

This week we are going to look at the first half of Ephesians Chapter 3:

Ephesians 3:1-13 *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.
13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.*

Today, I want to look at some more practical aspects of the Grace of God as it applies to the Gospel and our responsibility as ambassadors of the Kingdom.

Let's focus on a few of the verses we read:

Verse 2 - *the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;*

stewardship

/'st(y)oʊərd, SHip/

the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

Greek word is *oikonomia* - the management, oversight, administration, of other's property

Stewardship is biblical way of talking about our life, and I think it would radically alter our lives if we thought of it in terms of stewardship—that we are accountable to God for what we do with what he has trusted to us.

We have been trusted by Him with resources and the care of everything - creation, gifts, talents, money, time, grace, the Gospel - for the sake of God's purposes in the world.

Today, we are focusing on our stewardship of the gift of Grace in our lives. Let's look at a few verses that talk about this.

1 Peter 4:10 *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Matthew 25:14-29 *"For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.*

15 *To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.*
16 *Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents.*
17 *In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more.*
18 *But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*
19 *“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.*
20 *The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’*
21 *His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’*
22 *“Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’*
23 *His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’*
24 *“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.*
25 *And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.*
26 *“But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.*
27 *Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.*
28 *Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’*
29 *“For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.*

In order to be good stewards of the Grace of God, we need to remember that we are ultimately “playing to an audience of one”.

Colossians 3:23,24 *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

Hale Pule Question:

Think about the unique way the Father created you with your personality, gifts, talents, interests, etc. In what ways do you think you can be a good steward of all that the Father has entrusted to you?

Let's look at a couple of more verses here in Ephesians 3:

Verses 7,8 - *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. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ*

One of the most common strategies the enemy has to keep us from being good stewards of the grace of God in our lives is to deceive us into thinking we are not worthy to be used by Him. If being used by God was based on merit, no one would qualify. We are worthy because of His grace and His grace alone.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;
8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;
9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*

Ephesians 2:8,9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Hale Pule Question:

Think about how the enemy would want to keep you in bondage to guilt, shame, and condemnation so that you would shrink back from being who He made you to be and do what He created you to do. Make sure you have asked the Father to forgive you of any sin in your life that is contributing to this. (1 John 1:9) Once you have prayed and are forgiven by the Father, if you feel comfortable to share these with your Hale Pule group, do so and ask them to pray for you to have the courage to move forward in obedience to the Father in all that He wants you to do and be. If you are not in a Hale Pule group or don't feel comfortable just yet to share – go before Him, ask forgiveness if necessary and ask Him to give you the courage to move forward biblically.

Let's look at a couple of more verses here in Ephesians 3:

Verses 10-12 *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.

Joshua 1:9 *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*

2 Timothy 1:6,7 *For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*

Hebrews 13:5,6 *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"
6 so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"*

Hale Pule Question:

How can you join together with other Jesus Followers (the Church) to be a good steward of the Grace of God in your life with courage and confidence?