

LESSON FIVE

THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GRACE & THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

Scripture Reading:

Eph. 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the Gentiles —

Eph. 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph. 3:3 That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,

Eph. 3:4 By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

Eph. 3:5 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 spirit,

Eph. 3:6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,

Eph. 3:7 Of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God which was given to me according to the operation of His power.

Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph. 3:9 And to enlighten all *that they may see* what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph. 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Eph. 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access in confidence through faith in Him.

Eph. 3:13 Therefore I ask *you* not to faint at my afflictions for your sake, since they are your glory.

Questions:

Section 1

1. What does the Greek word *Oikonomia* mean and what does it show of God's desire?
2. What does it mean to be a prisoner of Christ and what is the result?

Section 2

1. Define stewardship and what does it mean in God's economy?
2. What is grace, and what is the purpose of grace?
3. What qualifies us to minister Christ to others?

Section 3

1. What does it mean to walk worthily of God's calling?
2. What is a revelation, and what is God's economy?
3. Who are the saints, and why did Paul refer him as "less than the least of all saints"?

Section 4

1. What is the meaning of the word "apostle"? Who are the apostles and prophets today?
2. What do we need to see the revelation?
3. What is the mystery of God and the mystery of Christ?

[Section 1]

THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GRACE

Verses 2 through 21 of chapter three are a parenthesis, and 4:1 is a continuation of 3:1. In this parenthetical, beseeching word, the Apostle Paul described to the Gentile believers his ministry for them, a ministry which he received in the stewardship of grace through the revelation of the mystery of Christ. He also prayed in this parenthesis that the church might experience Christ to the fullest extent.

In this message we shall consider the stewardship of the grace of God. Paul says in 3:2, "If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you." In Greek, the word rendered "stewardship" in this verse is the same word rendered "dispensation" in 1:10 and 3:9. The stewardship of the grace is the dispensing of the grace of God into God's chosen people for the producing and building up of the church. Out of this stewardship comes the ministry of the apostle, who is a steward in God's house, ministering Christ as God's grace to God's household.

The Greek word translated "stewardship" in verse 2 is *oikonomia*. According to ancient usage, *oikonomia* denoted a stewardship, a dispensation, or an administration. At the time of Paul, many rich families had stewards whose responsibility was to distribute food and other necessities to members of the household. Our Father has a great family, a divine household. Because our Father has such vast riches, there is the need in His household for many stewards to dispense these riches to His children. This dispensing is the stewardship. Hence, a stewardship is a dispensation. The word "dispensation" here does not denote an age or means by which God deals with people; it refers to God's dispensing of His riches into His chosen ones. This dispensation is the stewardship with the dispensing ministry of the ministers of God. This ministry of dispensing is also God's administration. Today God administers by dispensing Himself into us. This stewardship, this dispensation, this administration, is God's economy. In the New Testament economy of God there is the desperate need for the stewardship of grace.

I. THE STEWARD—A PRISONER

In order to have such a stewardship, there is the need of stewards. Every apostle is a steward of God. As an apostle, Paul was a steward who dispensed the riches of God to His children.

A. Of Christ Jesus

Although Paul was a steward, in 3:1 he referred to himself as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the nations." The Apostle Paul considered himself the prisoner of Christ. Apparently he was confined in a physical prison; actually he was imprisoned in Christ. On the basis of such a status, the status of his actual living as a prisoner in Christ, he besought the saints. In releasing the revelation of God's mystery concerning the church in chapters one and two, Paul spoke on the basis of his status as the apostle of Christ through the will of God. That status was the authority of his revelation concerning the church. In beseeching the saints to walk worthily of God's calling, he spoke from his status as the prisoner of the Lord. His status as the apostle of Christ qualified him to release God's revelation, whereas his status as the prisoner of the Lord demonstrated his walk in the Lord, by which he could inspire and beseech the saints to walk in the Lord as he did.

