

Ephesians 3:7—of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

Paul was “*made a minister,*” confirming that God ordained Paul’s ministry—not Paul himself (read Acts 26:16). “*Minister*” means “one who renders service to another; an attendant, servant.” Paul desired to know Christ’s heart above all else (Philippians 3:10), thus His passion was Christ Himself—not the ministry to which he was called. Through pursuing Christ, his Source of empowerment was revealed—God Himself. Hence the words, “*according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power*” (Philippians 3:7). God’s “*grace*” not only made Paul an apostle (a position he could have rejected—as did Judas), but sustained him as he carried the gospel to the Gentiles—also confirmed by 1Corinthians 15:10:

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1Corinthians 15:10)

Colossians 1:29 lines up perfectly with our findings:

And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me. (Colossians 1:29)

We learned earlier that “*works*” (Colossians 1:29) can be perceived as God’s energizing, so a review of the word “*works*” in Ephesians 1:11c might be encouraging.

Paul realized that God Himself, through His grace and power (Ephesians 3:7), would supply everything needed to fulfill the ministry to which he had been called. Paul’s responsibility was to yield to Jesus’ indwelling presence for purity of character (1Corinthians 9:27), for God’s servants must be “*above reproach*” (1Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7).

We are to pray for everyone who holds a leadership position within Christ’s body. To those who are called of God to a particular position, we pray they continually remember the Source of their calling and empowerment. For believers who function in positions to which they have not been called (or gifted), we pray they might yield to individuals equipped for the responsibility. Saints who sense an obligation to serve God in a specific area, yet are ungifted for the position, many times hinder God’s work and God’s people.

Ephesians 3:8—To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

Paul probably viewed himself as “*the very least of all saints*” because of his mistreatment of believers prior to his conversion (Acts 22:4; 1Corinthians 15:9; 2Corinthians 12:11; Galatians 1:23). He credits God’s “*grace*” as the source of his empowerment while preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (also read Galatians 2:2, 8-9).

Paul preached “*the unfathomable riches of Christ*” (Ephesians 3:8)—“*unfathomable*” can also be interpreted “unsearchable” or “incomprehensible.” Had Paul preached a thousand years describing Christ’s “*riches,*” the majority would have remained untold.

As we ponder Christ’s “*riches,*” Colossians 1:16 comes to mind:

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created by Him and

for Him. (Colossians 1:16)

Even Hebrews 1:2 states that Jesus is the “*heir of all things*”:

in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Hebrews 1:2)

Jesus, the “*first-born*” Son of the Father (Hebrews 1:6), will inherit everything—and we are “*fellow heirs*” with Him (Romans 8:17):

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:17)

We, as part of the body of Christ, the church, have received abundant riches through being placed into Jesus (read Ephesians 1:3, 1Corinthians 1:5, 2Corinthians 5:17, 2Corinthians 5:21, and Colossians 2:10 for starters).

We are also part of Christ’s inheritance, for we belong to Him (1Corinthians 3:23). Hence, we add to His wealth.

Conclusion: Our value is great in the eyes of the Creator.