

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XLVII : DIGRESSION #2 - PAUL AS MINISTER OF THE MYSTERY TO THE GENTILES (3:1-13)

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. (Eph 3:1-13 KJV)

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 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. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. (Eph 3:1-13 NIV)

For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you the nations, if, indeed, ye did hear of the dispensation of the grace of God that was given to me in regard to you, that by revelation He made known to me the secret, according as I wrote before in few [words] — in regard to which ye are able, reading [it], to understand my knowledge in the secret of the Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it was now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit — that the nations be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in the Christ, through the good news, of which I became a ministrant, according to the gift of the grace of God that was given to me, according to the working of His power; to me — the less than the least of all the saints — was given this grace, among the nations to proclaim good news — the untraceable riches of the Christ, and to cause all to see what [is] the fellowship of the secret that hath been hid from the ages in God, who the all things did create by Jesus Christ, that there might be made known now to the principalities and the authorities in the heavenly [places], through the assembly, the manifold wisdom of God, according to a purpose of the ages, which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have the freedom and the access in confidence through the faith of him, wherefore, I ask [you] not to faint in my tribulations for you, which is your glory. (Eph 3:1-13 Young's Literal Translation)

Paul as Minister of the Mystery to the Gentiles (3:1-13)

The essence of what Paul is saying is as follows:

For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the Gentiles —

*if, indeed, ye did hear of **the responsibility of managing the GRACE of God which was given to me, namely, that He made known the mystery that the Gentiles should be***

joint – heirs

and joint – body

and joint – partakers

of His promise in Jesus the Messiah through the gospel;

this **GRACE** was given to me

- **to preach** the unsearchable riches of the Christ among the Gentiles
- **and to enlighten** all as to what is the plan of the mystery

in order that [hina] the untraceable wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and to the authorities in the heavenlies through the ecclesia.

Therefore I ask you not to lose heart in my tribulations on behalf of you which is your glory.

v 8 — Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; — ἐμοὶ τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαι τὸν ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτον τοῦ Χριστοῦ [emoi tōi elachistoterōi pantōn tōn hagiōn edothē hē charis hautē en tois ethnesin euangelisasthai ton anexichniaston plouton tou Christou] *“A new sentence begins here and continues to the end of v.*

12. The thought now moves forward from the grace of God embodied in the gospel (v. 2) to the process of preaching that gospel (cf. v. 7). This has three steps ‘distinguished from one another in stating those to whom it is offered’: the Gentiles (v. 8), all people (v. 9), and the powers (vv. 9, 10).” [O’Brien, 240] “The first statement of the mystery proclaimed through Paul’s apostleship began and ended with a reference to that apostleship in terms of grace (cf. vv 2,7). Now the third reference to grace in the pericope introduces a further elucidation of the mystery with which Paul’s apostleship was uniquely connected. ‘This grace’ is in fact explained in what follows in terms of Paul’s apostleship to the Gentiles. It consists in the preaching of the good news to them.” [Lincoln, 182]

Unto me, — ἐμοὶ [emoi] *emphatic because of position. The stress is on the contrast between Paul the missionary and Paul prior to his conversion.*

who am less than the least — τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ [tōi elachistoterōi] *The grammarians call this a ‘comparative of a superlative.’* The definition of **comparative** – ‘adjective: involving comparison between two or more objects;’ e.g., ‘more than...’, ‘less than...’, ‘better than...’. The definition of **superlative** – ‘adjective: of the highest quality or degree;’ e.g., ‘least, most, best.’ So Paul here takes an extreme (‘the least’) and takes it even further by making a comparison of that extreme (‘less than the least’). In the words of Ernest Best: *while a comparative of a superlative is logically impossible, it is an unusual but known grammatical formation.* [Best, 316] Harold Hoehner says this would literally be translated ‘leaster’ but is rendered ‘less than the least’ in most our versions (AV, RV, ASV, NEB, TEV, JB, NIV, NJB). Thomas Abbott observes that double forms of comparatives and superlatives are frequent in poets. “The form ἐλαχιστότερος [elachistoteros], a comparative of the superlative ἐλαχιστος [elachistos], is found only here. It belongs to a class of double comparisons which had a place probably in the popular modes of speech, but of which a considerable number are found in later literature, especially poetry. The only other example in the NT is the double comparative μείζοτερος [meizoteros, ‘larger, greater’] in 3 John 4.” [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 306]

