

## Paul's Prayer Life Ephesians 1:15-19

Ephesians 1:15-21 (NKJV) 15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe

One of my favorite authors is a Baptist preacher by the name of Arthur W. Pink. I used to have a copy of most everything that he wrote and that was a lot of books. Eventually I obtained these books on computer and sold my printed sets. I kind of wished that I still had them. I sold them for three and four times what I had paid for them, even though they were heavily marked up.

Well one book was on the prayers of the apostle Paul. Every time I opened that book I was amazed at how much of Paul's writings were actually prayers.

So as Paul has described the spiritual blessings that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit has given His children, now Paul begins to pray for them. And oh what a marvelous prayer. I wish that our prayers sound like his prayers.

When you compare Paul's prayers to our own ours are a little weak. On the other hand Paul's prayers are deep and filled with good things. Paul makes big withdrawals on God's account while we are counting out the nickels dimes and quarters.

Paul goes for the diamonds found deep in the earth while we are scratching the surface for a few grains of gold.

Most of our prayers would enrich our lives while Paul prayed that God would enrich the souls of the people he prayed for.

We pray that our lives would be easier while Paul's prayers prepared people for even the greatest difficulties.

So let us look at Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

- I. What Paul heard about them moved him to prayer for them.
  - A. He heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus.
    1. Faith is like the wind, it can only be seen in the effects that it has.
    2. A true faith in the Lord Jesus changes everything about the person.
    3. It changes them from the inside out and remakes all of their actions.
    4. We must never forget that faith alone saves but a faith that is alone, that is without works, is a dead faith and cannot save anyone.

- B. He heard of their love for all the saints.
1. True love never fails to act appropriately.
  2. Ga 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.
  3. Real faith produces love for all of the children of God.
    - a. 1Jo 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.
    - b. 1Jo 3:14 ¶ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.
    - c. 1Jo 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
    - d. 1Jo 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

II. His prayer first involved thanking God for them.

- A. Thanking God should be a part of all our prayers.
- B. One of Paul's main areas of thanksgiving was what God was doing for and through fellow believers.
1. 1Th 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,
  2. 2Th 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,
  3. Col 1:3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

III. This is to whom he addressed his prayer.

- A. He prayed to the **God** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father of glory**
1. Not everyone who prays prays to God.
  2. Not everyone who prays to God prays to the God of the Bible.
  3. Paul is very specific in his prayers, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.
    - a. If your God doesn't have an only begotten Son who came to earth died and rose again then he is not the God of the Bible.

- B. No where do we find people praying to dead people.
  - C. The idea of praying to someone other than God comes from a false sense of humility that the Bible knows nothing about.
- IV. He prayed that God would give them some things.
- A. The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of **Him**,
    - 1. We can have no greater aspiration than knowing God in His fulness.
    - 2. John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
  - B. That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;
    - 1. The eyes represent the ability to perceive, to see.
    - 2. It is a terrible judgment of God when people cannot understand God and His word.
      - a. Isaiah 6:9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' 10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." 11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, 12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
      - b. Mt 13:15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'
    - 3. You see my problem in High School was not the school or the teachers, the problem was that I didn't want to know what they were teaching.
    - 4. So it is often in the church, some people do not want to know anything about God and God says ok I will just shut them out, they will hear but not understand, they will see but not perceive.
    - 5. Oh that we would have a heart to seek after God, to know Him in all His attributes.
      - a. Years ago I listened to the Pulitzer Prize-winning, bestselling biography of America's founding father and second president John Adams, brilliantly told by master historian David McCullough. 750

pages over 30 hours of listening but still I do not know John Adams.

- b. If we put less effort into knowing God than we do in know John Adams we are not going to highly rewarded.

C. That you may know what is the hope of **His calling**,

1. Hope is what we need, but not like the false hope that the candidates offer us every 4 years.
2. I remember as a kid that every time we chose up teams in school oh how I wanted to be the first kid called to be a part of the team.
3. But lo I was usually at the end of the line.
4. But God's calling is not based on how we run or jump or hit a ball or shoot a basket. It is not based on what we know or the color of our skin or eyes or hair.
5. Our calling is based on God's own good pleasure.
6. And our hope is in that calling, that reached down into the pit of sin and caused our heart to be opened to the call and we answered.
7. It is a calling not to serve as much as it is to be, to be God's child, and to know Him and love Him.
8. It is a call that brings us from the world of darkness into a kingdom of light.
9. What a great calling. That is our hope.
10. Our hope is not in this world, it will always falter and fail, but God will prevail over all and because of our calling we are with Him, and that is what makes a difference.
11. Never loose sight of that hope.

V. He prayed that they might know some things.

A. What are the riches of the glory of **His inheritance** in the saints,

1. When I think of the glory of God, I just can't think of anything better, greater, awesome, magnificent than the glory of God.
2. But then Paul talks about the riches of His glory.
3. Wow oh wow.
4. Eph 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Also in 2:7 and 3:18

5. Notice here that God's inheritance is in the saints.
6. What a glorious thought that God has saved us for Himself.
7. In verse 18, Paul prays that we might know how precious the saints are in God's eyes as His inheritance. He is glorified in His saints, and this glory is valuable. It is part of the wealth that God possesses, dearer to Him than all the splendors of creation. *Kenneth S. Wuest*
8. That we might be His inheritance, what a special relationship.
9. Oh that we could understand that in its fulness.

B. What is the exceeding greatness of **His power** toward us who believe,

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    after I heard of  
        your faith in the Lord Jesus  
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    the **God** of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
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18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;  
    that you may know what is the hope of **His calling**,  
        what are the riches of the glory of **His inheritance** in the saints,  
19 and what is the exceeding greatness of **His power** toward us who believe,  
        according to the working of **His mighty power**  
            20 which **He** worked in Christ  
                when **He** raised Him from the dead  
                    and seated Him at **His** right hand in the heavenly places,  
21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion,  
and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.