Paul considered himself the prisoner of Christ because he had been imprisoned by Christ. Later, in 4:1 he refers to himself as "the prisoner in the Lord." Christ was Paul's prison. One day, the very Christ whom you love will become your prison. Sooner or later, every steward of God, every minister of God's riches, every faithful lover of Christ, will be imprisoned not only by Christ but also in Christ. The more you love Him, the more you will be in Him. Eventually, you will be in Him to such an extent that He will become your prison. Once you are placed in this prison, you will not want to get out, because you will love this prison very much. Here you enjoy Christ to the uttermost.

Everyone who loves the Bible has a high regard for the Epistle to the Ephesians. It would be a great loss for us not to have this book in the New Testament, for Ephesians contains the highest revelation in the Bible. This revelation was given to a man imprisoned in Christ, a man who enjoyed Christ as his prison. This indicates that in order to see something so heavenly and divine, we need to be a prisoner in the Lord. The more freedom we have, the more blind we are. But if Christ is our prison, our eyes will be opened to see the heavenly vision, and we shall receive the highest revelation.

B. On Behalf of the Saints

Paul saw this vision on behalf of the saints, for as he says in 3:1, he was a prisoner on behalf of the Gentiles. If we enjoy Christ as our prison, we also shall see a vision not for ourselves, but for the church.

Many Christians read Ephesians again and again without seeing the revelation contained in it because they are not imprisoned in Christ. They are too free, and their freedom makes them blind. But if you are willing to lose your freedom, the vision will come to you. Which do you prefer to have—the freedom or the vision? We all need to pray, “Lord, for the sake of the heavenly vision, I am willing to lose my freedom. Lord, I want to be imprisoned in You. Others may think that I am suffering, but when I am imprisoned in You, I enjoy You to the uttermost.” The enjoyment of being imprisoned in Christ enables us to receive the heavenly revelation.

No doubt, there are precious truths in all the books of the Bible. But the sweetest and deepest truths are in Ephesians. These truths are conveyed in heavenly utterances such as, “Be strengthened into the inner man,” “Are renewed in the spirit of the mind,” and “Be filled unto all the fullness of God.” These heavenly expressions were uttered by one who saw a vision as a prisoner in Christ. While he was imprisoned in Christ, Paul saw what it was to be strengthened into the inner man, to be renewed in the spirit of the mind, and to be filled unto all the fullness of God. In principle, it is the same with us today. Whenever we enjoy freedom outside of Christ, we lose our spiritual sight. But if we are willing to abide in Christ as our prison, the vision will come, and our sight will be restored. The heavens will be open to us, and everything will become crystal clear.

In Ephesians 3 the Apostle Paul had a very high vision. It was in this chapter that he used the term “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (v. 8). What Paul saw regarding this is far beyond our understanding. Not even Paul himself had words adequate to express it. Eventually, he could speak only of the breadth and length and depth and height (v. 18). These dimensions, which are the dimensions of Christ, are actually the dimensions of the universe. As he was confined and restricted in a prison, Paul had a vision of the universal dimensions of Christ. Although you may consider yourself a little brother or sister, you also will see something on behalf of the church if you are willing to be a prisoner in Christ.

[Section 2]

II. THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GRACE

A. The Stewardship

The stewardship of the grace is the dispensing of the riches of Christ. According to the context of chapter three, grace refers to the riches of Christ. When the riches of Christ are enjoyed by you, they become grace. Paul’s ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers. A stewardess on an airplane dispenses food to the passengers; she does not dispense information on how to cook. Likewise, the Apostle Paul dispensed the riches of Christ to the saints. This is what we are doing in the ministry today.

1. According to God’s Economy

This stewardship is according to God’s economy. With God it is a matter of economy; with us it is a matter of stewardship. All the saints, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be, have a stewardship according to God’s economy. This means that every saint can infuse Christ into others. Even a young sister in high school can dispense Christ into her classmates. This dispensing of Christ into others is the stewardship according to God’s economy.

In the past we have pointed out that the heavens are for the earth, that the earth is for man, and that man is for God. The desire of God’s heart is to dispense Himself into man. The heavens and the earth are for this dispensing. This is the central point of the whole Bible. God does not want to remain in Himself; He wants to get into us. Therefore, in eternity past He purposed to dispense Himself into us. For the fulfillment of this purpose, God created the heavens for the earth, the earth for man, and man for Himself. God’s economy is to carry out the dispensing of Himself into man. We share in this economy through our stewardship, our ministry of dispensing the riches of Christ. Therefore, the stewardship of the grace is according to God’s economy.

