eph. 3:1-7***

***1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, [The dispensation of the grace of God]***

***2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:***

***3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, [The dispensation of the mystery of the Christ, who is the Head of the Body]***

***4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)***

***5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;***

***6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: [The nature of this sacred secret and its essence for Gentiles in particular]***

**7 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. [Paul, administrator of grace and conveyor of grace truth to the Gentiles]**

- ***The “mystery dispensation” of the Christ, verses 3-4, given to Paul for the Gentiles: This dispensation was a mystery or “sacred secret” until revealed to (and then through) Paul. It could not have been known otherwise as verse 5 goes on to state.***
  - ***The nature of this sacred secret and its essence for Gentiles in particular, even “fellow heirs” of the same Body, verses 5-6: Here two parts of the truth of the mystery dispensation are revealed and there is much more beyond this. These two are Jew and Gentile as co-partakers or co-heirs of God and of Christ and as equal members of the joint-body, the Body of Christ.***
- ***The Revelation of the Mystery and Its Consequence for Us Gentiles - Part 2***
    - ***Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — The eternal purpose of God — to make all see the dispensation, verses 8-12:***
      - ***“the unsearchable riches of Christ”: See Rom. 11:33 where this is translated “past finding out”. It signifies that it cannot be found in other scripture no matter how hard or carefully one might look.***
      - ***“the fellowship of the mystery”: The best manuscripts here have “dispensation” in place of “fellowship” although the essential meaning would be clear in any case.***
      - ***“which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God”: “hid in God” and not merely hidden in the word. This intensifies the meaning even of verse 8. It was therefore the express purpose of God that the mystery truth not be known previously to its revelation to Paul.***
      - ***“The eternal purpose of God — to make all see the dispensation - verses 8-11 - wherein untold “unsearchable” riches for Gentiles are revealed***

- *On earth unknown and unknowable until now, he writes - since they were “hid in God” from the beginning (and foundation — see Eph. 1:9, “the mystery of his will”) of the world (or age). They were part of his eternal plan but unrevealed and kept secret until given to Paul as part of his divine deposit. And his great purpose was to reveal them to “all”, even “the principalities and powers in heavenly places”. So this truth is not hidden in the Bible to be discover by mankind in due course of time as so many think. It was hidden in God himself!*
- *So before the Mystery was revealed to Paul, even those dwelling in the heavenlies could not know! The dispensational significance of this must not be minimized. However, once God had unveiled the dispensation of the mystery, it became the responsibility of the Church which is his Body to fulfill this part of the eternal plan that all, even those in the heavenlies might know! Indeed, we are the intended vehicle to bring this knowledge to even angels, principalities and powers.*
- *Knowing all of this, we surely should be bold to minister this grace unfailingly everywhere. It was Paul’s great purpose to make it known. Is it ours as well? It is not too late to begin.*
- *Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — The Eternal Purpose of God, Its Consequence or the final divine purpose or goal. Then, finishing the chapter:*

***[REREAD ] Eph. 3:13-21***

***13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.***

***14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

***15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,***

***16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;***

***17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,***

***18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;***

***19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.***

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,  
21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

- *Not only the Spirit but also Christ dwells in the hearts of believers today, verses 16-17. It is for us to learn of him as he dwells in each of us saints day by day as we redeem the time. Enjoying him is our privilege under the full riches of his grace! The dimensions of Christ's love for the saints is beyond knowledge but still available, verses 17-19. This love for us is inexhaustible and beyond our limited comprehension, he writes. That is no match for his grace and its sufficiency. Amen?*
- *The fullness of God is available today, verses 19-21. There are no words apart from these that can adequately express such riches. "The fullness of God"!*
- *Again, the whole focus here is on knowing the depths of the love of Christ, NOT on trying again and again to become more like Christ was in his earthly ministry. Paul is our example today as he followed the heavenly Christ. And far, far more of his growth and abundance awaits us as his plan and purpose for us all is manifested fully for all eternity as he wrote here:*

*Eph. 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

***Today's Outline: Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — Chapter 4 — Experiencing the Full Redemption in Christ Jesus!***

