



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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Paul and Gretel Haglin

EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

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**“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given,
to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,
and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery
which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things...”**

Ephesians 3:8-9 NASB

Dearly Beloved,

Taking my own advice in January's *Letters of Faith*, I have been praying that the Holy Spirit would align me and the whole Body of Christ with the challenges given to St. Paul as he expressed receiving them from the Lord of Glory in Ephesians 3:8-10. This section of Scripture has been a favorite grazing pasture for me ever since He confirmed my calling to teach the unfathomable riches of Christ to nominal Christians with these very same verses in April 1974. I was not prepared, however, to be so refreshed as I read these familiar words with this new mindset.

I again experienced laughing to myself as I read Paul's expression of humility and found myself reminding the Holy Spirit that Paul had not met me yet or he could not have claimed such a position of prime chickenhood!

The Passion Translation employs some delightfully different words in these opening verses that still retain the same impact:

“I have been made a messenger of this wonderful news by the gift of grace that works through me. Even though I am the least significant of all His holy believers, this grace gift was imparted when the manifestation of His power came upon me. Grace alone empowers me so that I can boldly preach this wonderful message to non-Jewish people, sharing with them the unfading, inexhaustible riches of Christ which are beyond comprehension.” (Ephesians 3:8 TPT)

Surely there is no way we could be told more clearly that our first priority in aligning our spiritual life to accomplish Paul's challenges is a genuine humility and a total reliance on the Holy Spirit being the sole and total source of resurrection power in preaching the full revelation of Messiah

Jesus. These words make clear that when we are talking about grace in ministry, we are talking about God's power.

This is one of Paul's major points whenever he refers to his approach to teaching and preaching:

“...when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom [although he was preeminently equipped with both], proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NASB)

I have to admit that I was startled to see Paul's continual reference to his calling to *preach* rather than to *teach*. I have always considered him the primary *teacher* of this new revelation of God's relationship to man.

What is the difference between preaching and teaching? Thanks for asking!

It seems to me that in today's society, one obvious basic difference is in the compensation received. Big time preachers (holy TV stars and stadium-fillers) receive significantly higher “pay scales” than the teachers do in the trenches of even many megachurches. I believe there is a legitimate reason for this disparity because of the different basic approaches and content of these two presenters of truth and wisdom of God.

Today's successful Teacher concentrates on presenting foundational facts about, and practical applications of, his chosen subject. The Preacher attempts to elevate the Scriptural basis of a subject into the exciting realm of exhortation to receive, believe, experience, and implement it into action. Again, I chuckled at the difference between Paul's calling to take this new revelation of their long awaited Messiah to those who faithful Jews considered the heathen, the Gentiles, and my calling to teach the Body of Christ. I recalled the time I went to downtown St. Louis at high noon, to the busiest executives' lunch-break intersection in the city, and I could not find a single heathen during a full hour of accosting people with my tracts and pitch on Jesus. Every single person the Holy Spirit led me to approach was a believer with a major life problem. The Holy Spirit used me to heal and deliver them. This was an exciting experience of what The Passion Translation so beautifully declares in Ephesians 3:8: **“...the unfading, inexhaustible riches of Christ which are beyond comprehension...”**

On the drive home with my mentor, I was embarrassed to realize that I still had all the tracts he had given me to hand out. However, it was forever settled in my spirit that my call from God was to

minister to the Body of Christ, so I could quit trying to be an evangelist like most of my newfound Christian friends.

The second part of this mighty call from God is even more intimidating. The Passion Translation puts it in these words: “...to bring to light the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things.” (Ephesians 3:9)

The mystery, hidden for ages from everyone except a few of His choicest prophets, was that Almighty God was going to bring His Son to earth, born as a helpless human baby in an animal feeding trough in the tucked away village of Bethlehem. Even further hidden was the fact that this child was the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah, and the Savior King of Israel. In fact, He was so well hidden that even major leaders in God's plan for proclaiming who Jesus really was, like Paul himself, did not recognize Him as their Savior without sovereign acts of Father God's revelations. Paul received the premature-death-carrying assignment of shining the light of truth on the administration of this mystery and proclaiming it to the known world.

The word “administration” has three basic meanings (Webster’s New World College Dictionary-4th Ed.), all of which are amenable with Paul’s assigned task of revealing (bringing to light) this miracle King of the Kingdom of God here on earth. The first and general definition of “administration” is simply, *The management of affairs*. Isaiah 9:6 immediately comes to mind: “**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**” (emphasis added)

The second definition is broader, but still connotes Jesus as King of the Kingdom of God here on earth, *The activity of a sovereign state in the exercise of its powers and duties*.

The third definition of “administration” expands the concept to include Paul’s understanding of the mature Body of Christ, the Ecclesia of God, *The persons collectively that make up the executive branch of a government*.

This “dictionary game” might seem like a stretch to you at first, but I think some serious contemplation on it will show how uniquely Jesus’ mission here on earth is covered by this one simple word “administration.”

Paul was very cognizant of his being a major part of unveiling the “mystery of the ages,” and I am sure he felt the spiritual weight of knowing that Jesus Himself had specifically laid the honor and responsibility on him. The word “mystery” here means *A religious truth that can only be known by revelation, and cannot be fully understood*.

We have the privilege of seeing in Scripture what some disciples knew about this monumental revelation of a “mystery” that had been kept secret without a leak for thousands of years:

“And He [Jesus] was saying to them, ‘To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables...’” (Mark 4:11)

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 16:25-27)

“Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory...” (1 Cor. 2:6-8)

If my assumptions are correct, that these charges made to the Apostle Paul are spiritually applicable to us upholding them today, using righteous judgment, how do you think the Church is doing? Where do you think we are lacking in the fulfillment of this assignment as a Body of believers? What do you think we all might want to incorporate in our Communion prayers because of this study?

I would be delighted to hear from you!

Huge Haglin Hugs,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul & Gretel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.