The Apostle Paul was not the only one with a stewardship. In 3:8 he refers to himself as “less than the least of all saints.” This indicates that Paul was even smaller than we are. Our concept needs to be radically changed. If Paul could be a

steward, then we also can be stewards and dispense the riches of Christ into others.

2. For God's Dispensation

This stewardship of the grace is for God's dispensation. We have seen that the desire of God's heart is to dispense His riches, which actually are Himself, into His chosen people. After these riches have been dispensed into us, we need to take up the burden to dispense them into others. With God, these riches are His economy; with us, they are the stewardship; and when they are dispensed by us into others, they are God's dispensation. When God's economy reaches us, it becomes our stewardship. When we carry out our stewardship by dispensing Christ into others, it becomes the dispensation of God into them. Hence, we have the economy, the stewardship, and the dispensation.

Our concept of preaching the gospel needs to be uplifted. We should not be concerned merely with winning souls. Rather, we should preach the gospel to carry out God's economy by dispensing God into others. Go to school or to work for the purpose of carrying out your stewardship according to God's economy for His dispensation. We are not doing an ordinary work of gospel preaching. We are dispensing God into man. What a glorious ministry! What a wonderful stewardship! Praise the Lord that we all have such a stewardship! We have the privilege of dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ into others.

B. The Grace

Since our stewardship is the stewardship of the grace, we need to see what grace is. John 1:17 says that grace came through Jesus Christ. During the time of the Old Testament, there was law, but not grace. Grace did not come until Christ came.

Many Christians think that grace refers mainly to material blessings. But the Bible indicates that grace did not come before Christ. However, God certainly bestowed material blessings on His people before Christ came. Grace is nothing less than God Himself given to us, gained by us, and enjoyed by us. Before Christ came, God could not be given to anyone. No one could receive God or enjoy Him. But in Christ and through Christ we receive God, and God becomes our enjoyment. Therefore, grace is God Himself as our enjoyment. The stewardship of grace is the dispensing of God into people to be their enjoyment. Dispensing this grace into others is

our stewardship according to God's economy. Because we partake of God as our enjoyment, we can dispense Him as grace into others. This is the dispensation of grace.

III. THE MINISTRY OF A MINISTER

In 3:7 Paul says that he became a minister. In the New Testament there is just one ministry, which is the stewardship, the dispensing of God into people. The word "minister" corresponds to the word "steward," for a steward is one who serves by dispensing the necessities of life to others. Not only the brothers who minister the Word of God or the elders who care for the local building are ministers, but every saint, every member of the church, has a part in the ministry. Do not be cheated by the traditional concept and think that you are not a minister. A minister is simply one who serves. A minister of the gospel serves people with the gospel. If a young sister ministers Christ to her mother, she is carrying out the New Testament ministry. All the saints must be bold to declare that they are ministers. We must not only speak this but put it into practice. Young people, go to your parents and minister Christ to them. I encourage you all to fulfill this ministry.

A. According to the Gift of the Grace of God

Our ministry is according to the gift of the grace of God. To say that grace is God for our enjoyment means that grace is God as our life and life supply (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9). This life supply operates within us. By means of this operating life, we have a certain ability, which is the gift. Therefore, in 3:7 Paul speaks of being a minister "according to the gift of the grace of God."

All the saints have such a gift, such an ability. For example, my hand has the ability to grasp objects. This ability comes from the life blood in my body. If the blood does not flow into my hand, my hand will be short of life and therefore will not be able to function. But when the life blood flows into my hand, the blood operates within the hand to give it the ability to function. As members of Christ, we all have the life of God operating within us to produce a certain ability. This ability is the gift that makes us ministers to impart Christ to others.

B. To Preach the Unsearchable Riches of Christ as the Gospel

Our ministry is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel. It is not to present doctrine

nor simply to teach the Word in letters. Our gospel is a Person with all His riches. To preach such a gospel is to minister the riches of Christ to others.

C. For Producing the Church

This ministry is for producing the church. The ministry of the Apostle Paul as God's steward was to bring forth the church by dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ as grace into the believers. Paul's ministry was not only to save sinners, but to produce the church for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. This was the goal of his stewardship of grace.

