

EPHESIANS

3 : 1 - 13

ALL-IN FOR JESUS' CHURCH

(Ephesians 3:1-13 Part One)

Other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Apostle Paul is far and away the most influential and powerful figure in the New Testament. He wrote 13 of its 27 books, 14 if you believe he wrote Hebrews (as many scholars do). In the book of Acts, which records how the Church got miraculously started and then spread, Paul is the dominant human instrument most used by the Holy Spirit. More so than all the other Apostles put together. Paul routinely traveled on death-defying missions trips throughout the Middle East and Europe, spreading the Gospel of Christ and planting the churches of Jesus wherever he went. Paul relentlessly spoke about Jesus as the one and only true God to corrupt political leaders, to hostile military commanders, and to fanatical religious zealots with murder on their minds. Due to his courageous witness, Paul was the object of numerous assassination attempts, horrible beatings and lashings, illegal imprisonments, robberies, and near-death deprivations (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). The early Church historian Eusebius records that Paul finally suffered martyrdom by beheading at the hands of the insane Roman Emperor, Nero! It is safe to say: Paul inspired his generation for Christ. He was 100% God's man. And wonderfully, here in **Ephesians 3:1-13**, Paul transparently opens his life to us like a book. He reveals to us why he did what he did for Jesus, and how he became who he became for Jesus. Listen now, God wants you and me to carefully study this honest self-revelation of what made Paul tick. Why? So that we too will aspire to fulfill God's purpose for our lives and be ... **all-in for Jesus' Church**.

PAUL'S LIFE AS A MINISTER

(vv.1-7)

1. (v.1-2) Paul approached living as a ...
2. (vv.3-6) Paul knew he had been chosen to share ...

3. (v.7) Paul experienced more of God's grace and power ...

THE MESSAGE OF PAUL'S LIFE

(vv.8-13 Next Week)

TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of this week's message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don't have to cover them all.

1. Read aloud **Ephesians 3:1-13** from two different Bible translations, preferably one of them being the New Living Translation (NLT). When you hear a phrase calling each one of us, as Christians, to be **all-in for Jesus' Church**, what is your gut reaction? Honestly, does it kinda get you excited, or do you find yourself wanting to pull back? Why do you think you react the way you do, and why do you think others react the way they do? Have you actually ever been challenged in such a way before? On a practical level, what does it mean (or look like) to be a Christian who is genuinely ... **all-in for Jesus' Church**?
2. Paul was imprisoned, for five years, because he sought to bring the Gospel of Jesus to the Jews in Jerusalem and to Gentiles all over the ancient world. In other words, his service as a minister in, and to, Jesus' Church resulted in some pretty heavy-duty sacrifice on his part! Describe in your own words what Paul's attitude was toward this sacrificial service. What can we learn from the example of Paul's sacrificial service in regard to developing our own right attitude toward sacrificial service within the Body of Christ? Who are some really great examples of this at NCF? Are there blessings and benefits to sacrificial service within the Church? If so, what are they.
3. Paul knew that he had been chosen by God to share the best possible message the world will ever hear! The truth is, so have you! What exactly is that message? Share a succinct summary of it that anyone, nonbelievers included, would understand. Who are the people that God puts you into regular contact with that need to hear the message of Christ? What would it mean to you if some of them came to faith in Christ because of your witness to them? Take a minute to pray, right here in your group, for the folks the Lord has put upon your heart who need to come to (or come back to) faith in Jesus.
4. Read aloud **Ephesians 3:7**, followed by **Ephesians 4:11-12**. Pastor John taught that every Christian is just as much a minister as the Apostle Paul was! That is quite a statement. What does it mean? It's in the Bible; do you believe it? Are you doing something about it? What are the gifts, talents, and abilities that you possess and that the Holy Spirit wants you to put into action within Jesus' Church? Now more than ever, NCF needs you to help us be a church full of ministers.