

## REVIVE CHURCH- PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH

### EPHESIANS SERIES #4

---

Earlier in the chapter Paul lays out the believer's identity, in Christ we are blessed with every spiritual blessing including but not limited to adoption, redemption forgiveness and more. He now turns to God in prayer that the spiritual truths available for every believer through the finished work of Jesus may move from a positional truth into an experiential truth for growth and maturity. *We are to move beyond just believing something with our mind into transformation and kingdom living. Paul reveals God's desire that He would be known in the most intimate sense and that the heart hold be awakened to the truth of our inheritance in Jesus Christ.*

**Ephesians 1:15-20** (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, 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,]

Paul's one general prayer here is that the **Father would give His people increased understanding of the knowledge of God so that they would experience three expressions of His glory—**

1. **the hope of His calling**, To walk in confidence (hope) related to God's calling—His "assignment" for our life. (*Body of Christ and personal expression*)
2. **the glory of being The Fathers inheritance**, To know who we are to God as His inheritance—how He sees us and feels about us.
3. **walking in the power of God**. To experience God's power in our life—in our mind, heart, circumstances, and ministry as sons and daughters.

In this Apostolic prayer is the remedy for the church and the individual longing to grow in the knowledge of the Father, including the depths of every spiritual blessing. **Paul appeals to God as the God of Jesus and the Father of glory (Eph. 1:17).**

God's redeemed people are invited to partake of the heavenly inheritance in increasing measure just as we witnessed Jesus fully participating in when He walked this earth.

The glory (essence of who He is) that the Father possesses is the very glory that He imparts to His children in salvation. **He gives it to His people in this age primarily according to our hunger for it.**

Paul's primary prayer in asking for the the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to be released was that God's people would know or encounter Him by power of the Holy Spirit, that the "eyes of their understanding" (heart) be enlightened/awakened by the Spirit (1:18). **I like to look at this as the unlocking of our heart! God's Revelation is an unveiling of our hearts that we might receive insight into the way God works in our lives.**

- The knowledge of God includes what God is like, how He acts and feels towards His people.
- **The natural mind cannot understand spiritual truths—we need living understanding that only comes from the Spirit.** The natural man has no spiritual sight we need to supernaturally receive. **The Scripture**

is more than intellectual ideas, but it is an unveiling of spiritual things which requires the supernatural capacities given by the Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 2:12** (NKJV) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** (NKJV) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know [them,] because they are spiritually discerned.

**Eph. 1:17** 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,

The Greek word here for knowledge (**epignosis**) refers to experiential knowledge which is much more than informational knowledge/facts about God. **To know or encounter God is the essence of eternal salvation. Other applications of the word know reveal the same theme. Example (Jn. 17:3 -ginosko) This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only God and Jesus Christ.**

- Knowing God is to have personal, firsthand experiential knowing.

**The Holy Spirit is in us, reveals the depths of God to us.** To Paul, it was essential that the Ephesian believer's hearts be enlightened. (*to shine, to brighten up, illuminate, give light, make to see.*)

Eph. 1:18a- the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling,

- I. **Paul's first specific request was that the church would have confidence related to God's calling for their lives the hope of His calling!**— God's calling on our lives includes *our calling to be in His eternal family*, but it also includes *His divine assignment for our lives*—in this age and the age-to-come. **In other words what is the divine calling that's on your life presently and for all eternity? We need His revelation on this if we are to be fully liberated as children of God.**
  - **Our primary calling in this life is first internal, heart, mind soul.** *Jesus saves, delivers and equips us, transforming our desires. We no longer make decisions that satisfy the flesh but are led by the Holy Spirit to earnestly desire God and His fullness. Our 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.).
  - **Our calling is also external,** there are divine assignment that includes our position and function in the church, marketplace, and our home. This is what most people are focused on when considering their "calling." **This what they do** This is an important part of our calling. **However, it is not as important to our Father as who we are and cannot define us.**
  - The Lord has given the vast majority of people an assignment that involves few things and seemingly makes very little impact (that can be measured by man in terms of the numbers impacted).
  - **We are to be faithful to the extent with what He has entrusted to us and not measure our value based upon influence** but His love for us and our love for Him. **Our Father's narrative and perspective is deep and wide, taking our heart posture, character and daily faithfulness into account.**

**Luke 19:17** (NKJV) “And he said to him, ‘Well [done,] good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’

**Matthew 25:21** (NKJV) “His lord said to him, ‘Well [done,] good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Everything in this life is preparing us for the age to come so spend time, effort, money and faithfulness in areas that will pass through to the next life. It is important to understand that what we do in this age continues with the age-to-come. Much discouragement is related to lacking understanding of how God values our small labors and how they are actually making an eternal impact. By revelation we see that faithfulness in “little” now leads to “ruling ten cities” in the age-to-come.