D. By Revelation of the Mystery in Spirit

According to 3:3 and 5, our ministry is by the revelation of the mystery in spirit. The mystery of God is Christ, and the mystery of Christ is the church. As long as we have seen Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ, we have the revelation of the mystery in our spirit. This enables us to minister Christ to others. This is a matter in our regenerated spirit which is indwelt by the Spirit of God.

[Section 3]

THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

In Ephesians 3, a parenthetical word, Paul begins to beseech the saints to walk worthily of God's calling. What Paul speaks regarding himself in this chapter is a pattern for one who would walk worthily of God's calling. In order to walk worthily of God's calling, we need to be a prisoner of the Lord, a steward, and a minister. As one imprisoned in Christ, Paul saw a heavenly vision. The more he saw of this vision, the more he experienced Christ and gained Christ. Paul was also a steward dispensing the riches of Christ to the members of the household of God. Furthermore, he was a faithful minister, one who ministered Christ to the members of the Body so that Christ might be expressed in the Body.

To walk worthily of God's calling is not simply to be kind, humble, and loving. It is to be imprisoned, confined, in Christ, where we see the vision. By seeing this vision, we experience Christ, and Christ is wrought into our being to make us stewards to dispense the riches of Christ into others. We also become ministers dispensing the riches of Christ to the members of the Body so that the Body may be built up. We all need to be imprisoned in Christ so that we may

experience Him more and minister more of Him to others.

Having considered the stewardship of the grace in the previous message, we need now to see the revelation of the mystery. Ephesians 3:3 says, "That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief." God's hidden purpose is the mystery, and the unveiling of this mystery is the revelation. The apostle's ministry was to carry out this revelation for the producing of the church. A revelation is an unveiling, the taking away of a veil. In the New Testament we have the revelation, the unveiling, of God's economy. In other ages and generations this economy was a hidden mystery. It was not made known to Adam, to Abraham, to Moses, to David, or to Isaiah and the other prophets. If they had been asked what God's economy is, they would have been unable to answer, for during their time the mystery was still veiled. God's economy, the dispensing of Himself into man to produce a Body for His Son, had not been revealed to them.

The Son of God is the embodiment of God. God's economy is to dispense Himself into a great number of human beings in order to produce a Body for this embodiment of Himself. This means that the Son of God as the embodiment of God requires a Body, an increase, an expansion. This expansion can be produced only by God's dispensing of Himself into His chosen people. This is the greatest mystery in the universe. Although many political leaders and dignitaries know nothing about this great mystery, by God's mercy we know what it is... We know that God's economy is to dispense Himself into His chosen people in order to produce the Body as the expansion of the Son of God for the full expression of God in the universe. Nothing is greater or more important than this. Praise the Lord that not only do we know what God's economy is, but we are also in it! In fact, we even are it. We know it, we are in it, and we are it. By revelation this great mystery, which had been hidden until the coming of the Lord Jesus, has been unveiled to us.

IV. THE REVELATION TO THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

This mystery has been revealed to the apostles and prophets (v. 5). Do you regard the apostles and prophets as outstanding people? The fact that the mystery has been revealed to them causes many to regard them as extraordinary. However, in 3:8 Paul, who was an apostle, referred to

himself as “less than the least of all saints.” According to Paul’s own word, the apostles and prophets were not extraordinary, for Paul said that he was less than we are. On the one hand, we may regard the apostles and prophets as extraordinary; but on the other hand, we should consider them the same as we are.

Only in the book of Ephesians does Paul say that he was less than the least of all saints. Notice that he did not say here that he was less than the apostles, although in 1 Corinthians 15:9 he did say that he was “the least of the apostles.” It is surely very significant that Paul inserted such a word into this section of Ephesians. If we did not have this verse, we would all be inclined to view the apostles as great men. Why did Paul mention this? It was because he was exhorting the believers to walk worthily of God’s calling. As he made this exhortation, he presented himself as an example, saying that he was less than the least of all saints. If Paul had not uttered this word, we might be tempted to excuse ourselves by saying that Paul, who was a great apostle, could have such a walk but that we are not able to have it. By inserting this word, Paul gave no place for such an excuse. In 3:8 Paul seemed to be saying, “Saints, don’t think that I am greater than you. No, I am less. Since someone less than you can do this, then certainly you can do it also.” We should not make excuses for ourselves. If Paul could have this kind of grace, we all can have it. If Paul could live such a life and walk worthily of God’s calling, then we can also.

