

"Paul's Prayer for the Saints at Ephesus"

Part 3

Introduction: For the last 2 weeks we have been looking at the prayer which Paul offered up in chapter 1 for the saints at Ephesus. We have looked at several points about this prayer.

I. The Motivation

Notice Ephesians 1:15-16

1. He had heard of their faith.
2. He had heard of their love for the saints.

These people whom Paul was writing to were genuine believers. Their faith in Christ was a real saving faith and their lives proved it. Paul had heard of their faith as it was being lived out and their saving faith was manifest in their love for their fellow saints.

This truth motivated Paul to stop and pray for these believers.

**I. The Prayer
Part 3**

Notice Ephesians 1:17

Paul begins his prayer by praying for these believers to deepen their walk with their Lord. He desires that they grow in knowledge and in wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to put into practice the knowledge which they would gain. So, Paul desires that these believers deepen their knowledge and to mature in their walk.

Notice Ephesians 1:18a

Here in this verse Paul prays for their eyes of understanding to be enlightened. This literally means, "THE EYES OF YOUR HEART".

The HEART here refers to the EMOTIONS, THE MIND and THE WILL. This was the center of emotions. Paul desired that the TRUTH of who they were IN CHRIST would be a heart knowledge and not just a head knowledge. This would take the work of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of their heart.

Paul did not want the knowledge of who they were in Christ to be just a head knowledge, but he wanted this knowledge to be in the center of their being that way it would control them. Paul knew there was a danger that it would all be in the head. Let me show you something that Jesus said:

Matthew 13:13

¹³ *Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*

It is possible to know what the Bible says about who we are in Christ and yet be controlled by our feelings and our emotions. So, it would only be a head knowledge. They would know it but not understand it. Paul's desire was that the Truth of the first 3 chapters would be embedded deep down in their hearts and it would control the way they lived their lives.

Now as we move on, we see the details of Paul's prayer.

1. **He prays about the past.**

Notice Ephesians 1:18b

Last week we looked at Paul prayed that they would know the HOPE of their calling. He desired that they would know the HOPE which they had been called into. We too have been called into great HOPE in Jesus Christ.

1. **Hope in the rapture.**
2. **Hope in a glorified body.**
3. **Hope of an eternal home.**
4. **Hope of the Kingdom.**
5. **Hope of the eternal state.**

Now we come to where we are today.

2. **He prays about the future.**

Notice Ephesians 1:18

Now in the previous verses we looked at the inheritance which we are guaranteed to receive.

Notice Ephesians 1:11, 13-14

The Holy Spirit is the down payment that guarantees our eternal inheritance until the purchased redemption or until the church is complete.

1 Peter 1:3-4

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

These verses speak of our inheritance but in the verse, we are looking at Paul is not talking about the BELIEVER'S inheritance.

Notice Ephesians 1:18 again.

Paul desires that the saints at Ephesus understand that they are GOD'S INHERITAMCE and he wants them to grasp onto the knowledge as God's inheritance they are also the riches of His glory.

Notice Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14

All God has done in and for us is to the praise of His glory.

Let me share with you the words of F. B. Meyer on this thought:

"What an extraordinary combination! It is a mystery that God should find his inheritance and portion in the love of men and women like ourselves. But that he should find the riches of glory in them! --this passes thought. It may, however, be explained by a piece of farming that I learnt recently. The other day, when travelling in Scotland, I was introduced to some farmers whose soil was naturally of the poorest description; and yet, in answer to my inquiries, I found that they were able to raise crops of considerable weight and value. This seemed to me very extraordinary. Out of nothing, nothing comes, is the usual rule. But they unravelled the mystery by telling me that they put in, in enriching manure, all that they took out in the days of golden harvest.

Is not this the secret of any grace or wealth there is in Christian lives? Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thee, O Christ of God, be the glory! Whatever Thou dost get out of us, Thou must first put in. And all the crops of golden grain, all the fruits of Christian grace, are Thine from us, because Thou hast by thy blood and tears, by the sunshine of thy love, and the rain of thy grace, enriched natures which in themselves were arid as the desert and barren as the sand."

Before we were saved, we were spiritually dead, and we were unable to produce and good works at all. Let me remind you what we were before we were saved.

Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

¹³ Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

¹⁴ Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

¹⁵ Their feet are swift to shed blood:

¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways:

¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known:

¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Titus 3:3

³ For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Isaiah 64:6-7

⁶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

⁷ And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Romans 7:18

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

There was nothing good in us.

But when we were saved, we were given the Holy Spirit, we were given the heart of Jesus Christ and God washed us clean.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

¹⁰ *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

¹¹ *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Now we are new creations.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Now from our lives comes righteousness.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

So, God took us who were deep in sin, whose hearts were sinful and corrupt, and who were His own enemies and now from us comes righteousness. We are His inheritance and we are to the PRAISE OF HIS GLORY because the righteousness that comes from us is because of what He has poured into us.

Now let me raise a question in the midst of this Truth.

Why is it so important that I know this?

Because we are to live in a way that we bring glory to God. Listen to the words of Meyer again on the application here:

"Give all thou hast to God. As He bought, so let Him possess, everything. He will occupy and keep thee. He will bring fruit out of thy rockiest nature, as the Norwegians raise crops on every scrap of soil on their mountain slopes. He will put into thee the grace that thou shalt give back to Him in fruit. He will win for Himself a great name, as He turns thy desert places into gardens, and makes thy wildernesses blossom as the rose."

The bottom line is we are to give ourselves fully over to God and allow Him to bring fruit from us to glorify Himself. We must not hold anything back for He has bought us, and He has filled us. We belong to Him and so we are to give ourselves completely over to Him.

This shines a different light upon what Paul wrote in Romans 12.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Now let us see the third part of Paul's prayer.

3. He prays about the present.

Notice Ephesians 1:19

First, it is very important to notice that Paul does not pray for God to give the believers power. But he prays that they would understand the power which they already have.

Secondly, we need to know that Paul uses 4 words in this verse to show just how great God's power is in the believer.

- a. **Power** - This refers to a dynamic power and it is the very word which we get the word "dynamite" from. This refers to a spiritually dynamic living force.
- b. **Working** - This refers to an energetic power. This is the word we get our word "energy" from. This is power that overcomes resistance.
- c. **Mighty** - This refers to the strength which God gives to believers. It is the power of His might.
- d. **Power** - This refers to force or a mighty power.

The point Paul is making here is that we have all the power we need to live a life worthy of who we are in Jesus Christ.

- ✓ We have power to overcome sin.
- ✓ We have power to resist temptation.
- ✓ We have power to resist the Devil.
- ✓ We have power to exercise our gifts.
- ✓ We have power to serve.

We do not need to ask God for His power for it has already been given to us.

Colossians 1:29

²⁹ *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

Paul goes on to illustrate just how great this power is which has been given to us who are believers.

1. It is the power that resurrected Jesus Christ.

Notice Ephesians 1:20a-21

2. It is the power that seated Jesus at the right hand of the Father.

Notice Ephesians 1:20b

3. It is the power that placed Jesus as Lord over all.

Notice Ephesians 1:21-23

Conclusion:

*"Now, I want to ask you a question: Are you sitting in this auditorium, this morning, or are you sitting in heavenly places? The answer is yes, yes, yes. Physically, we are here; but, **in Christ**, we have been raised. When He died, we died. His death had our name on it. When He was raised from the grave, we were raised from the grave. When He ascended, we ascended. When He is seated at the right hand of God, so are we, in Christ. If I were to put you in a barrel and put that barrel in the Mississippi River, where would you be? In the Mississippi River, right? Well, if you're in Christ, and Christ is at the right hand of God, where are you? Seated with Him. The devil hopes you don't understand this. That's the reason Paul said, "I am praying that your eyes will be opened, that you will be enlightened, that you will understand this" (Ephesians 1:18). That's my prayer, that you'll understand it: **"the exceeding greatness of His power"** (Ephesians 1:19). Imagine a couple of demons speaking. One demon says to the other, "Demon, if those liberal theologians ever really let Jesus Christ out of that tomb, and those so-called Baptist preachers begin to preach it—whew! Hell help us, all Heaven will break loose." Don't you think it's time all Heaven broke loose? Don't you think it's time that the people of God begin to understand and to exercise Kingdom Authority?"*