

## THE PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER

### SESSION #2

**Review:** Jesus has been promised an inheritance from His Heavenly Father. You are His inheritance. Though we have experienced and are blessed to know that Christ is our inheritance, we need a fresh revelation of how we are Christ's inheritance. As a matter of fact, the Father is so determined to present us to Christ on the day of His appearing that, He placed His seal of ownership on us until that day. **'You Were Sealed'** This phrase is possibly one of the greatest and most amazing actions of God toward us. God agrees to write His name on our life/heart at the moment of our surrender to Him. He deposits His very Spirit into us. In ancient times, and in Paul's time, it was common for business transactions to be paid for, settled, and sealed even before an item was able to be transferred to the new owner's home. When an item needed to be left for a later pick-up time, the new owner would place hot wax on that purchased object and sealed with the owner's personal signet ring. This a 'signature' of sorts. The sealing with the signet ring guaranteed that the object belonged to him and his family until delivery arrangements could be made.

#### I. PAUL PRAYS FOR SPIRITUAL WISDOM & REVELATION

- A. **Ephesians 1:15-21** *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup> 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, <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> 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.*
- B. Interestingly, after all of Paul's proclamations over the Christians living in Ephesus, he then turns to the *Father of glory* in prayer on behalf of this spiritual family. Much could be said of the value of combining the proclamation of God's Word and the faithful prayer of the Saints to ask for God for these words to be fulfilled.
- C. We also see Paul in this prayer mention that practically every time he knelt in prayer before the Father, the Church in Ephesus was heard from his lips. Wow!
- D. 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—the hope of His calling, the glory of being God's inheritance, and walking in the power of God.
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.
- E. Paul had just outlined aspects of God's glory referred to 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.
- F. **Ephesians 1:3-8** *"...the Father...who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, <sup>4</sup>just as He chose us...<sup>5</sup>having predestined us to adoption as sons...<sup>7</sup>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace..."*

- G. Paul appealed to God as the God of Jesus and the Father of glory (**Eph. 1:17**).
- H. **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.
- I. **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. God as Father implies that He has children. If He is the Father of glory, then this implies that He has Children of glory.
- J. **The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Him:** Paul's primary prayer here was that God's people know or encounter Him by receiving more of the spirit of wisdom and revelation— that the “*eyes of their understanding*” (heart) be progressively enlightened by the Spirit (**Eph. 1:18**).
- K. **The Eyes of Your Heart-** This refers to the place where we perceive and understand the things of the spirit and in the spirit. The scriptures refer to our spiritual heart as the throne of a person and the place where thought and moral judgement is considered.
- The knowledge of God includes what God is like, how He acts and feels towards His people.
  - The unaided mind cannot understand spiritual truths—we need living understanding that only comes from the Spirit. The strongest eyes are useless when a person is in total darkness. The natural man has no spiritual sight. 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 Cor. 2:12-14** “*Now we have received...the Spirit...that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God...<sup>14</sup>The natural man (unaided mind) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them...*”
- L. **That you may know: (Greek- epignosis)** The Greek word for knowledge refers to experiential 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**).
- M. **John 17:3** *This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only God and Jesus Christ.*
- N. Paul's foundational 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 faithfulness and wholeheartedness.

## II. THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING

- A. **Ephesians 1:18** *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,*
- B. 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.
- C. The divine assignment on our life has two dimensions (internal and external) in two time frames (temporal and eternal). We need revelation in these because by nature we have a wrong perspective.
- We need a paradigm shift in each of these areas.
  - What God values and plans is opposite of what we naturally value and plan. Only by revelation can we understand God's view.
- D. God has a beautifully personalized calling and assignment for each person's life that includes both the present and future. This is one of the main themes in Paul's prayers for believers.
- E. **Colossians 1:9** *We...do not cease to pray for you...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will...*