Many Christians think that only certain believers such as Peter are “saints.” They even speak of Saint So-and-so. But according to the writings of the apostle Paul, all believers are saints. As saints, we are not inferior to Paul. We all can walk in the same way he did.

The meaning of the Greek word rendered “apostle” is “a sent one.” If you send me to Los Angeles for a certain purpose, I am your apostle, your sent one. In the Bible an apostle is someone sent by God. Although John the Baptist was sent by God, he should not be considered the first sent one in the New Testament economy, because his ministry was during a transitional period. The first one sent by God in the New Testament economy was the Lord Jesus. Hence, He was the first Apostle (Heb. 3:1). The Lord sent out the twelve apostles. These twelve, however, were not the only sent ones. In John 20:21 the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” This verse proves that all the disciples were sent ones. This means that every

believer is a sent one. Even a young sister in junior high school is one sent to school by the Lord to minister Christ to her teachers and classmates. Likewise, if you are burdened for one of your relatives and the Lord sends you to him for the purpose of ministering Christ to him, are you not one sent by Christ? Yes, to your relatives you are Christ’s apostle. You may even be an apostle to those in your own family. One day the Lord may send you to your mother to share Christ with her. At such a time you are an apostle to your mother. Therefore, in a sense, we all are the Lord’s apostles, His sent ones.

In like manner, there is a sense in which all believers in Christ are prophets. Contrary to the concept of many Christians, a prophet is not primarily one who predicts the future; he is a spokesman for God. According to Hebrews 3, Moses, one called by God and sent to the children of Israel, was an apostle; he typified Christ as God’s Apostle. When the Lord called him and sent him out as an apostle, Moses was timid and claimed that he could not speak well. Then the Lord told Moses that He would give him his brother Aaron as a prophet. Aaron was given by God to Moses not to predict the future on behalf of Moses but to be his spokesman. By this we see that the ministry of a prophet goes along with that of an apostle. Moses was the apostle, and Aaron was the prophet.

[Section 4]

On the one hand, we are apostles, and on the other hand, we are prophets. The young people are sent to school as apostles, but when they open their mouths to speak on behalf of the Lord, they are prophets. Likewise, if you go to your mother with the burden to minister Christ to her, you are an apostle. But as you speak for Christ, you are also a prophet. It is a shame to be a Christian for years without ever going to someone with the burden to minister Christ to him. It is also a shame to be a Christian without ever speaking to others on behalf of Christ. A normal believer is both an apostle and a prophet, a sent one and a spokesman.

Suppose, under the Lord’s sovereignty, some of you are burdened to move to another city. You minister Christ to the people there, and after a period of time a number become believers. Then you all meet together as the church in that locality. Through whom was that church raised up? It was raised up by the apostles sent by the Lord to that locality. Because these sent ones also

Speak for God, they are prophets as well as apostles.

Regarding apostles and prophets, we all have been drugged by religious concepts. I hope that this message will be a strong antidote to this drug. I am serious in saying that we all must be apostles and prophets. Suppose a certain sister works as a nurse in a hospital. Do you think God wants her merely to be a nurse? No! God sends her to that hospital to be an apostle and a prophet. God's authority is always with such a person. If you practice your apostleship and prophethood, God will be with you as your authority. Many times we do not have authority because we fail to practice our apostleship. Wherever we are, at home, at school, or at work, we need to be there as those sent by the Lord to minister Christ to others by speaking for Christ.

