

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

I. Introduction

- A. We are living in a messed-up world! And that's an understatement! Evil and Marxism seem to be everywhere, in every aspect of our life, and sad to say, dictating how life will be in America. I just have one thing to say about that... "But GOD!"
- B. I thought I was going to speak about "stewardship" and I was well into that message when I saw God taking it in another direction. I was not inspired about what I thought I was going to preach, but the more I studied what God was showing me, the more inspired I got! I'll be honest, I had forgotten how exciting it is to prepare a message!
- C. The Apostle Paul used "stewardship" as a way to describe who we are and how we are to approach the Gospel and The Kingdom of God!
 1. So let's dig in...

II. What Is A Steward?

- A. The manager of another person's property, finances, or household affairs.
- B. As far as Christians are concerned, stewardship involves the responsibility of managing God's work through the church. God has appointed all Christians to be His stewards on earth. Stewardship is not an option, as Paul points out about his own call. Being a steward is a necessary part of believing the gospel, even if it involves sacrificing personal rewards (1 Cor 9:17). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

III. Stewards of the Mysteries of God

- A. 1 Cor 4:1-2 *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and **stewards of the mysteries of God.** 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found **faithful.*** NKJV
 1. **stewards:** *oikonomos* (oy-kon-om'-os); a house-distributor (i.e. manager), or overseer; by extension, a fiscal agent (treasurer); figuratively, a preacher (of the Gospel):
 2. **mysteries:** *musterion* (moos-tay'-ree-on); from a derivative of *muo* (to shut the mouth); a secret or "mystery" (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites):
 3. **faithful:** *pistos* (pis-tos'); from NT:3982; objectively, trustworthy; subjectively, trustful: (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006, 2010)
- B. Steward, Leader Traits.
 1. A common Bible figure of leadership is the "steward". (OT example, Joseph)

--- Let's back up a little so that we keep this in context. ---

IV. Avoid Worldly Wisdom

- A. 1 Cor 3:18-20 *Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "**He catches the wise in their own craftiness**" (Job 5:13); 20 and again, "**The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.**" (Ps. 94:11) NKJV*
 1. Paul quoted Job 5:13 & Ps. 94:11 to shame the Corinthians, stating God knows the ways of the wise but their ways are futile.
 - a. Lesson 1 – Do not trust in the wisdom of this world.
 2. How often do we walk in anxiety, or even fear, because of what we see and hear on the news or on our social apps on our phones?
 - a. Lesson 2 – Guard what we watch and listen to. Be in charge of what you feed your soul (mind, emotions, and will).

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

V. The Mystery Revealed

- A. Eph 3:1-7 *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. NKJV*
1. Gentiles and Jews alike are to accept each other as partners in God's covenant of salvation. This mystery was especially foreign to the OT Jewish mindset, not being understood by Gentile or Jew until Jesus came.
 2. Paul is equipping the church at Ephesus for spiritual warfare
 - a. First, the believer's position – you have to know who you are before you can fight for what you believe. You are chosen, blameless, adopted, accepted, forgiven, predestined, and sealed (by the Holy Spirit). These are all part of the mystery of God.
 3. Know that...
 - a. In Him, you are adopted as a child of God!
 - b. In Him, you are fully accepted.
 - c. In Him, you will find a love that is higher and deeper than you could ever imagine.

VI. Purpose of the Mystery

- A. Eph 3:8-13 *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. 13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. NKJV*
1. This eternal purpose is God's intent to display the church (you and I) before all evil powers as His instrument (steward) to accomplish throughout the world what He has already accomplished through the death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

VII. Appreciation of the Mystery

- B. Eph 3:14-21 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. NKJV*

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

1. Paul's prayer here is for the Holy Spirit's power to fill **every** believer, which is what needs to happen for the eternal purpose listed in vs. 8-13 to be realized.
2. What do we do?
 - a. Seek, hunger, and thirst to know and understand the greatness of Jesus' love for you!
 - b. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to comprehend the incomparable love of Christ.
 - c. Pray that though the Holy Spirit, you will be completely filled with the fullness of God.
 - d. Do this all for the glory of God!

VIII. Conclusion: We Walk In Unity

- A. Eph 4:1-3 POWER OF UNITY – Vs. 2 *walk in lowliness, gentleness, and longsuffering, bearing one another in love.* (love, humility, and forgiveness) Unity was so much a part of the early church, Paul assumed the presence of such. Vs. 3 *endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace* (“peace” something that binds or restrains) Merrium-Webster est. 1828
- B. Eph 4: 4-6
 1. One body
 2. One Spirit
 3. One hope
 4. One Lord
 5. One faith
 6. One baptism
 7. One God and Father of all.