PAUL MADE SIMILAR STATEMENTS IN THE NT BUT THIS GOES FURTHER THAN THE OTHERS — Other comments made by the Apostle Paul along these same lines:

‘I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.’ (2 Cor 12:11 NKJV)

‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’ (1 Tim 1:15 NKJV)

‘For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.’ (1 Cor 15:9 NKJV)

In the First Corinthian passage, Paul is comparing himself with the other apostles and called himself the ‘least’; here however he compares himself with all believers and uses a greater term, ‘less than the least’. *“The thought of the dignity of the office he had received at the cost of such grace and power at once evokes the sense of his own utter unworthiness, to which he gives stronger expression here than even in 1 Cor. xv. 9, or 2 Cor. xii. 11.”* [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 306]

PAUL’S PAST MAY HAVE BEEN THE REASON FOR SUCH A STATEMENT — *“As he reflects on his commission to be Christ’s missionary to the Gentiles Paul is filled with amazement at the extraordinary privilege that has been given to him. Using a very striking expression in which he neither indulges in hypocrisy nor grovels in self-deprecation, he indicates how deeply conscious he is of his own unworthiness and of Christ’s overflowing grace to him: to me who am least than the least of all God’s people has this grace been given.* As if the superlatives ‘least’ (among the apostles, 1 Cor 15:9) or ‘first and foremost’ (of sinners, 1 Tim 1:15) were insufficient to express his unworthiness, Paul creates a new form of this Greek adjective, that is, a comparative of a superlative (‘leaster’, ‘less than the least’). *What grounds are there for such self-effacement? Barth rightly points out that the apostle is not just thinking in general terms about the weakness of his flesh or the continued struggle of the ‘old man’ against the ‘new’. He considers lifelong weakness, temptation, and failure to be characteristic of all believers. Rather, he has in view here his violent persecution of the church of God (1 Cor 15:9). His repeated, specific reference to his role as a persecutor reveal his consciousness of sin.”* [O’Brien, 240] “Paul did at any rate see a great contrast between his former career as a persecutor and his commissioning to be the herald of the one whom he had persecuted (in the person of his

followers), and in this contrast he recognized the amazing grace of God.” [Bruce, 319] “It was not merely the sense of his sinfulness in general, which weighed so heavily on the apostle’s conscience. It was the sin of persecuting Christ, which he could never forgive himself. As soon as God revealed his Son in him, and he apprehended the infinite excellence and love of Christ, the sin of rejecting and blaspheming such a Savior appeared so great that all other sins seemed as comparatively nothing. Paul’s experience in this matter is the type of the experience of other Christians. It is the sin of unbelief, the sin of rejecting Christ, of which, agreeably to our Savior’s own declaration, the Holy Spirit is sent to convince the world (John 16:9).” [Hodge, 116]

PAUL WAS EVALUATING HIMSELF APART FROM THE GRACE OF GOD — “He labors to exhibit himself, and everything that belongs to him, in as humiliating a light as possible, in order that the grace of God may be the more highly exalted. But this acknowledgment had the additional effect of anticipating the objections which his adversaries might bring against him. “Who is this man that God should have raised him above all his brethren? What superior excellence did he possess that he should be chosen in preference to all the others?” All such comparisons of personal worth are set aside by the confession, that he was *the least of all the saints*. This is no hypocritical declaration. Most men are ready enough to make professions of feigned humility, while their minds are swelled with pride, and in words to acknowledge themselves inferior to every one else, while they wish to be regarded with the highest esteem, and think themselves entitled to the highest honor. Paul is perfectly sincere in admitting his unworthiness; nay, at other times he speaks of himself in far more degrading language. “For I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 15:9.) “Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners, of whom I am chief*” (1 Timothy 1:15.) *But let us observe, that, when he speaks of himself as the meanest of all, he confines his attention to what he was in himself, apart from the grace of God. As if he had said, that his own worthlessness did not prevent him from being appointed, while others were passed by, to be the apostle of the Gentiles.*” [Calvin, 253f]