The apostles and prophets, however, must bear a particular sign to prove that they are apostles and prophets. This sign is the revelation of the mystery. If you go to someone without this revelation, you are neither an apostle nor a prophet. When you contact people for Christ, you must let them know in a proper way that you have seen something they have not seen. It is by having this revelation that we have the boldness to say that we are God's sent ones and God's spokesmen. If a young brother has such a revelation, he can say to his unbelieving father, who may have a doctorate in physics, "Father, you know a great deal about science, but you don't know anything about Christ. I know Christ, for I have seen the revelation concerning Him. Christ is my life. He lives in me, He is one with me, and He is everything to me." If you have this revelation, then you are an apostle and a prophet. Do you not have the revelation concerning Christ and the church? Certainly you do. Therefore, go to your relatives and friends to tell them of what you have seen.

A. In Spirit

Ephesians 3:5 says that the mystery has been revealed to the apostles and prophets in spirit. The word spirit here refers to the human spirit of the apostles and prophets, a spirit regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. It can be considered the mingled spirit, the human spirit mingled with God's Spirit. Such a mingled spirit is the means by which the New Testament revelation concerning Christ and the church is

unveiled to the apostles and prophets. We need the same spirit to see such a revelation.

When we speak to others about Christ and the church, we should not speak from our mind, emotion, or will. Rather, from our spirit we should tell others what we have experienced of Christ and the church. The principle here is that emotion touches emotion, mind touches mind, and will touches will. Likewise, only spirit can contact spirit. If you speak to others from your emotion, you will not be able to touch their spirit. But if you speak out from your spirit, their spirit will be touched.

B. Concerning Christ and the Church

The revelation received by the apostles and prophets is not a revelation of the many secondary matters in the Bible. It is the revelation concerning Christ and the church. In order to dispense Christ to others, we need to have this revelation.

V. THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

In 3:4 Paul speaks of the mystery of Christ. The mystery of God in Colossians 2:2 is Christ, whereas the mystery of Christ in Ephesians 3:4 is the church. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God. Christ also is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ.

A. Hidden in Other Generations but Revealed in the New Testament Age

This mystery was hidden in other generations but has been revealed in the New Testament age. The mystery of Christ, the church, which is His Body, was hidden in the Old Testament ages. None of the Old Testament saints knew anything regarding this mystery. But it is revealed in the New Testament to all believers through the apostles and prophets. Today our ministry is simply to carry on this revelation.

B. The Church, the Body of Christ

1. With the Gentiles as Fellow Heirs and Fellow Partakers of the Promise

We have pointed out that the mystery of Christ is the church, which is the Body of Christ. Regarding the church as the mystery of Christ, verse 6 says that "in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and

fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel.” The term fellow heirs indicates that in God’s New Testament economy the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated Gentiles and the believing Jews are fellow heirs of God, inheriting God. The term fellow members of the Body indicates that the saved Gentiles and the saved Jews are fellow members of the Body of Christ as His unique expression. The term fellow partakers indicates that the Gentile believers and the Jewish believers are fellow partakers of God’s promises given in the Old Testament, concerning all the blessings of God’s New Testament economy. Being fellow heirs is related to the blessing of the household of God; being fellow members of the Body, to the blessing of the Body of Christ; and being fellow partakers of the promise, to the blessing of the promises of God, as found in Genesis 3:15; 12:3; 22:18; 28:14; and Isaiah 9:6. Both the blessing of God’s household and the blessing of Christ’s Body are particular, whereas the blessing of God’s promise is general, all-inclusive.

2. Brought Forth out of the Unsearchable Riches of Christ

The church as the Body of Christ is brought forth out of the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). The church is not brought forth out of doctrines or systems of organization. As the Body of Christ, the church can only be brought forth out of the riches of what Christ is.

3. For Expressing the Multifarious Wisdom of God to the Rulers and Authorities in the Heavens

According to God’s intention, the church is to express His multifarious wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavens (v. 10). This is to shame Satan and his followers. Satan’s plots afford God the opportunity to express His wisdom in a multifarious way through the church.

4. According to the Eternal Purpose Which God Made in Christ

The producing of the church to be the Body of Christ is according to the eternal purpose which God made in Christ in eternity past (v. 11). The formation of the church is not accidental but eternally planned.

5. For the Dispensing of God

God’s purpose in having the church is to dispense Himself into His chosen people (v. 9). Hence, the

church as the Body of Christ is a matter of God’s dispensing.

References:

Life-Study of Ephesians msg. 28 & 29