

## Making Mention of You in My Prayers (Part 2)

July 5, 2002

### Ephesians 1:15-23

*15, For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which [exists] among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention [of you] in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will 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 surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. [These are] in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly [places], 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Remember as we discussed last week that this is Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. Remember also that we identified three aspects to Paul's prayer here:

1-Thanksgiving in Verses 15-16

2-Intercession in Verses 17-19

3-Adoration in Verses 20-23

#### THANKGIVING

- ***Last week we examined Paul's thanksgiving. What two things did Paul thank God for according to verse 15?***

#### INTERCESSION

Not only does Paul offer up thanksgiving for the believers in Ephesus, but beginning in verse 17 he also intercedes on their behalf.

- ***As Paul begins to intercede for the Ephesians, How does he address or describe God here in verse 17?***

- ***How does Paul intercede for the Ephesians here in verses 17-19?/What does Paul pray for?***

Verse 17-

Verse 18-

Notice that Paul prays for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, not the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Really what Paul is praying for is *spiritual wisdom*. A spirit of wisdom and revelation is a disposition of godly knowledge and insight that is possible only for a redeemed,

sanctified mind. He is praying for an ever-growing spiritual knowledge in the lives of the Ephesian believers. He is praying that the Ephesian believers continue to grow in their relationship with God by coming to know Him better.

Notice also that Paul prays that the eyes of their hearts be enlightened. Paul moves on here to request better *spiritual vision*. In Scripture the **heart** is the fulcrum of man's being, the seat of his intelligence and will. It speaks of the mind and understanding not the emotions. The term **enlightened** means to be illumined or given light. It is a reference to the Holy Spirit's ministry of continually illuminating spiritual truth for the child of God.

- ***What three things does Paul pray for the Ephesian believers to know in order that their spiritual vision might be improved?***

### The Hope of His Calling:

His calling is a reference to God's election in verse 4. It is because of God's calling and election that believers have hope. It is because God has chosen us and saved us that we have hope. 1 Corinthians 15 teaches us that we have hope because Christ was raised from the dead. Likewise 1 Peter 1:3 calls the Christian's hope a living hope.

The Christian's hope is described in various ways in the Scripture. It is called the hope of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8); the hope of righteousness (Galatians 5:5); the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7); and the hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2).

The term **hope** carries with it an assurance for the future. It is a fervent yearning, a confident expectation and a patient waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises.

- Paul is praying that believers may be given a greater understanding and knowledge of this future hope, which was secured for us in His calling and saving us.
- ***Ultimately, what is our hope as believers (cf. Titus 2:13)?***

### The Riches of the Glory of His Inheritance in the saints:

This phrase does not refer to our inheritance in Christ as verse 11 does. But it refers to God's inheritance in the saints. The saints are God's inheritance. The saints are a people for God's own possession. Those of us whom He has chosen and saved are His inheritance.

- Paul is praying that believers would recognize and appreciate the extraordinary value that God places on us.

### The Surpassing Greatness of His Power toward us who believe:

Verse 19 can literally be translated, "*What is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe, according to the **working** of the **strength** of His **might**.*" Here Paul uses four synonyms for the idea of God's power.

1-**power** (DUNAMIS) is where we get our English word dynamite. It means power, capability or potential.

2-**working** (ENERGEIAN) is where we get our English word energy. It means effective or active power.

3-**strength** (KRATOUS) means a force that overcomes resistance (it is used only of God in the Scriptures).

4-**might** (ISCHUOS) refers to bodily or muscular strength in humans; inherent, vital power in God.

Taken together these four words underscore the completeness of God's power.

- Paul is praying that believers would grow in their understanding of God's incomparable power.

## ADORATION

As Paul intercedes for the Ephesian believers to grow in spiritual knowledge and vision, He is moved toward adoration as He reflects on God's power.

- ***What does Paul recognize as an illustration of God's incomparable power?***

Vs. 20a-

Vs. 20b-

Vs. 22a-

Vs. 22b-

The resurrection of Christ from the dead was clearly the working of God's power. Only God can bring life from death. Christ's resurrection assures us of our future resurrection (cf. Romans 6:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This is a wonderful illustration of God's incomparable power and truly He is worthy to be praised for it.

The exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God is also a clear working of God's power. Christ had humbled Himself to take on humanity and accomplish our redemption. He was then returned to the highest position, to be with God at His right hand (John 3:31; Ephesians 4:10; Philippians 2:6-11). To be seated at the right hand was to be seated in a place of honor, equality and authority. The heavenly places simply refer to the very presence of God the Father in heaven. Christ's exaltation was "*far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.*" The statement in verse 21 simply serves as an emphasis of God's power in exalting Christ.

- ***How should the truth that Christ is exalted above all alter the way we as believers live each day?***

- ***Describe the relationship between Christ and the church that verses 22-23 depict.***

Having been raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God, Christ is now the head of the church, the ultimate authority over the world. Christ is supreme over all things. This includes the

church as Christ was given to the church as its Head. He is the Head and we are the body. He has complete control and authority over His church.

The purpose of Paul's adoration is that we might comprehend how secure we are in Christ. God's power is incomparable and this should bring believer's great comfort.

Paul has offered up thanksgiving, intercession and adoration to God. He is indeed thankful for the believers in Ephesus and has prayed that they might grow in spiritual wisdom and knowledge. As Paul closed his prayer he was moved to acknowledge the incomparable power of God.

**APPLICATION:**

- *How would you assess your current prayer life? Is it honoring God? What changes do you need to make in light of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians?*