

Get a Life!

*Ephesians*

# Locked Up For Jesus

Lesson Thirteen

# Get a Life!

Page 2 of 4, Lesson Thirteen

## *Ephesians*

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1

### Locked Up for Jesus

**Lesson Goal:** To help students to understand that Paul was willing to be whatever it took to please God.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 3:1-7; Galatians 1; (Paul's final arrest and imprisonment—Acts 21—27)

The apostle Paul was a determined man. He had, according to his testimony in the first chapter of Galatians, undergone many trials for Jesus. He said that he had scars that were evidence of his commitment to be the best witness that God could have. He spent many years preparing for his ministry. He proved himself with the Christian leaders of his day. When he wrote this, Paul was in Rome to be tried before the Caesar. He was under house arrest. Yet, he didn't consider himself a prisoner of the government of Rome. He was, in his words, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He considered his current state to be the will of God for his life.\*

He also considered his imprisonment to be on behalf of the Gentiles. Paul's imprisonment was proof of his commitment to the Gentiles. Paul paused in the middle of his thought to remind the people in Ephesus of his salvation experience. He uses the word mystery, which we have discussed previously, as that which has now been revealed. That is, the fact that Jesus is God's Son and came into the world to be our Savior and Lord.

He goes on to say that this mystery, now revealed, includes the Gentiles as well as the Jews. What does this mean? Why would Paul feel a need to raise the issue of the Gentiles being included? He explained that for all of time, God had intended for all to be included in His invitation to be His children. However, it was not known because humans did not get God's full message. He had told Abraham that he would be a blessing to the nations. (Genesis 12:3) However, the Hebrew nation kept God to themselves and the message of salvation to themselves. God changed that with Jesus and the church that He established.

In these Scripture verses, Paul says that the Gentiles had not been considered as recipients of God's revelation. Why was that? The Jews considered themselves blood relatives of Abraham. They could all trace their family tree, through one parent or another (most of the time both), to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They believed that God had made a special agreement with Abraham, and no one but his family was included.

The Gentiles included everyone who was not a Jew. They were sometimes known as "pagans," those who did not know God. The Jews looked down on everyone else, because they believed that they were God's chosen people and no one else was included.

Paul was so convinced of this that he became a headhunter of Christians, sent out by the leaders of the Jews.

# Get a Life!

Page 3 of 4, Lesson Thirteen

## *Ephesians*

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1

### Locked Up for Jesus

He was on the way to Damascus to arrest, and bring back to Jerusalem, captive Christians who would stand trial for their beliefs, when he became a Christian.

Paul speaks of the great freedom for the Gentiles who, it is now clear, share in the promise of Christ. (3:6) He had just written about them being made alive in Christ. (2:4, 5) He wants to assure them, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they were just as welcomed in the family of God as were the Jews. This, he says, is the Gospel... good news! (3:6)

The constitution of the United States of America says plainly that all humans are created equal. We all have rights (freedoms) that should be guaranteed. There was a time when some residents of the United States did not have equal rights. This was debated in many places, including the courts. It took many, many years for the full truth of that to sink in with the majority of Americans. Actually, it has not been totally accepted yet. But the fact is that all citizens of the United States must be treated just alike and have all the privileges that our country offers. These verses in Ephesians say that everyone, all people, were equal in God's sight.

Paul, the apostle, was rejoicing with the residents of Ephesus, who were Gentiles, that it was certain that they were fully included in the grace of God...that by faith they could come to God in Christ and have everything, every access to God, that the Jews had. He calls them "heirs together with Israel" (Israel is another name for the Jews). (3:6) In other words, they had every privilege that the Jews had, and God was as much their Father as He was the Father of the Jews. Jesus was the Messiah who was promised to the Jews. Paul assured them that Jesus was also the Messiah to the Gentiles.

Now Paul, the prisoner, has become the one to shout the very good news that God loves everyone and wants to have a personal relationship with everyone, not matter who you are...no matter who your parents are.

**Memory Verse:** "This mystery is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 3:6

\*Underlined sentences in the Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

# *Student Worksheet*

## Get a Life!

Page 4 of 4, Lesson Thirteen

### *Ephesians*

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1

### Locked Up for Jesus

**Memory Verse:** “This mystery is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 3:6

>Paul was, in his words, a \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ. He considered his current state to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of God for his life.

>Paul’s imprisonment was proof of his \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gentiles.

>The Gentiles included \_\_\_\_\_ who was not a Jew...sometimes known as “\_\_\_\_\_,” those who didn’t know God.

>He wants to \_\_\_\_\_ the Gentiles, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they were just as \_\_\_\_\_ in the family of God as were the \_\_\_\_\_.

>Paul was rejoicing with the residents of Ephesus, who were \_\_\_\_\_, that it was certain that they were fully included in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God...that by faith they could come to God in Christ and have every thing, every \_\_\_\_\_ to God that the Jews had.

>Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_ who was promised to the Jews. Paul assured them that \_\_\_\_\_ was also the Messiah to the \_\_\_\_\_.

### **How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:**

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be ready to live for him all the rest of your life.