BY GOD’S GRACE, PAUL DID SEE THE SINFULNESS OF HIS OWN HEART — There are those commentators that focuses on Paul’s comment to his present state. I believe at least to some degree they are correct. “[Paul] calls to mind his own (not past, but present and inherent, see 1 Tim i. 15) unworthiness of the high office, and resumes the context with an emphatic declaration of it.” [Alford, 105] “*This is an instance of the great humility of the apostle; and indeed the greatest saints are, generally speaking, the most humble souls, as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; these have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; they rejoice in the grace of God manifested to others; they are willing to receive instruction, nay admonition, from the meanest believer; they have the least opinion of their own works, and are the greatest admirers of the grace of God; and do most contentedly submit to the sovereign will of God: the reasons of their great humility are, because they have the largest discoveries of the love and grace of God and Christ, which are of a soul-humbling nature; they are the most sensible of their own sinfulness, vileness, and unworthiness, which keeps them low in their own sight; they are commonly the most afflicted with Satan’s temptations, which are suffered to attend them, lest they should be exalted above measure; they are the most fruitful souls, and boughs laden with fruit hang lowest; and they are the most conformable to Christ, who is meek and lowly.*” [Gill, 80] *Jesus lists this as the first beatitude, ‘blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God’* (Matt 5:3). Consider the testimonies of others:

Martin Luther during his early experience often wrote to Staupitz: “*oh my sins, my sins!*” *yet in the confessional he could name no sins in particular which he had to confess; it was clearly a sense of the general depravity of his nature which filled his soul with deep sorrow and pain*

Jonathan Edwards wrote: Often since I have lived in this town I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness, very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together, so that I have been often obliged to shut myself up. *I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness and the badness of my heart than ever I had before my conversion. It has often appeared to me that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind, of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell.* When others that have come to talk with me about their soul’s concerns have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them they were a bad as the devil himself; I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble to represent my wickedness.... *When I look into my heart and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell.* And it appears to me that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fullness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of His power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of His power and in all the glory of His sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself, far beyond the sight of everything but the eye of sovereign grace that can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceeding small and faint; it is enough to amaze me that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping for my sins, I thought I knew at the time that my repentance was nothing to my sin.... It is affecting to think how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit left in my heart.

George Whitefield used to say, “*When I see myself I seem to be half devil and half beast,*” and again, as he passed through great crowds on his way to preach: “*I wondered why the people did not stone so vile a wretch as myself.*”

From the diary of **David Brainerd**, missionary to the Indian in New Jersey in 1700s. Much of his diary was found to be occupied with bemoaning his sinful state:

May 13, 1742: *Saw so much of the wickedness of my heart, that I longed to get away from myself. I never*

before thought there was so much spiritual pride in my soul. I felt almost pressed to death with my own vileness. Oh what a body of death is there in me! Lord, deliver my soul.

May 15: indeed I never saw such a week as this before; for I have been almost ready to die with the view of the wickedness of my heart. I could not have thought I had such a body of death in me.

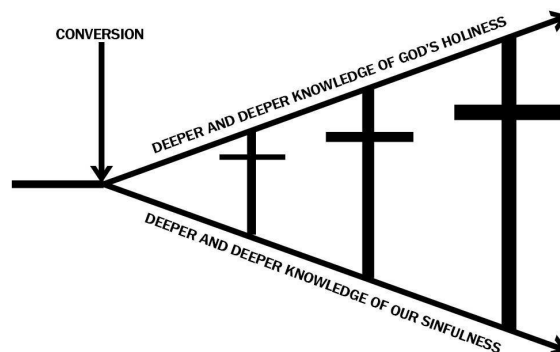
June 30: spent this day alone in the woods, in fasting and prayer; underwent the most dreadful conflicts in my soul that ever I felt, in some respects. I saw myself so vile, that I was ready to say, "I shall now perish by the hand of Saul." I thought, and almost concluded, I had no power to stand for the cause of God, but was almost afraid of the shaking of a leaf. Spent almost the whole day in prayer, incessantly. I could not bear to think of Christians showing me any respect.

