Session 1 Paul’s Prayer in Ephesians 1:17-20

# INTRODUCTION

* 1. As Paul often does, he links his praise with his prayer to follow – ‘For this reason’ Eph. 1:3-14 – I have not stopped giving thanks for you remembering you in my prayers – for this reason he sets himself to praying – Paul offers thanksgiving for God’s intervening sovereign grace in the life of his readers – specifically having heard about his readers ‘faith in the Lord Jesus’ and their love for all of God’s people
* Also if we are to imitate Paul we will be attentive to reports of the progress of the gospel we express our gratitude to God and offer to him thanksgiving for what he is doing the lives of his people!
  1. Paul’s one general prayer here is that the Father would give His people increased understanding of the knowledge of his Son the Lord Jesus, so that they would experience three expressions of His glory—the hope of His calling, the glory of being God’s inheritance, and walking in the power of God.

## 17[I pray]…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, 18the eyes of your understanding*** *[heart]* ***being enlightened; that you may know*** *[by experience]* ***what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20which He worked in Christ when He raised Him…and seated Him at His right hand… (Eph. 1:17-20)***

* + 1. To walk in confidence (hope) related to God’s calling—His “assignment” for our life.
    2. To know who we are to God as His inheritance—how He sees us and feels about us.
    3. To experience God’s power in our life—in our mind, heart, circumstances, and ministry.

**VIDEO PRAYER**

* 1. Paul had just outlined aspects of God’s glory referred as “spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3-14). This is one of the most comprehensive statements in the Bible describing how God lavishes grace upon His people. The Father chose His people to enjoy the exalted position of being His adopted children.

## 3“…the Father…who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4just as He chose us…5having predestined us to adoption as sons…7In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace…” (Eph. 1:3-8)

* 1. Paul appealed to God as the *God of Jesus* and the *Father of glory* (Eph. 1:17).
     1. ***The God of our Lord Jesus Christ***: This includes what God did with Jesus in His humanity as the ideal picture of what the Father is committed to ultimately do with His redeemed people.
     2. ***The Father of glory***: The glory that the Father possesses is the very glory that He imparts to His people in salvation. He gives it to His people in this age *according to our hunger* for it.
  2. ***The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him***: Paul’s primary prayer here was that God’s people know or encounter the glory of His Son, the Lord Jesus by receiving more of the spirit of wisdom and revelation— that their “eyes of their understanding” (heart) be progressively enlightened by the Spirit (1:18).
     1. Isaiah 11:1-2
     2. The knowledge of Jesus includes not only what he is like but also how He acts and feels towards His people.

* 1. ***That you may know:*** The Greek word for *knowledge* (*epignosis*) refers to experiential knowledge or personal knowledge which is much more than informational knowledge of true facts about God. To know or encounter God is the essence of eternal salvation (Jn. 17:3; Phil. 3:10).

## This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only God and Jesus Christ. (Jn. 17:3)

* 1. Foundational to Paul’s approach to discipleship is that “the heart of a believer be enlightened.” It takes God to know God; thus, we earnestly pray for more. To Paul, this was the primary need for the Ephesian believers. It is the most powerful influence that equips us for wholeheartedness. I pray, “Lord, let me see what Paul saw, so that I can see and obey You like Paul did.”

# THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING

* 1. Paul’s first specific request was that they have confidence related to God’s calling for their lives— God’s calling on our lives includes our calling to be in His eternal family (Eph. 1:3-14), but it also includes His divine assignment for our lives—in this age and the age-to-come. In other words, Paul prayed that people would receive living understanding about how God views their calling.

## 17…that the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him…18that you may know [by experience] what is the hope of His calling… (Eph. 1:17-18)

* 1. God has a tailor-made calling or assignment for each person’s life that includes both the present and future. This is one of the main emphases in Paul’s prayer for believers.

## 9We...do not cease to pray for you…that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will… (Col. 1:9)

***4Epaphras...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Col. 4:12)***

* 1. ***Our internal calling***: Our primary calling in this age is internal. We are to say and do what He said and did (Sermon on the Mount lifestyle) without regard to the honor or money that we receive or the size of our impact or influence. Our internal calling is to be a faithful disciple of Jesus that loves God and embraces what the world calls foolish (humility, serving, giving, praying, forgiving, etc.).
  2. ***Our external calling*** *(in this age)*: This aspect of our divine assignment includes our position and function in the marketplace, a ministry organization, or our home, etc. This is what most people are focused on when considering their “calling.” Spiritual gifts -

## 17You were faithful in a very little; have authority over ten cities. (Lk. 19:17)

***21You were faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. (Mt. 25:21)***

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# THE GLORY OF BEING GOD’S INHERITANCE

* 1. Paul’s second specific request relates to who we are to God***.*** This prayer is to realize that we are God’s inheritance. To know who we are to God as His inheritance is to know how He sees and feels about us. By making us His inheritance, God has revealed His passion for us. Paul spoke of both our inheritance in God (Eph. 1:14) and of God’s inheritance in us (Eph. 1:18).

## 17…may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him…18that you may know [by experience]… what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints…

***(Eph. 1:17-18)***

* 1. Paul is making a reference to Moses’ revelation from God (Deut. 32:9).

## 9For the LORD’s portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. (Deut. 32:9)

* 1. The Father promised Jesus an inheritance. Jesus’ inheritance is a people who are voluntary lovers of God. God will not force this on us but woos and wins us by His grace to respond freely to Him in love.
  2. The great prize of all the ages that the Father has chosen to give Jesus is a Church filled with those who voluntarily choose to love Him.
     1. We are the reward that God gave to Jesus because we are what Jesus desires. This reveals His passion for us and gives us great dignity.
     2. We are that which is nearest and dearest to His heart. We are the reward that Jesus longs for.
  3. Seeing who we are to God is foundational to our spiritual identity—we are objects of His affection. We are transformed when we see the value, dignity, honor, and beauty that we possess in His eyes.
     1. We confess that we are Jesus’ favorites in that He loves us as the Father loves Him.

## As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you… (Jn. 15:9)

* + 1. We confess that the heart of Jesus, the Bridegroom King, is ravished for His Bride.

## 9You have ravished My heart, My sister, My Bride… (Song 4:9)

* + 1. We confess that Jesus’ desire if for His people.

## 10I am my Beloved’s and His desire is toward me. (Song 7:10)

* 1. We can overcome passivity and discouragement by growing in revelation of who we are to Jesus.

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# EXPERIENCING THE GREATNESS OF GOD’S POWER (EPH. 1:19)

* 1. Paul’s third specific request relates to experiencing the power of God and perceiving rightly how it operates in and through us.

## 17…may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him…18that you may know [by experience]… 19what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe… (Eph. 1:17-19)

* 1. We must not despise the “small things” that the Lord does in and through our lives (Zech. 4:10). We need revelation to see how God has wisely chosen to release power in His Kingdom. God’s way is to usually to release His power in small measures—but it is still “His power.” On many occasions the Spirit inspires our heart and uses us to bless others—in small measures but it still “His power.”

## 10For who has despised the day of small things? (Zech. 4:10)

* 1. When we see small measures of God’s power as true expressions of His glory, then we receive it with gratitude while being sustained in our hunger to contend for greater measures of power.
  2. We must walk in the tension of being grateful and faithful in the days of small beginnings while contending to see a far greater measure of His power. We pray earnestly for an historic visitation of the Spirit while giving thanks for the smaller measure that we walk in today.
  3. Acts 4 – Story of raising the dead -
  4. We need revelation of God’s zeal to pour out His Spirit in this way—to have a sustained vision to contend for the full breakthrough of God’s power in our lives, city, and nation.