

THAT YOU MAY KNOW

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE BLESSED CHURCH

(Part 1 & 2)

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TYPE OF SERMON: Expository

TEXT: Ephesians 1:15-23

SUBJECT: The Apostle Paul's Prayer.

COMPLEMENT: Paul prayed for the blessed church that they may know the hope of their calling, God's inheritance in the saints, and God's working power in the church.

PROPOSITION: The Apostle Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know that he was thankful to God for their faith, love, and for them to know the hope of their calling, God's inheritance in the saints and His power that was working in His people.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage my spiritual family to remain faithful to God by remembering what God has done for us.

INTRODUCTION:

1. *On our last lesson we considered some of the great blessings of the church of Christ (Eph. 1:1-14).*
 - a. Grace and peace
 - b. Chosen before the foundation of the world
 - c. Adoption to God's family
 - d. Redemption
 - e. Forgiveness of sins
 - f. The seal of the Holy Spirit
 - g. Reconciliation
2. *We examined, therefore...*
 - a. The origin and source of our spiritual blessings
 - b. The quantity of our spiritual blessings
 - c. The nature of our spiritual blessings
 - d. The location of our spiritual blessings
3. In this lesson we will focus on Paul's prayer for the blessed church.
4. *One of the great things that we can learn about the life of the Apostle Paul is that he was indeed a man of prayer.*
 - a. Paul taught a lot on prayer in his 13 epistles
 - b. Exhorted Christians to dedicate time to prayer (1 Thess 5:17; Col 4:2; Rom. 12:12)
 - c. But, he also was an example of a man of prayer (Prayed with the Ephesian elders, Acts 20).
5. *In Ephesians 1:15-23, we learn the Apostle Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know...*
 - a. That he was thankful to God for their faith.
 - b. That he was thankful to God for their brotherly love.

- c. That he wanted God to give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.
 - d. The hope of their calling.
 - e. The richest of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.
 - f. The exceeding greatness of His power toward the saints.
6. Consequently, let us examine the following points of discussion.

First, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know that...

I. HE WAS THANKFUL TO GOD FOR THEIR FAITH.

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (1:15-16).

- 1. The word “Therefore” (NKJV) or “For this cause” (ASV 1901):
 - a. Connects the previous statements with what follows
 - b. After mentioning the blessings we enjoy in Christ, Paul now is thankful to God for the faith of the church at Ephesus.
- 2. It is always a reason to rejoice and thank God for the faith of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 3. *Remember what faith is:*
 - a. Greek word **pistis**
 - b. Complete trust in Jesus conjoined with obedience
 - c. This is the kind of faith Paul heard about from the saints at Ephesus
 - d. This is the kind of faith that needs to be in our lives!
- 4. *Faith in the life of Christians is important because...*
 - a. Without it we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. Without it we cannot overcome the world (1 John 5:4).
 - c. Without it we will depart from the living God (Heb. 3:12).
 - d. Without it we cannot enter heaven (John 8:24).
- 5. Let us be thankful for the faith of our brothers and sisters in Christ!
 - a. Let us pray for our spiritual family that we always have the kind of faith that pleases God.
- 6. Let us work diligently to have the kind of faith that pleases God!

Second, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know that...

II. HE WAS THANKFUL TO GOD FOR THEIR BROTHERLY LOVE.

“And your love for all the saints” (v. 15).

- 1. Paul rejoiced in the Lord and gave thanks to God not only for the faith of the church at Ephesus, but also for their love they had for the saints.
- 2. The faith of the church at Ephesus was made manifest when they practiced brotherly love!
- 3. *We can be sure that their love for the brethren...*
 - a. Was a love without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9-10).

- b. Was a love they learned from Jesus (John 13:34-35).
- c. Was a love where they looked out for the interest of others (Phil. 2:4).
- d. Was a love that provided for the needs of others (1 John 3:17-18; Acts 2:44-45).
- 4. This is the love that must prevail in the church!
- 5. Let us be thankful to God for those members of the Lord's church that have this kind of love in their lives!
- 6. *Remember the importance of brotherly love in the church:*
 - a. It helps the church to live in unity (Jews and Gentiles, Eph. 2:13-16; 4:1-3).
 - b. It helps us to obey God's command (John 13:34).
 - c. It helps us to make a huge difference in the world (John 13:45).
 - d. It helps us to care for the spiritual well-being of others (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).
 - e. It helps us to provide for the needs of others (Acts 2:44-45).
 - f. It helps us to imitate Christ and God (1 John 4:8).
 - g. It helps us to make it to heaven (1 John 2-5).
- 7. Let us remember that the saints at Ephesus were sealed with the Holy Spirit, and therefore, manifested the fruit of the Spirit as seen in Gal. 5:22-23!

Third, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know that...