- F. **Colossians 4:12** *Epaphras...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*
- **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.*). This internal calling is eternal and does not change.
  - **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. This is what most people are focused on when considering their “calling.” This is an important part of our calling. However, it is the least important aspect of God’s calling on our lives because they can change in our brief life.
- O. **Luke 19:17** *And the Master said to the Servant, ‘Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’*
- P. **Luke 16:10** *He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*
- Q. **Matthew 25:21** *You were faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things.*
- R. This life can be compared to an 80-year internship which prepares us for ministry in the age-to-come. It is important to understand that what we do in this age has continuity with the age-to-come.
- S. Our life is changed when we have assurance that the “small things” that we do in seeking to obey God are valuable to Him—He highly values and remembers them forever (**Mt. 10:42**).
- T. **Our Eternal Calling:** The impact and the measure of God’s glory that the Spirit will release through us in the age to come will be much greater than it is in this age. It takes revelation to see that our greatest measure of power and ministry impact is in the age-to-come. By revelation we see that faithfulness in “little” now leads to “ruling ten cities” in the age-to-come.
- U. *“God called us to Christ and holiness, to freedom and peace, to suffering and glory. More simply, it was a call to an altogether new life in which we know, love, obey, and serve Christ, enjoy fellowship with Him and with each other, and look beyond our present suffering to the glory which will one day be revealed.”*  
(Commentator John Stott)

### III. THE GLORY OF BEING GOD’S INHERITANCE

- A. **Ephesians 1:18** *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,*
- B. **Ephesians 1:18** *‘I pray that the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination, flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling —that is, the wealth of God’s glorious inheritances that he finds in us, his holy ones!’ (T.P.T.)*
- C. 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**).
- D. Paul is making a reference to Moses’ revelation from God (**Deut. 32:9**).
- E. **Deuteronomy 32:9** *For the LORD’s portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.*
- F. The Father promised Jesus an inheritance. It is amazing that God who possesses all things has an inheritance for which He must wait. Jesus’ inheritance is a people who are voluntary lovers of God. God will not force this on us but beckons us by His grace to respond freely to Him in love.

- G. 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.
  - a. We are the reward that God gave to Jesus because we are what Jesus most desires. This reveals His passion for us and gives us great dignity.
  - b. We are that which is nearest and dearest to His heart. We are the reward that Jesus longs for.
- H. 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.
  - a. We confess that we are Jesus' favorites in that He loves us as the Father loves Him.
  - b. **Jn. 15:9** *As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you...*
  - c. We confess that the heart of Jesus, the Bridegroom King, is ravished for His Bride.
  - d. **Song 4:9** *You have ravished My heart, My sister, My Bride...*
  - e. We confess that Jesus' desire is for His people.
  - f. **Song 7:10** *I am my Beloved's and His desire is toward me.*
- I. We can overcome boredom, discouragement, and temptation by growing in revelation of who we are to Jesus.

#### IV. EXPERIENCING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER

- A. **Ephesians 1:19-21** and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power<sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,<sup>21</sup> 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.
- B. Paul's third specific request relates to experiencing the power of God and perceiving rightly how it operates in and through us.
- C. 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 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."
- D. **Zechariah 4:10** *For who has despised the day of small things?*
- E. 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.
- F. One of the most extravagant displays of God's "exceedingly great power" was when the Father elevated His only begotten Son to His right hand in all of His humanity. Christ became the forerunner into the Father's glory. Where Christ goes, we are now invited to go.
- G. Chuck Swindoll says, "He returned on high, taking to heaven His full and complete human nature—now glorified and immortal—so that He might be a perfect mediator between God and humanity. What an indescribable example of God's awesome power!" (**Chuck Swindoll**)
- H. We are on the doorsteps of one of the greatest outpourings of the Spirit in history. The Church of Jesus will be filled with God's glory (**Eph. 5:27**).
- I. Christ has taken His place as fully God AND fully man not just at the right hand of the Father. This now also implies that He has taken His position of authority over all things in heaven and on the earth, things in the past, present, and future. Christ now rules from this seat of authority through His Church in the earth. Wow!

- J. Christ is now the head over His Church in heaven and on the earth. Those who are in Christ are His governing Body of authority. As Christ is governing, leading, and shepherding His Body/Church, this is the now the fullest manifestation of His work on the earth.
- K. Could this be a little insight into Christ's statement to His disciples that they would see and experience the "greater works than these/His"? Christ as 1 Person= His miracles works vs. Christ through His Church= His miracles through an entire spiritual family
- L. **John 14:12** *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."*
- M. **Acts 2:17-20** *"...in the last days...I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...<sup>19</sup>I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke...<sup>20</sup>before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD."*
- N. Power is always needed to produce results.
- O. God's power is best displayed through our own weakness.
- P. *"Self-made success leads to confidence, confidence breeds pride, and pride ends in a fall."* (Chuck Swindoll)
- Q. Father of glory, give us fresh revelation of Your zeal to pour out Your Spirit in this way and grace to contend for the full breakthrough of God's power in our lives, city, and nation. Amen!