

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 4

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Paul’s Prayer for You”

1:15-19 ~ February 27, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers apply their salvation to life, not just eternity.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Rodeo-Fest tku to Art and Stella Betham – and all others who helped
- Men’s Golf Outing – March 19th @ The Views Golf Club
- Needed new leadership team for the Fall Festival – see Sheryl Beyer at the Fall Festival courtyard table.
- Welcome Class March 2 or 9
- First Taste Luncheon – Sunday March 13

Chris & Jaycee Palic...last Sunday – Jaycee has been leading the games each Wednesday night for AWANA...best wishes as they move to Idaho.

Opening Prayer

Open your Bibles to Ephesians 1:15-19

If you are a Christian, you are to live your life “in gear”. You are to live in such a way that you are moving forward – that you are advancing in life – that you are continually laying claim to new territory.

God does not intend the Christian to simply lay claim to salvation, but live in a stagnant state of their knowledge of God and the level of holiness and righteousness in living.

Paul begins vs. 15 with the phrase, “For this reason...”. This points us back to the wonderful things he has just told us in vs. 3-14.

Because He has blessed you with every spiritual blessing, God has chosen you in eternity past, He predestined you to be adopted through the work of Christ on the cross. He has done this in accordance with His pleasure and will. He has given you His glorious grace, He has redeemed you through the blood of Jesus

and forgiven you according to the riches of His grace. He has given you wisdom and understanding in excessive amounts. He has revealed a great mystery to you, and He has marked you...sealed you so that you would know the certainty of your present and eternal inheritance!

“For this reason...”

Because God has blessed us in so many ways at the point of our salvation, Paul wants to make sure we keep moving forward in our Christian faith. Paul has just told us in vs. 3-14 of the abundant wealth of our salvation and security in Christ, and how he wants to make sure we don't waste our new life by just looking toward heaven and neglecting God's intention for our salvation to change our life now.

Paul gives thanks for:

Your *faith* vs. 15-16

Why was Paul giving thanks for the believers in Ephesus? Well, it had been at least four years since Paul was ministering to them, and he was now in prison. During this time in prison, Paul would have received letters from some of his friends and co-workers in the Gospel, and some of his co-workers would have visited him in prison. These letters and visitors brought him news and updates on the various churches in the region, and the message he was told about the believers in Ephesus was that they were still walking in the faith, they were holding strong in the faith, and the evidence of this was their love for all other believers.

The Apostle John gave thanks and had joy to “...find some of your children walking in the truth...”(2 John 4)

Paul gives thanks to God for their faith...and by extension, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, for your faith.

Why? Why does Paul give thanks for your faith?

Paul thanks God for all of these things because all of these things are from God! They are not from us – we don't receive any of these things because we are worthy of them. In the same way, we ought to thank God for our salvation / faith just as Paul does.

Your love for allbelievers vs. 15-16

Notice the result or action of their faith. Their faith is not only a personal thing, it's a public thing. Their faith results in love for all believers...key word here is all. So often, Christians can be the most unloving and critical people who are loyal not to all other believers, but only to those believers who believe and worship just like they do. This is an invalid sense of Christian loyalty. Take the believers in the first century as an example. You had small house churches that were comprised of Jews and Gentiles. Jews had a background in monotheistic worship – they had worshiped the one True God and had the Law, which gave them specific commands on how to live obedient lives in both civic and moral practices. The Gentiles came from a polytheistic history, worshiping many gods, and living in antithetical ways from the Jewish experience. When both of these groups came together under one roof – when they were both incorporated into the Body of Christ, there were still vast differences in attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors. The Jews could be very heavy handed or legalistic, and the Gentiles were likely to be permissive of various forms of immorality. This was perfect soil for divisions to take root, as they sometimes did. Paul is commending the Ephesians not just for their continued faith, but for the love they express to all believers.

There are a few non-negotiable truths of our faith, but there are many areas that are debatable. Paul even addresses this issue when he talks in Romans 14 about the debatable and non-debatable things of the faith.

Whenever you have two believers together, there will be at least one aspect of doctrine or theology where they disagree. As you expand the number of believers, you will expand the number of opinions. We are commanded to love one another (John 13:34-35), and one of the marks of faith is love for all the saints – even those who disagree with you on certain matters.

This is not easy to do – I struggle with this at times – but it’s significant to note that Paul thanks God for the Ephesians unconditional love for others who claim the name of Christ.

Christianity is first and most concerned about the object of our faith...Jesus...and His atoning death on the cross and resurrection from the grave. What we do with our life – how we live our life is vitally important (as we’ll see in a minute), but our love for other believers is based in our common faith in Christ.

Our love for all other believers is simply copying the love of God. We know that God so loves the world (John 3:16), but He also loves those who are His children...His chosen ones! There is a special love relationship each believer has with the Heavenly Father (“Abba, Father” – Rom. 8:15). In like manner, we should love other believers, even those we have disagreements with.