III. HE WANTED GOD TO GIVE THEM A SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened” (vs. 17-18).

- 1. The phrase, “A spirit of wisdom” must be interpreted in light of the Greek text. The definite article “the” does not precede the noun “spirit.”
 - a. This phrase may be interpreted as Paul asking God to give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God even better.
 - b. This phrase may also be interpreted as the Holy Spirit in view of its remote context Eph 1:13-14.
- 2. *We must remember the context of the time when this letter was written:*
 - a. It was about 62-63 AD
 - b. The church was established about 30 years earlier.
 - c. There were miracles gifts of the Holy Spirit (e.g., the gift of prophecy, tongues, etc.).
 - d. 1 Cor. 12:8-9, “For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit.” Here the definite article “the” is present.
 - e. There were Apostles present at that time.
 - f. Wisdom and revelation may have come through miraculous means.
- 3. *What about Christians in the 21st century?*

- a. Today we are blessed to have the faith that has been once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
 - b. We have the complete revelation of God in His written and inspired Word.
 - c. We now can fully know God by studying His Word!
4. *The purpose of this wisdom and revelation in this context:*
- a. That the church at Ephesus may fully know God
 - b. "Knowledge" Gr. *Epignosis* – Full knowledge (20 times in NT)
 - c. As Christians who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and those who now enjoy all the blessings in Christ, we should always strive to know God in a more intimate way.
5. *How can we have a personal relationship with God where we can know Him?*
- a. By studying His revelation, that is, His inspired Word
 - b. By practicing His Word
 - c. By praying to Him more frequently
 - d. By putting Him first in our lives
 - e. By living a holy life in Christ
 - f. By loving Him with every fiber of our being
 - g. By imitating Him
 - h. By loving and obeying His Son
6. Our spiritual eyes must be enlightened through God's Word in order to know God; nevertheless, we must be willing to desire such!
7. The Apostle Paul wanted this for the church at Ephesus!

Fourth, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know...

IV. THE HOPE OF GOD'S CALLING.

"That you may know what is the hope of His calling..." (v. 18).

- 1. Paul prayed to God and wanted the church at Ephesus to know the hope of His calling.
- 2. *"Hope" in this context means:*
 - a. *Elpis* – To look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial (Louw & Nida Lexicon).
- 3. *The Bible has a lot to say about the hope we enjoy in Christ:*
 - a. Eph. 2:12 – We did not have hope outside of Christ.
 - b. Rom. 8:24 – We are saved by hope.
 - c. Col. 1:5 – Our hope is reserved in heaven.
 - d. 1 Thess 5:8 – It is the hope of our salvation.
 - e. Col. 1:27 – Jesus Christ is our hope of glory.
 - f. Titus 2:13 – It is a blessed hope.
 - g. 1 Pet. 1:3 – It is a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - h. Titus 1:2; 3:7 – It is the hope of our eternal life.
 - i. We are blessed with hope because God is our God of hope (Rom. 15:13).
- 4. *"Calling" in this context means:*

- a. To urgently invite someone to accept responsibilities for a particular task, implying a new relationship to the one who does the calling, invitation (Louw & Nida Lexicon).
- 5. *What kind of calling is this?*
 - a. We are called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14; Acts 2:36-41).
 - b. It is an upward call of God (Phil. 3:14).
 - c. It is a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9).
 - d. It is a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).
 - e. It is one in which we must walk worthily (Eph. 4:1).
 - f. It is a call into one body (Col. 3:15).
- 6. Thanks be to God because we NOW have the complete revelation available by which we can learn about this hope of His calling!
- 7. We thank God for this wonderful calling and hope we now enjoy!

Fifth, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know...

V. THE RICHEST OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS.

“What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (v. 18)

- 1. This part of the text is talking about God’s inheritance in us, not ours – **“His inheritance in the saints.”**
- 2. Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know that we are God’s inheritance.
- 3. *We are the means by which God is glorified:*
 - a. 1 Pet. 2:9 – We are God’s chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, and his own special people!
 - b. Titus 2:14 – We are God’s own special people, zealous for good works!
 - c. Eph. 1:5-6 – We are adopted sons of God to the praise of the glory of His grace!
 - d. Eph. 1:12 – Those, who first trusted God are to the praise of His glory!
 - e. Eph 1:14 – We are God’s purchase possession to the praise of His glory!
- 4. We are here by the grace of God to be **His inheritance** and the means by which He is glorified!
- 5. This is a great truth that we should never forget!

Sixth, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know...

VI. THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD THE SAINTS.

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power” (v. 19).

- 1. Paul prayed that the church at Ephesus may know the exceeding greatness of God’s power toward His saints, His church.
- 2. *How does God’s power work in us?*
 - a. It gave us life in Christ (Col. 2:12; Eph. 2:1)
 - b. It gives us the strength to serve God (2 Cor. 3:4; John 15:5; Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 1:7).

- c. It gives us strength to overcome our enemy (Eph. 6:10-18).
 - d. It helps us to make it to heaven (Phil. 1:6).
 - e. It is not a miraculous power that enable us to perform miracles, as some contend.
3. *Things we can learn about this great power of God in relation to Christ:*
- a. It is divine in nature
 - b. It comes from God
 - c. It raised Christ from the dead
 - d. It seated Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenly places
 - e. It is a strong power above all principalities, powers, might, dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come—In essence, Christ's Power is above all!
 - f. It gave Christ all authority!
 - g. It placed Christ as head over the church, which is His body.
4. We need to acknowledge God's power for the benefit of our salvation.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. What a wonderful prayer we find in Ephesians 1:15-23!
- 2. *Through this prayer, the Apostle Paul wanted them to know...*
 - a. That he gave thanks to God for their faith and love.
 - b. He also wanted them to know that he desired for God to give them wisdom and a spirit of revelation to know God, to know the hope of their calling, and God's inheritance, as well as His power working in us.
- 3. May we as God's church never forget to appreciate this great prayer uttered by the Apostle Paul, on behalf of God's church.
- 4. May these points of discussion help us to understand the need to live faithfully in Christ, and to know that we can live faithfully in Him.
- 5. We are indeed a blessed church!

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