

**01.09.11/Ephesians 3:1-12****Activity**

Ask the children if they saw a neighbor giving away a prize to every person who came to visit, would they go visit? Would they tell other people to go visit, too? Most likely we all would! We often share good news or exciting advice with others, but sometimes we aren't good stewards of the knowledge and love of Jesus, even though news about Jesus is the BEST NEWS EVER. He gives us so much love, and He wants us to love others as well. The good news of Jesus and His sacrifice is so much better than telling someone to go and get a prize. It's eternal! We will learn in Ephesians 3 from Paul about how to be a better steward with the good news of Jesus!

Ephesians 3:1-12

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Discussion

Paul was an Apostle and he was appointed to reach out to the Gentiles. Gentiles were people that weren't Jewish. Before Jesus came, people believed that when the Messiah came, He would come to give the Jews freedom. In reality, when Jesus came to Earth to die for us and be resurrected, He gave everybody who believes in Him freedom from sin, not only the Jews but the Gentiles as well.

Question 1

What is the mystery that Paul speaks of?

Paul says that the mystery was hidden for ages in God who created all things. The mystery is God's plan for salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus. This is the great mystery uncovered: the prophecy of the ages that Jesus would come became true—and He came to save the entire world because He loves both Gentiles and Jews!

Question Two

How is the wisdom of God made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places?

Through the church! The church is God's vehicle for teaching others about Him and His love. We are to love others like Jesus loves us, and when we do, we are showing the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places the wisdom of God! When we love others in the name of Jesus, it reaches all the way to the heavens! That's powerful!

Question Three

What does Paul say we are supposed to do?

The "eternal purpose in Christ Jesus" that Paul refers to is God's divine plan to reconcile us to Himself. Paul says he was given the grace to "...preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages



in God. . . " We are to share His good news with others and love them in a way that lets them know that Jesus' death and resurrection give us the opportunity to be with God for eternity. When we do this we are being good stewards of Jesus' good news!

Wrap Up

If we believe in Jesus and accept His sacrifice for us, we can have boldness in Him to share His love with the world. If you want to accept Jesus' gift of salvation, talk with a parent or someone you trust right away! Let's pray today that Jesus gives us the boldness and confidence to love others the way He loves us and to share His good news with the world!