

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

We saw last week how that Paul was a dedicated man of prayer. Although his prayers are not typical of our prayers. Most of the things that Paul prays for are spiritual in nature rather than material or physical.

Most of Paul's prayers were like the prayer in 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Think of that. What would you do if you prospered only as well as your soul prospered? There would be some very poor saints in the churches today I am persuaded.

So we pick back up in verse 18 today.

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

- I. 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. While Jesus talked with the two disciples on the Emmaus road, their hearts (that is, their minds) burned within them; but it was not until "their eyes were opened [that] they recognized Him" (Luke 24:31-32). Before the Spirit enlightened them they had the information but not the understanding; what they knew was true, but they could not in the power of their own minds grasp the meaning and significance of it. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*
 - a. These disciple didn't get any more information that caused them to see Jesus amongst them, but rather it was God who opened their eyes that they could see.

- b. We sing that old old song. Open mine eyes that I may see, glimpses of truth thou hast for me. What a blessed truth. I hope God will right now open your eyes that you may see it.
 - c. Else you will stumble through the word of God all your days.
 - 3. Isaiah 29:18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - 5. 1 Corinthians 2:13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
 - 6. 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.
 - 7. So it is often in the church, some people do not want to know too much about God and God says ok I will just shut them out, they will hear but not understand, they will see but not perceive.
 - 8. 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. In Christian circles the worth of a person is determined not by his or her background (we are all only sinners saved by grace) but by where we are going. We are going to Zion. We are going to be like the Lord Jesus Christ in every way. *James Montgomery Boice*
11. 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.
12. It is a holy calling.
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,
13. It is a heavenly calling.
 - a. Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

D. God has done more that call us out of darkness, He has called us into service.

1. There is something that God wants us to do with our lives.
2. He wants us to be His witness where ever we are.
3. Oh that we might never loose sight of the hope of our calling.

II. 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. The Greek behind this phrase allows two interpretations. It can refer either to God's inheritance of us—we are his possession—or to our inheritance of what he has given to us in salvation. The second interpretation is more likely, because of the context; *James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians*.
 6. Either way oh what a glorious thought that God has saved us for Himself.
 7. Some critics charge that a concern for what is to come makes Christians of little earthly use. The opposite is the case. We know what we are to become and therefore we live differently here. It is the citizens of heaven who make the greatest differences on earth. *James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians*
 8. I am reminded of when Jesus told the parable of the talents what He said to the faithful servants.
 - a. Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.
- B. What is the exceeding greatness of **His power** toward us who believe,

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 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,
 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.