Hope is released in our lives **when we have assurance that what we are doing is valuable to God and an essential part of our calling.**(even if men do not see its value). Our resolve to obey is strengthened when we have confidence that what we do and the sacrifices we make matter to God and that He remembers them forever.

**Eph. 1:18b**-what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

I. **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).

**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.

**The great prize of all the ages-that the Father has chosen to give Jesus is a Church filled with voluntary lovers called (His bride).** We are what God wants most and are what God is most committed to. We are that which is nearest and dearest to Jesus’ heart. We are the reward that the Father gave to Jesus because we are what Jesus most desires.

**Who we are to God is foundational to our spiritual identity: seeing ourselves as the object of His affection. We see the greatness, value, dignity, honor, and beauty that we possess in Jesus’ eyes.**

1. **We make the scriptural positive confession that the Father loves us just as He loves the Son.** John 17:23 (NKJV) “I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.
2. **As the Father loves us as sons and daughters, Jesus the son loves as a Bridegroom.** We positively confess that the heart of Jesus, the Bridegroom King, is ravished for His Bride.

**Song 4:9** You have ravished My heart, My sister, My Bride...

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

**Much of our insecurity and fear is related to lacking this revelation of His affections to us in our weakness. We falsely assume His love is weak and fickle like ours.**

**Eph.1:19** and what [is] the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

I. **III. Paul's third specific request relates to how we are empowered to live out our life in God.**

This prayer request is to experience the power of God and to perceive rightly how it operates in us. We need revelation to see how God has wisely chosen to release power in His Kingdom. God's way of maturing us is to give His power in small measures as we seek Him for a great breakthrough of power. This is not to discount power encounters the Holy Spirit has for us!

- **He releases His power mostly in small measures internally and externally**
- When we see small measures of God's power as true expressions of His power and love, then we receive it with gratitude instead of despising it. Without revelation of this, we cannot see His hand in many things that He does for us. Therefore we can despise the "little" things that He is doing.

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

- We must walk in the tension of being grateful and faithful in the days of small beginnings while being desperate for more of His power. We pray earnestly for revival because we see what we lack, while giving thanks for what we do have. *We must repent both of despising the day of small beginnings and of being content with far too small a measure of God's power in our midst.*

We need revelation of the time delay that God strategically employs when releasing the greater measures of His power as well as understanding why God wants to release His power—which is to establish His name and to help people. Our prayers are the on-ramp for the present and future.

We need revelation that God actually wants to release a breakthrough of power in the ministry of the Church. We must never be content with powerless Christianity. Rather, we contend for NT Christianity that experiences the power of the resurrection. We need the Spirit's revelation to have a sustained vision for the full breakthrough of God's power in our region in God's strategic timing.

## Home group questions

- Discuss the pattern of Ephesians 1. Paul lays out the believer's identity, in Christ we are blessed with every spiritual blessing including but not limited to adoption, redemption forgiveness and more. He now turns to God in prayer that the spiritual truths available for every believer through the finished work of Jesus may move from a positional truth into an experiential truth for growth and maturity.
- Share your own experience of moving from positional truth to experiential truth.
- How is prayer essential to our spiritual growth in receiving truth by the Spirit.
- Why is revelation from the Holy Spirit needed for our understanding.

- Discuss the 3 different expressions of God’s glory that Paul was praying for the church to receive.
- **the hope of His calling**, To walk in confidence (hope) related to God’s calling—His “assignment” for our life. (*Body of Christ and personal expression*)
- **the glory of being The Fathers inheritance**, To know who we are to God as His inheritance—how He sees us and feels about us.
- **walking in the power of God**. To experience God’s power in our life—in our mind, heart, circumstances, and ministry as sons and daughters.