

The Prayer of Peace. . . .
That You may Know Your Treasures.
Ephesians 1:15-13

¹⁵ I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. ¹⁶ So I never stop being grateful for you, **as I mention you in my prayers.** ¹⁷ I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit. The Spirit will **make you wise** and **let you understand what it means to know God.** ¹⁸ My prayer is that light will flood your hearts and that you will understand **the hope** that was given to you when God chose you. Then you will discover **the glorious blessings** that will be yours together with all of God's people.

¹⁹ I want you to know about the **great and mighty power** that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used ²⁰ when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven. ²¹ There Christ rules over all forces, authorities, powers, and rulers. He rules over all beings in this world and will rule in the future world as well. ²² God has put all things under the power of Christ, and for the good of the church he has made him the head of everything. ²³ The church is Christ's body and is filled with Christ who completely fills everything. (Ephesians 1:14-23): ²

Warren Wiersbe relates an account of newspaper magnet, William Randolph Hearst. One of the wealthiest men of his time, Hearst spent a large fortune collecting art treasures from around the world. One day, he found a description of some valuable paintings he desperately desired to own. He sent his agent abroad to find them and purchase them. After months of searching, the man reported that the treasures had been found... in one of Mr. Hearst's warehouses. Had he known his treasures, he wouldn't have had to search for them. Ephesians teaches us about our riches in Christ. If we know them, we won't have to long for them.

Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesian church from prison. V.15 tells us that he had heard great news about his friends there. He heard about their "**faith in the Lord Jesus**" and their "**love for ALL the saints.**"

Those are two good measuring sticks for any church. Are we willing to step out on "**faith,**" following the Lord? Do we have a "**love for ALL the saints**" or just those who think like us, act like us and look like us? Verses 3-14 of the first chapter of Ephesians is one long sentence; it is literally a hymn of praise to God.

Verses 15-23 is also one sentence; it is a prayer for the people of God.

Evidently, Paul prayed continually for these precious believers. He did not "**cease to give thanks**" for them. Do you give thanks for other believers?

¹ Ephesians 1:15-23 • by Coy Wylie Ministry Now, Internet

² **Ephesians 1:15-23** *The Contemporary English [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System,* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995 by the American Bible Society.

He prayed that the Lord, "**the Father of glory**" would give them "**the spirit of wisdom**" and the "**revelation of the knowledge of Him.**"

In other words, Paul prayed that they would have the "**wisdom**" and "**knowledge**" to understand what God had done for them and to appreciate who they are in Christ. We have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, made heirs, sealed and guaranteed.

There is a particular phrase in verse 18 that is a key to unlock this long prayer, "**that you may know.**" You might say we already know these things. Well, you may have a head knowledge, but do you have a heart knowledge? Paul prays that "**the eyes of your understanding** [literally 'heart']" would be "**enlightened.**"

Did you know that there are "**eyes**" on your heart? In Scripture, the heart is the seat of the intellect, emotions and will. The Bible says our inner person can see (Ps.119:18), hear (Mt.13:9), taste (Ps.34:8), smell (Phil.4:18) and touch (Acts 17:27). I think this is what Jesus meant when He said, "**seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**"

The inability to see and hear things is not linked to intelligence, but rather spiritual condition of the heart. The Spirit of God must open the eyes of the heart. God wants our hearts, our inner person to be "**enlightened** [lit. 'shed light upon']." He wants us to have an intimate knowledge, and experiential understanding of Him.

God wants us to truly experience Jesus, not just "play church" or go through the religious motions of Christianity! Let's focus on four blessings that God want our hearts to see and know.

1. The Hope of our Calling (v.18b).

A number of years ago, off the coast of Massachusetts, a ship rammed an S-4, submarine. The submarine sank before anyone could escape. The entire crew was trapped. Ships rushed to the scene of the disaster, but there was nothing any of them could do. They were forced to watch and wait. Divers were sent down to evaluate the tragic situation. One man put his helmeted ear against the vessel and listened for any sounds. What he heard was someone tapping in Morse code. Because he knew Morse code he could decipher the message. It was this: "**Is - there - any - hope?**"

All around us, people are asking that question. Circumstances can become dark tunnels of despair. Health problems, financial calamities,

unexpected tragedies and uncertainties about life after death cause people to cry out, "**Is there any hope?**"

Some have concluded that there is indeed no hope in this world. I talked to a person this week who had been considering suicide? Why? They could see no hope. The eyes of their heart had no understanding.

Vincent Donovan was a missionary among the nomadic Masai people of East Africa. Many years ago, the Masai were often captured and sold into slavery. This proud people before they were carried abroad gave the last stop on the mainland a special name. It was called *Bagamoyo* which means "throw down your heart." They knew once they reached that place there was no more hope for freedom. They had no future.

