**Sermon Notes**

**“A Prisoner with a Purpose”**

**Ephesians 3:1–13**

**1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. 7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.**

v. 1 “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles…”

* You can have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

v. 4 “The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are…”

 i) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ together with Israel

ii) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ together of the one body

iii) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ together in the promise

The gospel establishes a radical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

v. 7 “I became a servant of this gospel…”

* Grace always brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; it is never merely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

v. 8 “boundless riches in Christ”

* “boundless” = *anexichniastos* = ‘impossible to understand, unfathomable, impossible to comprehend.

v. 12 “in him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”

* Paul’s concern is not for access to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at some future day, but access to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. Are you stuck or “chained” to less-than-ideal circumstances? What does it look like for you to serve Christ through them?

2. Who are you “in chains” for? What ministry have you been graced with? How can you lovingly serve despite your limitations?

3. Are you learning to explore the riches of Christ heart, soul, mind, and strength?

4. Is our church, in the sort of life it leads, posing the kind of challenge to the powers of evil which provokes a reaction? What does it look like for you to live into this vision?