

# Ephesians Series

## 7. Called for a Reason [Sermon Notes] Ephesians 3:1-13

We have already seen in previous weeks that we have been chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, sealed by the Spirit. We have become God's sons and daughters as a result of His grace through faith.

Last time we saw how that God makes us all one in Christ, irrespective of who we are and He is building us into a holy temple where He resides by His Spirit. It doesn't matter whether we are Jew or Gentile - we are all one in Christ.

In today's passage Paul follows this truth up. Look at verse 4

*In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 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.*

He's making a point here and that is what they are experiencing is something new - that the Gospel, the Good News - is for ALL people. Let nobody ever tell you that because of your birth or your background that you are in any way inferior.

I mentioned last time the terrible way in which we did that to other believers in the past. I hope we are different but I fear that we are not. You'll still find the same barriers existing between believers as in past ages - denominational, doctrinal, tradition, or just plain arrogance.

But when we say that in the eyes of God we are effectively equal then that's just what it says. It is not just equality of status in how we deal with one another, but God treats each of us individually according to His grace too.

Let's read on and you'll see what I mean:

*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 God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable 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.*

Paul had a special role. His was the job to start spreading the gospel across the Roman Empire to gentiles. To the gentiles the things of God were once a MYSTERY - not God has used Paul to make sure it was no longer a mystery. Paul turned out to be one of the most influential followers of Christ. We owe a huge chunk of the NT to him and it was through him that the gospel spread away from the Holy Land.

What a great man! But Paul describes himself like this in verse 8: *I am less than the least of all God's people.* Less than the least? No, no, Paul you've got it wrong here. Look at all the things that God has done through you. Look how great you are.

But as we look at Paul we see that he was responsible with others for the death of Stephen and the imprisonment and torture of Christians. He actively tried to destroy the Church. Yet by God's grace he was given this task. It was God's grace. He had no merit to do this huge task. He might have possessed great learning and ability to be a preacher and teacher. His writings are recognised as some of the clearest and thorough explanations of the meaning of the Christian faith. Yet he was a man who deserved God's wrath. In 1 Corinthians he admits this even more clearly:

*15:9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me*

It was the grace of God. God chose him and gave him this calling. He didn't deserve any of it. Yet God chose him.

We all have a calling as God's people. It doesn't matter who we are. It doesn't matter where we've been. God calls us to be somewhere and do God's work. Everyone.

That's me. And that's you too.

Have you seen Lynn News this week. I got a visit from the Reporter and we talked about Swaffham and how I believed that God had called me here. He asked me what I felt I was here to do for Swaffham. I told him how I believed that men and women needed to know about Jesus and what He wants to do for them. What else? I mentioned how as a church we wanted to minister to families - that Jesus was relevant and exciting. That we had a vibrant faith. What else? Oh yes, and our ceiling needed fixing. Kelvin MacKenzie, a former editor of The Sun said "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story." So what did we get "Sent by God.. to get the ceiling fixed!" Mark Reid the missionary to the lime plaster!! I think not.

We are ALL called. Not just the minister. We are all called to serve God. What is your calling?

But I'm not good enough? - yes you are because calling is through grace, not ability or experience. Both of those can help or be relevant cf Paul. But in themselves that doesn't replace God's call?

But I'm retired? - Retired is a human thing. There's no such thing as elderly in God's heaven. Mature, experienced, wise - yes. Changing ministry according to the strength that God gives you in your mortal body - yes. Retired - never. Useless, on the shelf - never. You never cease to be useful to God - never!

So what is God calling you to do?

Perhaps He's calling you to serve. Children, youth, practical tasks (cleaning, tea rota) or Intercessors. I believe the Lord is rising up people to ministry in this church. By that I mean that the skills for many of the needed tasks are in this Church. What about you?

I'm being called but I'm not equipped. Never mind if you're not equipped - we can get you equipped.

But I'm not experienced. Never mind inexperience - we can mentor you.

But I haven't been a Christian long enough! What's long enough? If you have been a Christian 10 minutes 10 months or 10 years - you're called! Respond to it.

God is calling you to an amazing work. God raises people up in the way He raised Paul up. Unlikely? It could be you!