

Sunday, May 17, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction

- Last week we began looking at the first one of Paul’s power prayers in Ephesians 1:15-23.
- This morning our goal is to finish studying this prayer as well as make some practical applications to our daily lives.
- This Prayer contains four major parts. Paul prays in verse 15 that the Ephesians would be given a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him 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
- Last week we spend the majority of our time looking at what Paul meant when He prayed that the Ephesians would be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.
- The goal of having the spirit of wisdom and revelation is that the Ephesians might know him.
- The way you know God today in the dispensation of Grace is through:
 - Wisdom—the wisdom of God in a mystery
 - Revelation—the revelation of the mystery

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 historians 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.

The Hope of His Calling

- The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him is designed to open the eyes of their understanding so that they might know some things.
- The first thing Paul wanted them to know was the hope of their calling.
- Hope—expectation of good, joyful and confident expectation, expectation, anticipation, that which is looked forward to, expectation of something future, a well-grounded expectation and a gladly and firmly held prospect of future good.
- Calling—a summons, an irresistible invitation, a nondisobeyable order to come.
- Paul wants believers to know the hope, expectation, and anticipation that comes from knowing the nature of our calling.
- Ephesians 4:4—believers only have one hope.
- Philippians 3:14—believers also possess a high calling in Jesus Christ.
- Paul’s prayer that we might know the hope of this calling.
- Titus 2:13—our hope as believers is tied to the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ to call home his church to himself.
- I Thessalonians 4:13-18—the next time Christ appears it is to meet the church in the air.

- I Corinthians 15:51-53—notice the fact that we shall not all sleep (i.e. die) before the Lord appears in the heavens to meet us in the air is part of the mystery.
- Do you see how we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him to understand the hope of our calling?
- It is at the rapture or the day of redemption that the believer's hope is realized as this mortal and corruptible body will be fitted with incorruptible and immortal body.
- Romans 8:18-25—we are saved from our present suffering because of the hope (confident expectation of a coming event) that our bodies will also receive redemption from the curse of sin that is upon creation.
- Philippians 2:20-21—the hope of the believer is that we will be glorified together with Christ.

The Riches of the Glory of His Inheritance in the Saints

- Ephesians 1:18—in the second half of the verse we see the second thing believers are supposed to know.
- Notice that this verse is talking about **his inheritance** not **our inheritance**.
- Our inheritance is discussed in Ephesians 1:11-14. Romans 8:17 tells us that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, however, that is not what this verse is talking about.
- Paul wants us to know about God the Father's inheritance. Inheritance means:
 - property received (or to be received) by inheritance
 - what is given to one as a possession
- Notice where God the father receives his inheritance—in the saints.
- Please understand what Paul is saying. God the Father stands to inherit something through us the church the Body of Christ. What is it that God inherits through us? The authority of rule and dominion in the heavenly places.

- Colossians 1:16-20—it is through the blood of his cross that Jesus Christ will reconcile all the governmental structures of heaven and earth back to himself.
- Isaiah 14:12-16—Lucifer's initial boast was to be like the most high.
- Genesis 14:19—the term the most high means to be the possessor of heaven and earth. When Satan said, “I will be like the most high,” he was saying he wanted to be the possessor of heaven and earth.
- John 12:31—refers to Satan as the prince of this world. Ephesians 2:2—refers to Satan as the prince the power of the air.
- It is through the body of Christ, the subject of the mystery kept secret since the world began that God is going to repossess the heavenly places back to himself.
- It is through us that God will reestablish his authority over the heavenly places and receive them again as his inheritance.
- Ephesians 3:10-11—it is us the church the body of Christ that teaches the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God.
- So we see that not only did we need God but he needed us so that he might accomplish his eternal purpose through his son Jesus Christ.
- Not only are we the recipients of an inheritance because we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ but God the Father receives an inheritance in and through us as members of the body of Christ.
- Do you see how we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him to understand God's inheritance in the saints?

The Exceeding Greatness of His Power

- The third thing Paul wants us to understand is the exceeding greatness of God's power that he has exercised toward us who believe.
- Exceeding greatness—means to transcend, surpass, excel, to surpass in throwing, to throw over and beyond a thing. Surpassing vastness.
- Notice that this power is only demonstrated toward those who believe.

- Working—is used in the NT only of superhuman power.
 - Ephesians 3:7, 4:16—effectual working
 - Colossians 2:12—operation
- This power has already been utilized on behalf of believers. Paul wants believers to know the exceeding greatness of God’s power unto them.
- Ephesians 1:19-20—the same power that God used when he raised up Christ from the dead and glorified him in the heavenly places has been exercised to us ward who believe.

Conclusion

- When was the last time you prayed this prayer for yourself or someone else?
- Rather than praying for healing we ought to pray that saints would understand the hope of their calling.
- Example of how to pray this prayer for yourself and someone else.

Praying Ephesians 1:15-23 for Yourself

Adapted from *Discover the Power in the Prayers of Paul* by David Bordon

Dear Heavenly Father,

In the name of Jesus Christ, I praise and thank you for all of the spiritual blessings you have bestowed upon me in heavenly places, in Jesus Christ. I thank you for accepting me in the beloved, that you have redeemed and forgiven me of all my sins past, present, and future. Furthermore, I praise you for abounding toward me in wisdom and prudence as well as revealing the mystery of your will. Thank you for the giving me an inheritance in Jesus Christ and sealing me with your Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption as the down payment of my inheritance.

On the basis of who you have made me in Jesus Christ, I pray that you would give unto me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you. Please open the eyes of my understanding that I might fully comprehend and appreciate the hope of your calling. Help me to understand the riches of and glory of Christ's inheritance through the saints. Cause me to understand what is the exceeding greatness of your power toward me because I believe that Christ died, was buried, and rose again in payment of my sin.

Father, I thank you that all these things were accomplished by the exceeding greatness of your power—the very power by which Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead. Thank you for giving me a position in your exalted son who you seated at your own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principalities, powers, might, and dominions. I praise you for making Christ head over all things to the church. Father I pray that through the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you I might understand how to better fulfill the ambassadorship that I have been given in Christ's stead.

Amen

Praying Ephesians 1:15-23 for Others

Adapted from *Discover the Power in the Prayers of Paul* by David Bordon

Dear Heavenly Father,

In the name of Jesus Christ, I praise and thank you for all of the spiritual blessings you have bestowed upon _____ in heavenly places, in Jesus Christ. I thank you for accepting _____ in the beloved, that you have redeemed _____ and forgiven them of all their sins past, present, and future. Furthermore, I praise you for abounding toward _____ in wisdom and prudence as well as revealing to them the mystery of your will. Thank you for the giving _____ an inheritance in Jesus Christ and sealing them with your Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption as the down payment on my inheritance.

On the basis of who you have made _____ in Jesus Christ, I pray that you would give unto _____ the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you. Please open the eyes of _____ understanding that they might fully comprehend and appreciate the hope of your calling. Help _____ to understand the riches of and glory of Christ's inheritance through the saints. Cause _____ to understand what is the exceeding greatness of your power toward them because they believed that Christ died, was buried, and rose again in payment for their sin.

Father, I thank you that all these things were accomplished by the exceeding greatness of your power—the very power by which Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead. Thank you for giving _____ a position in your exalted son who you seated at your own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principalities, might, and dominions. I praise you for making Christ head over all things to the church. Father I pray that through the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you _____ might understand how to better fulfill the ambassadorship that _____ have been given in Christ's stead.

Amen