On our behalf, Paul asks God for:

Read vs. 17-19

The spirit of wisdom and revelation vs. 17

In the NIV translates “spirit” with a capital ‘S’ – but in the Greek, this word does not contain the definite article, which makes a reference here to the Holy Spirit unlikely.

More likely Paul is referring to an attitude or disposition. Paul is praying that believers will have their own spirit sensitive to and

committed to the wisdom and truth (revelation) of God. In other words, since each believer has the Holy Spirit indwelling in them, Paul is praying that the believer's spirit will be led by / tuned into – the Holy Spirit's leading and conviction, so that the believer (you & me) will have the wisdom and truth of God as a regular / normal part of our daily life. Wisdom is not the same as intellect. Intellect is knowing things...from the basics to the complex. Wisdom is applying the knowledge of God to daily life.

Why does Paul want this to happen? So we can know Him better! Paul is giving thanks for our faith, but he is also praying that we would live out our faith.

The purpose of the spirit of wisdom and revelation is not for our own advancement – not for our own recognition – but so we can know God more deeply and more intimately. This “knowledge” is not simply intellectual but experiential.

“This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”

1 Cor. 2:13

Paul wants believers to grow in their faith...not just have faith.

Paul then asks for:

Your spiritual enlightenment^{vs. 18}

“...the eyes of your heart” – vs. 18

Greek: *kardia* = English: heart

English context / mindset – the heart is the center of our emotions.

Greek / Jewish mindset – the heart is the center of the intellect...

Greek:*splagchnon* = the intestines or bowels were the center of the emotions - feelings/affections

Paul is praying that we live out our Christian faith by our mind – by the truth – not by our feelings.

Many Christians hear God's Word, but they only accept what they *feel* is right. They make God's Word accountable to their feelings. They do what *feels* right instead of letting God's Word declare what is right (See [The MacArthur New Testament](#)

[Commentary, Ephesians](#), by John MacArthur, p. 45).

See 2 Cor. 6:11-13

“Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart (*kardia*) is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own (*splagchnon*) affections. Now in a like exchange -I speak as to children-open wide to us also.”

In the same way, Paul is telling the Ephesians (and us) that we need to make sure our spiritual life – our Christian life is led by the truth of God – not by our feelings about the truth of God.

So you may know the *hope* of your *calling* vs. 18

What is the hope of your calling?

I think this relates back to what Paul has described earlier in the chapter. I think this relates to the security of our position in Christ. Knowing that we are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit is a profound hope – a hope with certainty.

- We hope for peace with God, which the call of God makes possible in our life today.
- We hope for peace with others – which our calling leads us to (love one another – John 13:34-35), but even when this doesn't occur, when we are faithful, we can have peace which surpasses all understanding.
- We hope for a purpose in life, which our calling accomplishes. (Eph. 2:10)
- We hope for victory over sin, and victory over death. (1 Cor. 15)

- We hope for a resurrected, glorified body.
- We hope for an eternal home and eternal inheritance that will never spoil or fade away (1 Peter 1:4).
- We hope for the presence of God in our life and for all eternity.

All of these things, our calling accomplishes.

So you will realize your inheritance vs. 18

Sometimes the realities of our earthly life cause us to think of our heavenly and eternal inheritance as something less than real...we may think of them in only theoretical terms.

But our divine inheritance is more real and lasting than the things that occupy our time and attention here on earth. We can't avoid or ignore the things of our earthly life. This is where God has placed us and He has charged us with living this life in holiness, obedience, and joy. But we are to live this life with a full awareness of our citizenship in Heaven, and our eternal family – the saints.

No matter what blessings and joys our earthly life brings, the riches of our eternal inheritance dwarf anything this earth has to offer!

Christian...don't neglect to think about heaven and the glories of heaven! Don't neglect to think about the eternal city – the new heaven and the new earth – eternal joy and eternal satisfaction with all the saints from all of history.

Don't neglect to ponder what heaven will be like as we live each day in the presence of God Himself – without fear of judgment, without any tears or any pain – only joy that we can never understand fully in this world!

So you will utilize His power in you vs. 19

Power = Greek *dunamis* – we get our English words *dynamite*, *dynamo* from this term

Paul prays that you will know – and use the power of God that you already have in your life.

God has not called you to salvation – and called you to a new life without equipping you with what you need to obey His calling / His commands.

Most of us don't use the power we have – or we don't realize how God's power works in our life each and every day.

Next week, we'll look more deeply at the power of God in our life.

Application

Understand your salvation is not just for eternity.

Live out your salvation now.

- Love all other believers
- Allow your mind to be transformed by the wisdom and truth of God
- Know the hope of your salvation (look to vs. 3-14)
- Always remember the glory and wonder of your inheritance!
- Be confident – the power of God is in you!