

GROUP TABLE DISCUSSION/APPLICATION: Our culture has taught us to be skeptical or weary of certain people. How have you seen this tendency play itself out in a negative way in church communities? How have you seen the people of God transcend this behavior and welcome people that the outside world would deny or resist?

⁷ 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. ⁸ 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, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

1. Observations

2. Interpretations

GROUP TABLE DISCUSSION/APPLICATION: Christianity has taken a lot of hits and bruises over the past decade in our culture (think: our culture does not respect or think Christians have much to offer the world). How has this reality tempted you to “lose heart”? What do you do to remember that Christ has already overcome the world and our eternal security is in Him alone?

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted

and grounded in love,¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

1. Observations

2.

3. Interpretations

GROUP TABLE DISCUSSION/APPLICATION: How would you describe the state of your own prayer life? Do you reflect on the character of who God is? Does that drive you to pray?