

Sunday, May 10, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction

- Two weeks ago we began a new series of studies entitled Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul. In that first study we saw how the dynamics of prayer have totally changed for members of the body of Christ.
- I Thessalonians 5:17--We began by looking at Paul's instructions to the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing.
- We discussed how the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit has changed all of the rules when it comes to prayer. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would come upon God's people for a time in order to accomplish a specific task or purpose but He would not permanently indwell the Old Testament saints.
- This reality affected Israel prayer life because she has specific times and places for prayer whereas the body of Christ is instructed by Paul to pray without ceasing.
- Romans 12:12—Paul instructs believers to be instant or steadfastly attentive unto their prayer life.
- Furthermore we looked at what instant prayer looks like practically by looking at all the times Paul made mention of various saints in his prayers. To think about someone or hear a report about hem was a prompt for Paul to pray for them.
- I Timothy 2:1-2, 8—we also looked at the order of prayer that Paul discusses.
 - Supplications—need, want, a seeking, asking, or entreating of God or man
 - Intercessions—a request concerning others on their behalf
 - Giving of Thanks—thankfulness, to give thanks
- Everywhere Paul speaks of prayer thanksgiving always accompanies that discussion.
- Simply stated, we have in black in white on the pages of Scripture through the pen of the Apostle Paul, God the Holy Spirit's prayers for the body of Christ.
- By studying these prayers not only do we learn the heart of God for his people but we unlock the powerful potential of prayer in our daily lives as we learn to pray for each other the way the Holy Spirit prayed for the body of Christ.

Overview of Prayer

- This prayer contains four major parts.
- The Ephesians would be give the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they might:
 - Know God
 - Know what is the hope of their calling
 - Know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints
 - Know the exceeding greatness of his power toward us-ward who believe

Ephesians 1:17—The Spirit of Wisdom of Revelation

- Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians and therefore for us is that God the Father would give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.
- Please notice that the word “spirit” in this verse is not capitalized, therefore, Paul is not referring to us being given the Holy Spirit the third member of the Godhead. He just told us in verse 13 and 14 that we were sealed with the HS as the earnest of our inheritance.
- What does Paul mean then? He is talking about the working of the HS in the lives of the Ephesians to grant them wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.
 - II Corinthians 4:13—spirit of faith
 - II Timothy 1:7—we have not been given the spirit of fear but power, love, and sound mind.
- The goal of Paul’s prayer is that the Ephesians would be given (bestowed, granted, or supplied) with a spirit sensitive mind that is inundated with the wisdom and revelation essential for knowing him.
- There is an indivisible juncture between the spirit and mind of believers. God the Holy Spirit, through the medium of the human spirit, imparts to the minds of believers divine wisdom.
- II Corinthians 2:11—the only reason we know anything about God is because the indwelling Holy Spirit has illuminated our understanding.
- Ephesians 1:8—wisdom is one of the spiritual blessings that God has caused to abound in us.

- What is the spirit of wisdom? It has often been said that knowledge is what we can know in our minds as individual facts and truths; however, wisdom is the ability to successfully apply that knowledge to whatever we are doing.
- Notice that the result of this prayer is that the Ephesians might know God. If we are going to know God today in the dispensation of Grace we need to be able to know and apply that knowledge to the details of our life.
- Therefore, there is only one type of wisdom that would result in the Ephesians knowing God today in the Dispensation of Grace and that is the wisdom of God in a mystery.
- I Corinthians 1:17-2:13—the word wisdom is used 13 times
 - I Corinthians 2:7—Paul is speaking about the wisdom of God in a mystery. You cannot truly know God today with understanding the secret purpose that he is now accomplishing through the body of Christ.
- Ephesians 3:10—through the revelation of the mystery God has revealed his manifold wisdom to man to creation.
- Colossians 1:28, 2:3, 3:16—all deal with different aspects of the wisdom of God.
- Paul also prays for the spirit of revelation. The word revelation carries the following meanings:
 - Unveiling, uncovering of facts and truths, disclosure
 - The word literally means to uncover, hence, the disclosing and opening up of mystery truth pertaining to the Body of Christ, the Church.
- Paul's use of the noun revelation in conjunction with the mystery, the truth for the Church, confirms the fact that his main burden is for them to have insight and enlightenment into God's present church purpose in Christ.
- Consider the following verses:
 - Romans 16:25—revelation of the mystery
 - I Corinthians 2:10—God has revealed to us His hidden wisdom
 - II Corinthians 12:1, 7—Paul was continually receive more information from God.

- Galatians 1:12—Paul received his information by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - Ephesians 3:3, 5—it was through these revelations that Paul received that God unveiled his secret purpose for the body of Christ.
- The ultimate result of the spirit of wisdom and revelation is that we might know God.

Ephesians 1:18 Enlightened Understanding

- The result of having the spirit of wisdom and revelation is that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened.
- The word “enlightened” means to give light, to illumine, having had light thrown upon, have had illuminated. Consider the following Biblical examples:
 - Luke 11:36—“doth give thee light”
 - I Corinthians 4:5—“will bring to light”
 - Ephesians 3:9—“to make all men see”
 - Hebrews 10:32—“illuminated”
- During the 16th and 17th centuries that was a movement historian’s call the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment expanded upon the ideas of the Scientific Revolution and championed human reason over religion and superstition and a means of discerning truth.
- Paul is talking here about a true spiritual enlightenment whereby the eyes of our understanding comprehend what God is doing thereby given us wisdom in how to act properly.
- Ephesians 1:18—“that” tells you the purpose and intent. You will have to return next Sunday to get the rest of the story.