In Christ, we have "the Hope of His Calling." There is truly no hope apart from Christ. However, as believers we always have hope, "**the hope of His calling.**"

What is "**His calling?**" It is who we are in Christ. The Bible says that He has called us with an "**upward call**" or high calling (Philippians 3:14) a "**holy calling**" (2 Timothy 1:9), and a "**heavenly calling**" (Hebrews 3:1). It is the calling described in Rom.8:29 which says, "**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**" God has called us to be "**conformed**" to the image of Christ. This is who we are and who we are becoming in Christ. We are being changed to be like Christ, because He lives in us.

The "**hope of our His calling**" is certain. Romans 11:29 says, "**For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**" What God began in us when He chose us and saved us, He will complete. We are "**sealed for the day of redemption.**"

1 Thessalonians 5:24 says, "**He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**" Phil.1:6 says we can be "**confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**" Because God has called us all our hope is in Him not the world.

The Ephesian believers, the very people to whom this letter was originally written struggled with many of the same struggles we face today. Yet, because of their "**hope,**" they struggle no more for they are in heaven.

I love the old hymn, "**My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name... When all around my soul gives way, He**

then is all my hope and stay..."

2. The Riches of His Inheritance (v.18c).

a. He is our Inheritance and we are His Inheritance.

Note the phrase "**His inheritance in the saints.**" Notice that it doesn't say "our inheritance," but "**His inheritance.**"

Now we certainly have an "**inheritance.**" V.11 makes that very clear. Our inheritance was predetermined in eternity and v.14 says that the Holy Spirit is the "**guarantee**" or the down payment on that inheritance today!

However, this verse teaches us that God considers us to be part of His "**riches.**" He considers us "**His inheritance**" because of what He has invested in us.

In a very real sense, God has too much invested in us to forsake us at the altar!

b. We will be glorified in Him and He will be glorified in Us.

God deals with us on the basis of our future not our past. He looked at sniveling, cowardly Gideon who was hiding from his enemies and said, "**The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!**" He looked at Simon, the inconsistent fisherman and called Him, Peter, the Rock. He looks at you and me and sees a glorious treasure.

In effect it is as though the Lord is saying to us, "**I want you to see yourselves the way I see you. I want you to realize how much I love you and how much I value you. If you could see yourself from my point of view, you'd live differently.**"

Remember that phrase from v.18, Paul prayed that the "**eyes**" of our hearts would be "**enlightened?**"

This passage is like a trip to the holy optometrist. He is fitting us with spiritual corrective lenses to see ourselves and His work in us properly.

3. The Greatness of His Power (vv.19-20).

There are four words in this verse that speak of God's power. The first word "**power**" comes from *dunamis* from which we get "dynamite" and "dynamic." There is also *energia* or "**working.**" It means the energizing force of the Holy Spirit. *Kratos* or the second "**power**" refers to God's dominion or control. *Ischus* or "**mighty**" refers to endowed power.

Listen to this translation from the **Jerusalem Bible**...

"...how infinitely great is the power He has exercised for us believers This you can tell from the strength of His power at work in Christ when He used it to raise Him from the dead and make Him sit at His right hand..."

Note that we not only to know God's **"power,"** but **"the exceeding greatness of His power toward us."** We see God's power through nature, but it is **"the exceeding greatness of His power"** that is in us.

This is not necessarily a power that He gives to us but a power that He works for us. Some people have the idea that they can command God's power. We hear of people who "bind" this or "claim" that in God's power. They act like they have something the rest of us miss. They remind me of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8, a man who tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

The **"power"** Paul prays that we know is not a second blessing, a mystical experience or a new manifestation from God to seek. All the power that we will ever need to live for Him is already present in every believer.

Paul's prayer is not that we will get more power but that **"the eyes"** or our **"understanding"** will be **"enlightened"** so that we may realize the power that is already ours!

You already have all the power you need to witness, to overcome temptation and sin, to endure whatever trials may come your way. You just need to realize it and tap into it!

I love the story of the old woman who lived in the hills of Tennessee. She went to a great deal of trouble to have electrical power installed in her home. After a few months the Power Company noticed that she used very little electricity. They sent a meter reader out to check on the matter. He asked the old woman, **"Don't you ever use electricity?"** **"Oh yes"** she replied, **"I turn it on every evening to see how to light my lamps."** God's power must be used.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead works in us. Verse 20 is very specific. It tells us that God uses the same power in our lives that He used **"when He raised Him [Jesus] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places."**

Paul prayed in Philippians 3:10 that He also might be further **"enlightened"** about the power of God in his life. He said, **"that I may**

know Him and the power of His resurrection."

