

## ***FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST, HIS CHURCH & THE NATIONS***

*(Ephesians 3:1-2)*

What is most important thing that is happening in the world in our generation? Pastor Eric Alexander gave this answer: *"The most significant thing happening in history is the calling, redeeming and perfecting of the people of God. God is building the church of Jesus Christ. The rest of history is simply a stage God erects for that purpose."* What ultimately matters to God and what should therefore ultimately matter to us is the glory of His Son Jesus Christ and His plan for His Church. The Apostle Paul captured this vision and passion of God. This explains why though he was in prison when he wrote his letter to the Ephesians, his heart still burst with joyful confidence in what God was accomplishing through his suffering. The focal lesson of Ephesians 3:1-13 is this beautiful truth: *Since God's eternal purpose in Christ is to make known the glory of His manifold wisdom through the church, we must live our lives for the sake of Jesus Christ, His church and the nations.* As we reflect on our passage, let's consider these two lifetime commitments that should be foremost in our own hearts.

**1. We must be \_\_\_\_\_ and the cause of His \_\_\_\_\_.**

Paul was imprisoned in fulfillment of the words of our Lord Jesus concerning his calling as apostle and missionary to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1,13; Acts 9:15). He was arrested on false charges made by the Jews from the province of Asia who accused him of bringing a Gentile Ephesian named Trophimus into the Jewish temple (Acts 21:28-29). Paul, who was formerly notorious for persecuting, arresting and murdering Christians, was incarcerated because he was faithfully preaching the gospel of Christ he once despised and hated (Acts 26:17-18). As Galatians 1:23 says *"He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."* Paul was able to see his sufferings from the perspective of the Lord Jesus and through the lens of His gospel. He remarkably said: *"I am a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles"* (Eph. 3:1). Paul's commitment in spite of his imprisonment should challenge us to consider what truly matters in life. What's most essential for us Christians is to make the lifetime commitment to be spent for Jesus and the cause of His gospel.

---

**2. We must be \_\_\_\_\_ of God's grace for the sake of the \_\_\_\_\_.**

Paul also declared that he was a steward of God's grace (Eph. 3:2). A steward is a servant who is entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of the affairs, resources and riches of his master. Paul was God's steward entrusted with the responsibility and ministry to dispense the riches of Christ's saving gospel to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:7-8). Paul was quick to add that his stewardship and mission to the Gentiles was a gift of God's grace and an undeserved privilege (1 Tim. 1:14-15). Though Paul fulfilled a unique role as apostle and missionary to the Gentiles, we must not distance ourselves from his mission. Paul's mission is also our mission. We are called by our Lord Jesus Himself to be faithful stewards of the gospel of His redeeming grace for the sake of the nations (Matt. 28:19; 24:14; Rev. 11:15).

---