IF THIS WAS TRUE OF PAUL, WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE? — *"If Paul was humble, who should not be? Who, since his time, has equalled his ardour, his zeal, his attainments in the divine life? Yet the remembrance of his former life served always to keep him humble, and operated as a check on all the tendencies to pride in his bosom. So it should be with us — with all Christians. There has been enough in our past lives to make us humble, if we would recall it, and to make us feel that we are not worthy to be enrolled among the saints. One has been an infidel; one licentious; one intemperate; one rash, revengeful, passionate; one has been proud and ambitious; one has been false, dishonest, faithless; all have had hearts opposed to God, alienated from good, and prone to evil; and there is not a Christian in the world who will not find enough in his past life to make him humble, if he will examine himself — enough to make him feel that he deserves not even the lowest place among the saints. So we shall feel if we look over our lives since we made a profession of religion. The painful conviction will come over our souls, that we have lived so far from God, and done so little in his cause, that we are not worthy of the lowest place among the blessed."* [Barne's Notes on NT]

ARE WE HUMBLE? — How are we to answer such a question? To answer in the affirmative is in itself a declaration of pride! But I believe there are some checks we may take to evaluate ourselves (*ourselves, not others!*). **WE ARE NOT HUMBLE IF ...**

- *we believe we are humble – Pastor Fisher once said, 'Humility is a fleeting thing; as soon as you realize it, it is gone.'*
- *we are trying to be humble*
- *we are not a person of prayer – true humility results from our walk with Christ, and we cannot walk with Christ without being a person of much prayer*
- *we are not in the Word of God – true humility results from our seeing ourselves as the Lord sees us, and that only comes by being in His Word*
- *we cannot forgive*
- *we are easily offended*
- *we are jealous of others' accomplishments or praise*
- *we are filled with self-pity*
- *we use our 'humility' as an excuse not to serve ('oh, no, I could never do such a thing; you had better choose someone else more worthy.')*
- *we have what is called today 'low self-esteem' – 'low self-esteem' is still self and pride!*

The finest comment I have ever read concerning humility is from C. S. Lewis, *"True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less."* [C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity] "The name 'Paul' (Paulus) means 'little' in Latin, and perhaps Paul bore this name because he realized how insignificant he really was (Acts 13:9). He called himself 'the least of the apostles' (1 Cor. 15:9), but at least he was an apostle, which is more than we can claim. Here he called himself, not 'the least of all saints,' but 'less than the least of all saints,' and he later calls himself the 'chief of sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15). *Understanding the deep truths of God's Word does not give a man a big head; it gives him a broken and contrite heart.*" [Wiersbe, 28] *Without question Pastor would be listed among those in our church who have a deeper understanding into the Word of God, but could anyone possibly ever picture Pastor strutting around in pride? It has been my experience that those who go deep in the Scriptures also have a greater recognition of their inner sin, it is those with shallow theology that are proud of their own accomplishments. One cannot get close to the Lord without seeing their own unworthiness!*



WE CANNOT MAKE OURSELVES HUMBLE — *The paradoxical thing about humility is that if we recognize we are not*

humble, there is nothing we can do to change except to have a closer walk with the Lord. If we are not humble, we cannot make ourselves humble! Only the Spirit of God opening our heart and eyes to who He is and who we are without Him can create true humility. We need to confess our helplessness and pray, asking the Lord to show us our heart and then in pity, relieve our pain by showing us Jesus. I would challenge each of us to earnestly pray, 'Lord, show me my heart.' I guarantee you, if the Lord answers that prayer, we will pray even more earnestly for the Lord to show us Jesus!