There are times in all of our lives when we may wonder if God can do all that He has said He can do. Then we must look to Jesus. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and performed amazing wonders and miracles. He was totally obedient to His Father's will. When He died on the cross He bore all the sin of all the world. He was immersed and contaminated by sin. However Psalm 16:10 says, "**You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**" In His "**mighty power**" God "**raised Him from the dead.**"

The same power that wouldn't allow Jesus to remain in the grave will not allow God's promises to you to be broken.

What is the purpose for God's power in our lives?

- First, we have God's power in order to use our spiritual riches properly.

It is said that John D. Rockefeller, the world's first billionaire lived on crackers and milk for many years because of stomach troubles caused by worrying over his riches. He rarely had a good night's sleep and guards stood constantly at his door. He was wealthy but miserable. When he began to share his wealth with others in great philanthropic endeavors, his health improved considerably and he lived to be an old man.

- Second, we have God's power in order to overcome our enemy.

The dark forces of hell want to defeat us and keep us from using our spiritual riches. We could never defeat evil on our own, but with God's power we can.

- Third, we have God's power to enable us to live victoriously.

God doesn't chose us, adopt us, redeem us, forgive us, make us heirs and seal us with His Spirit and say, "**Now you are own your own.**" With all His other gifts, He gives us His power. Instead of depending on our own impotence we can depend on His omnipotence!

4. The Supremacy of His Authority (vv.21-23).

Jesus is Supreme over all other powers.(v. 21)

Verse 20 says that when Jesus was "**raised from the dead**" and ascended into heaven by the "**mighty power**" of God, He was "**seated**" at the "**right hand**" of the Father "**in the heavenly places.**"

The fact that He was "**seated**" means that His work was complete.

Hebrews teaches us that His sacrifice was "**once for all.**" Second, the fact that Jesus is at the Father's "**right hand**" denotes his authority. The term "right hand man" refers to someone who has authority to act for another. The Father has given Jesus supreme authority. Verse 20 says that Jesus is "**seated... at His right hand in the heavenly places.**" Verse 21 tells us more specifically where that is. It is "**far above.**" Note it is not only "**above,**" not just a little, but "**FAR above....**"

Jesus has authority "**far above all principality**" which means "rule" or "rulers." There never has been an aristocrat with power to match Jesus. No monarch on earth ever commanded an empire like His! Jesus is "**far above all... power**" or "authority." He is the ultimate authority. Further, He is "**far above all... might**" or strength. No one can match Him. He is "**far above all... dominion**" or control. No wonder even the demons tremble and call Him Lord!

Jesus is "**far above... every name that is named.**" The word "**name**" refers to titles. There is no king, no sovereign, and no star that even comes close to Him. Let's turn to **Phil.2:9-11**.

Notice that Jesus is "**above all... not only in this age but also in that which is to come.**" There has never been nor will ever be anyone, anywhere or anytime who can come close to Jesus' power and authority!

When the funeral of Louis XIV was held, the cathedral was packed with mourners who were paying their final tribute to the king. The room was darkened, except for one solitary candle. That candle illuminated the great casket holding the mortal remains of the king. As the minister stood to address the audience, he reached over the pulpit and snuffed out that lone candle which was there to symbolize the greatness of the king. The room was darkened, and from the darkness came four words: "**God only is great.**"

Jesus is supreme over all creation (v.22a).

The Father has "**put all things under His feet.**" That means that nothing is higher than Jesus! Jesus controls everything. Paul made mention of this in Colossians 1:15-18.

Jesus is Supreme over His Church (vv.22b-23)

Jesus is also "**head over all things to the church which is His body.**" "**Church**" means a called out assembly. It is a term that must be understood on two levels. In most cases in the NT, it refers to individual, local assemblies. However, in a few passages, the word obviously must be taken in a general sense referring to the complete "**body**" of Christ.

One of the most familiar images of "**the church**" is that of a "**body**" with Christ as the "**head**." He alone is the ultimate and total authority. It also means that as "**His body**" we are eternally connected with Him! We share His resurrection, ascension, exhalation and inheritance! We have the "**the fullness of Him who fills all in all**." The church is the "**fullness**" of Jesus and Jesus "**fills all in all**."

A body needs a head and a head needs a body. A bridegroom needs a bride. A vine needs its branches. A shepherd needs sheep. In this sense Jesus needs us to be complete! What a wonderful thought that God values us so much!

Just before World War II a school fire in Itasca, Texas, took the lives of 263 children. After the war, they built a new school that featured "the finest sprinkler system in the world." Civic pride ran high. Honor students guided visitors on tours of the new facilities to show them the finest, the most advanced sprinkler system money could buy. Never again would Itasca be visited by such a tragedy. 7 years later, when they were adding a new wing to the school, they discovered that the sprinkler system they had paid so much for had never been connected.

As believers we have all these wonderful blessings.

Do we know our treasures?

Are we hooked up to who we really are in Christ?