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Ephesians 3:1-12

1. “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles--
2. if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you;
3. that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.
4. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,
5. which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;
6. *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,
7. of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.
8. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,
9. and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

10. so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.

11. *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12. in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.”

According to this passage, God gave Paul “the stewardship of God’s grace.” Now a steward is defined as one who is given responsibility to manage (distribute, or appropriate), another person’s property. As a steward of God’s grace, Paul was to manage, distribute, or appropriate the grace of God. And although it may not be to the extent that the apostle Paul received, all Christians have this same stewardship of managing God’s grace: in their own personal lives, and in sharing the grace of God with others.

This is both our privilege and utmost responsibility. A very clear example of this is when we forgive others when they sin against us, just as we have been forgiven by God.

In Paul’s case, as revealed in this morning’s text, the stewardship of God’s grace was primarily for the Gentiles and focused on preaching the mystery. It is interesting to note that Paul in his canonized letter to the Ephesians never clearly defines what this mystery is. In verse 3 he indicates that he had written previously to these brethren

about the mystery. But we do find a specific definition of the mystery, by the inspired Paul, in his Colossian letter. In Colossians chapter 1, verses 25-27 Paul states: “I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

So “Christ in you” is the mystery, which was hidden. And according to such passages as Romans 8:9-11 we understand that “Christ in you” is another term for the Holy Spirit that indwells the Christian’s body.

So to summarize: the stewardship of God’s grace centers on the Holy Spirit living in and working through the faithful Christian. The grace of God is secured for the Christian through the Spirit of Christ living in him. And this Holy Spirit is a river of living water, overflowing with God’s grace into the lives of those around us. This is known in the Bible as “the stewardship of God’s grace.”