- *Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — The Seven Dimensions of the Keeping of the Unity of the Spirit, Verses 3-6*
- *Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — The Full Measure of Grace Given to Believers through the Resurrected Christ, Verses 7-11*
- *Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — The Perfecting of the Saints and Its Goal, The Unity of the Faith, Verses 12-16*
- *Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — The New Man and the Very Practical Difference It Makes, Verses 17-32*

***I. Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians — The Seven Dimensions of the Keeping of the Unity of the Spirit, Verses 3-6:***

- *With all this wonderful teaching if chapters 1-3 well in mind I trust, Paul launches now into the more practical part of his letter, chapters 4-6. As the “prisoner of the Lord”, he now exhorts us all:*

**[READ ] Eph. 4:1-6**

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

**3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

**4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

**5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

**6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

- *Verse 3 - “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”: To be diligent and fully engaged in “keeping” (carefully watching to protect) that unity under the control of “peace”, already established! Amen. By a gracious enabling of God through the Spirit we may do this well indeed. Next we see the foundations of what God has supplied:*
- *Seven unities of the Spirit identified here and all already our possession. This is so important to see. There are unities where formerly there were two, but now one. The Great Transition has ended and now all are Gentiles from God’s perspective. There are seven dimensions to this great Unity.*

*These “unities” are to be KEPT, not to be PRODUCED somehow! Many, many commentaries to astray here missing the most important truths of grace altogether in the process. These have already been established. They are our reality and are fundamental for us to comprehend fully. There are applications as the apostle writes here, but they are all founded on the truths taught here about what has already been accomplished through the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. These truths were not for a prior or a future dispensational plan, but are for this current dispensation alone. They are to be respected and protected, kept, as the apostle writes here. What are those Seven Dimensions of his abundant working according to grace?*

- *There is One Body: Not two bodies of believers, but only one.*
- *There is One Spirit: Not one in reference to Israel and the Jews with signs and wonders but only one.*
- *There is One Hope of our calling: Not two, one an earthly and prophesied inheritance and another a heavenly but kept secret, but only one.*
- *There is One Lord: Not one Lord for the believing Jews, and another for believing Gentiles, but only one.*
- *There is One Faith: Not one mingled with works-obedience as required by the Law and another free from the Law, but only one by grace through faith alone, independent of all works of law.*
- *There is One Baptism: Not by water and with the [Pentecostal] Spirit but by the Spirit only. This is real and effectual baptism, not one that was only “symbolic”.*
- *There is One God and Father of All: The same God is Father of all, whatever one’s status and heritage.*

**II. Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — The Full Measure of Grace Given to Believers through the Resurrected Christ, Verses 7-11:**

- *Grace is central and its fullness has consequences:*

**[READ ] Eph. 4:7-11**

**7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;**

- *The gifts then still given and effective (note that many transitional gifts had already been discontinued). Even some of these would soon pass away, for example, apostle and prophet. But some would continue as we know they have, namely, evangelists, pastors and teachers.*

***III. Paul's Testimony to the Ephesians – The Perfecting of the Saints and Its Goal, The Unity of the Faith, Verses 12-16:***

- *Now, as we go further here, we shall see that there is no end in sight for this ongoing ministry in the Body of Christ throughout this dispensation of the grace of God. God's goal is our maturing, our "perfection", and his empowering in each of us is oriented to that growth with its desired outcome. If only we would all take it to heart by faith and enjoy his great working always.*

***[READ ] Eph. 4:11-16***

**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;**

**12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:**

**13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:**

**14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;**

**15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:**

**16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

- *So, God's goal in ministering the grace gifts during this dispensation is to mature the saints in this now revealed grace-focused administration, verses 12-16.*

***Eph. 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Grace was given to Paul (see chapter 3 for that) and it is now given to us through the ministry of himself to others and from them to us.***

- *This administration is God's and his working is according to those summarized Seven Dimensions listed before – and the Body of Christ is in the very center of that working. This may seem astounding considering that most Biblical teaching today is focused on the world and its system as if God is doing his great work there. But it is to the contrary here as we are seeing, as his greatest work*



