

Gamma 11

Study 9

Ephesians 3:1-13

Section A (Exegetical Questions)

- 1. Explain what is the “mystery “ which Paul is referring to in this passage? Why is it a mystery? How is our concept of a mystery different from its concept in Ancient Greece ? Why was Paul willing to suffer for this mystery**
- 2. What is the ultimate purpose of gospel and how is it related to Ephesians 1:9-10. How does this affect us personally ?**
- 3. Why does Paul refer himself as a prisoner of Christ rather than Rome? How does this perspective impact him in the course of his personal suffering? What can we learn of this in our personal lives**

Section B

Reflection Questions

- 4. How do you handle apparently senseless suffering in your life? What helps you and what is not helpful. Are any sufferings in your life actually senseless? Are there ways in which we can support each other during these difficult times?**
- 5. If God achieves his purposes by using pain to test and strengthen us then why should we not pray for more trials?**
- 6. What if you are feeling bitter at the suffering because God had allowed this to come upon you , why do you think you are feeling like this? What does this reveal about where your ultimate treasure lies?**

Section C

Case history

Henry Lee was a manager at the local Giant Superstore and was a faithful Christian serving actively at the neighbourhood Baptist church. He was on the board of deacons and he led a life group. Admittedly he was not a perfect believer and would occasionally pilfer some goods from the store and take it home for his family as he was the sole bread winner. He reckoned the store would not miss it anyway. One day when there was an economic down turn he was suddenly retrenched. He went through a period of great depression and personal bitterness because he had trusted God and God did not reciprocate. He was almost on the verge of suicide. His pastor had always taught that a Christian would lead a victorious life and that all he had to do was to claim the blessings. Some friends came by and told him it was because he was stealing from the store, the angels saw it and this was divine retribution. Other friends said that he was not serving enough in church.

Why was Henry suffering? What did the trial reveal about where his ultimate treasure lay?

What do you think about his friends input in to his life was it accurate or helpful?