One of my favorite songs is by one who is also one of my favorite Christian artists, Phil Keaggy. Here is a song he wrote back in 1986 entitled 'Once I Prayed':

*Once I prayed, I knew not what I said,
Show me myself, oh Lord,
Alas I did not dread
The hideous sight which now
I shudder to behold,
Because I knew not self-aright.*

*And I was led in answer to my prayer,
As step by step to see
My wretched heart lay bare.
Then I prayed,
Stay, Lord, I cannot bear the sight.
And pityingly His hand was stayed,
His hand was stayed.*

*Now I pray, I know that prayer is right,
Show me Thyself, oh Lord,
Be to myself the Bright and Morning Star
To shine upon the grave of self
And lead my heart from earth afar,
From earth afar.*

Phil Keaggy, 'Once I Prayed', from his 'Way Back Home' CD

BALANCE — As with all of the believer's life, the key word is 'balance.' ***Yes, there should be an inner consciousness of our unworthiness in and of ourselves, but that should not prevent any service on our part.*** Paul did remember his past:

'Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.' (Phil 3.6)

'And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.' (cf Acts 7.58)

'And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.' (cf Acts 9.1,2)

But Paul's past did not paralyze him nor render him ineffective in the service of Christ! —

'For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.... But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.' (Gal 1.13, 23)

'Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.' (Phil 3:12-14 NKJV)

Paul in all his self-recognition of his sin realized that was who he was in and of himself, but Christ had done a work in him and was continuing to work in his life. That being so, Paul could also make comments such as these:

'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' (1 Thes 1:6)

'Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.' (1 Cor 4:16)

'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' (1 Cor 11:1)

'For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you' (2 Thes 3:7)

"[This Greek word] appears to express a definite idea, not only least of all saints, but even less than this implies. It may therefore be considered a unique formation. The expression can hardly be interpreted, with some eminent expositors, as referring to his consciousness of enduring sinfulness, as to which he could not place himself lower than all saints. True it is,

no doubt, that every Christian, when he looks into his own heart, and is conscious of the sin that still dwells there, and knows that he cannot see what is in the heart of others, may be ready to exclaim, [I am less than the least of all saints]; but this does not express a deliberate comparison, and whatever such a one may feel at such moments, he would act unwisely if, when instructing and exhorting others, he should thus proclaim his own inferiority to them. Such a confession would be likely to be misunderstood, and either called hypocritical or made the ground of the retort, Why, then, take upon you to instruct and reprove your betters? Certainly St. Paul gives us little reason to think that he would take such a view. He declares that he has ‘lived in all good conscience toward God’; that if any one might have confidence in the flesh, he might, being blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the law. And as one of the [saints], he does not reckon himself amongst the babes in Christ, but the mature (Phil. iii. 15). He affirms that in nothing is he behind the [gk, superlative apostles]; nay, he does not hesitate to call on his readers to be imitators of him, as he is of Christ. ***While never for a moment forgetting his own nothingness, and that it is only by the grace of God that he was what he was, he likewise never forgets his true position in Christ’s service. And he was too much taken up with his work in that service to have time for indulging in that kind of self-examination which consists in analysing one’s state of mind or one’s feelings.***” [Abbott, 85f]

PAUL’S COMMENTS HERE SUPPORTS THE PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF EPHESIANS — “Beare rightly sees here ‘the most serious hurdle which confronts those who deny the authenticity of the epistle.’ *Is it conceivable that an admirer of Paul, writing in his name to enhance his reputation in the late-first-century church, would ascribe such a self-demoting confession to him?*” [Wood, *Ephesians on CD*] ***“This is an important indication of Paul’s authorship of Ephesians. Such deprecation likely would not have been expressed about Paul by a pseudonymous author.”*** [Hoehner, 452]

of all saints, — πάντων τῶν ἁγίων [pantōn tōn hagiōn] The comparison Paul wants to make here is not with apostles (as in 1 Cor 15:9) but with ‘all the saints.’ “Paul wishes to convey that he considers himself to be less than the least of all believers who have been given this grace.... This is not false modesty but a true humility. There are two reasons for this sentiment. First, he considered himself to be the foremost of sinners and not worthy of the salvation God graciously gave (1 Tim 1:15). Second, he had blasphemed and persecuted Christ (1 Tim 1:13; Acts 9:4-5; 26:11, 14-15) and persecuted the church, trying to destroy it (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6; cf. Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:102, 4-5, 7-8; 26:9-11, 14-15). Thus, he felt unworthy not only of God’s grace for salvation but also God’s grace in appointing him to preach the gospel and to be an apostle to the Gentiles (1 Tim 2:7). This is an important indication of Paul’s authorship of Ephesians. Such deprecation likely would not have been expressed about Paul by a pseudonymous author.” [Hoehner, 452]