***is by his grace in the hearts of believers. And with the Lord God it is clearly never a numbers game!***

***Now the apostle continues writing about how through the administration of those grace gifts (of which only evangelist, pastor, and teacher continue today), the saints may be built up in their “knowledge”, verses 13 and following. It is the knowledge of how God is working in this dispensation of his grace that is so critical, he writes. Why? Because satan is working his own cheap and destructive facsimile to deceive the saints and recruit them into his program, contrary always to the Lord God’s. What does this imply for those not receiving this teaching? Simply this, that they are not able to defend themselves against the enemies attacks since they are not even aware of the nature of his warfare, which is always to thwart the working of Almighty God. That working today is according to his abundant grace. Amen.***

***But how many today know these truths? Only if the grace gifts are properly administered may they properly know and fulfill God’s plan for this dispensation. “Speaking the truth in love ...” is how that revelation of God through Paul is to be communicated. There is so much in these words.***

- ***This of course also involves each member of the Body, not only those with those identified grace gifts. For the essence of the Head-Body relationship, verses 16, is that as the head of the Body, Christ provides the love that is then multiplied through every member, one to another. The analogy is a deep and transforming one, he says, as the knowledge of God’s working in this manner today is needed to fulfill his purpose for us. So the power of transformation is therefore in the word of this grace. Have we learned that or are we only just beginning??***

#### **IV. Paul’s Testimony to the Ephesians — The New Man and the Very Practical Difference It Makes, Verses 17-24:**

- ***Now the apostle reminds his reader of the way it was before for them and how it still is for so many unbelieving Gentiles (or Jew, for that matter, since there is no difference between them in the mind of God today), verses 17-19***

**[READ ] Eph. 4:17-19**

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

- *But the unregenerate Gentiles are not living in the same realm at all, for they are walking in “vanity of their minds”, with “their understanding darkened” and even “alienated from the life of God” “through their ignorance” and the “blindness of their hearts”. Even more, the consequence of this leaves them “past feeling” so they are engaged in a life of “lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness”. So much here to ponder, as the apostle opens our minds to the great gulf that separates the believer and the unbeliever.*
- *Well, he is not finished, for now a new and powerfully descriptive term is introduced, the “New Man” with the very practical difference this makes, verses 20-24:*

**[READ ] Eph. 4:20-24**

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

- *So we see that membership in the Body of Christ changes everything. Full rights and privileges already granted to the believer in Christ Jesus and now the opportunity to grow and mature under the principle of grace. The restrictions and demands of the Law are over. Even righteousness and holiness are part of the gift of God. We are free indeed from the bondage to the Law, and then of course, to sin, praise God!*
- *Though our Old Man continues along side the New Man, we are no longer bound to that old and fallen nature. If we reckon all of this to be true, we are liberated from its power (see Romans 6 and*

***Galatians 5). If we do not so reckon or take God at his word in these scriptures, we will still be under the influence of that power, or, open to his influence. And we will not be enjoying the wealth of his grace either.***

- ***This is all so encouraging. We will read to the end of the chapter to see the spiritual walk of the believer under grace clearly revealed in verses 25-32:***

***[READ ] Eph. 4:25-32***

**25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.**

**26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:**

**27 Neither give place to the devil.**

**28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.**

**29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**

**30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**

**31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:**

**32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

- ***This is one of the most wonderful overviews of the life of the believer under grace that may be found anywhere. Note well how grace makes the difference as the apostle writes here:***
  - ***We are mutual members of one another in the Body so speak truth ... don't give into the devil's desires. He wants to thwart that truth and its propagation no matter what.***
  - ***Don't steal but work hard and give to one another ...***
  - ***Minister grace through edifying words of grace, always!***
  - ***Don't grieve the Spirit because we are sealed unto the day of redemption***
  - ***Let all evil speaking be put away and kindness and gentleness take their place***
  - ***Why, because God, for Christ's sake, has already forgiven you. How different this is from what Christ taught during his earthly ministry where forgiveness of others was a***

***precondition for his forgiveness. It is so very different today.  
This is so very practical right? Praise God and amen!***

**Conclusions and Application:**

- ***Amen! Enjoy the Lord all, and the eternal riches of his grace already available now.***