

1

**(Theme Slide)**

**As we think about how to make our 3-year vision a reality by August 2022 . . .**

**TR: . . . there is a lingering question that we must address.**



2

**You understand how important this question is in your relationship with others.**

**-- Whether in our families or at work, the question is, “What is their responsibility and what is mine?”**

**-- Is it their place to go first, or am I supposed to. Are they supposed to apologize or am I supposed to confront? Should I say something or wait for them to ask?**

**TR: If we turn the hands from horizontal to vertical, we see that it is the familiar tension that has divided Christians many times.**



3

**What is the purview of . . . READ SLIDE and what is ours?**

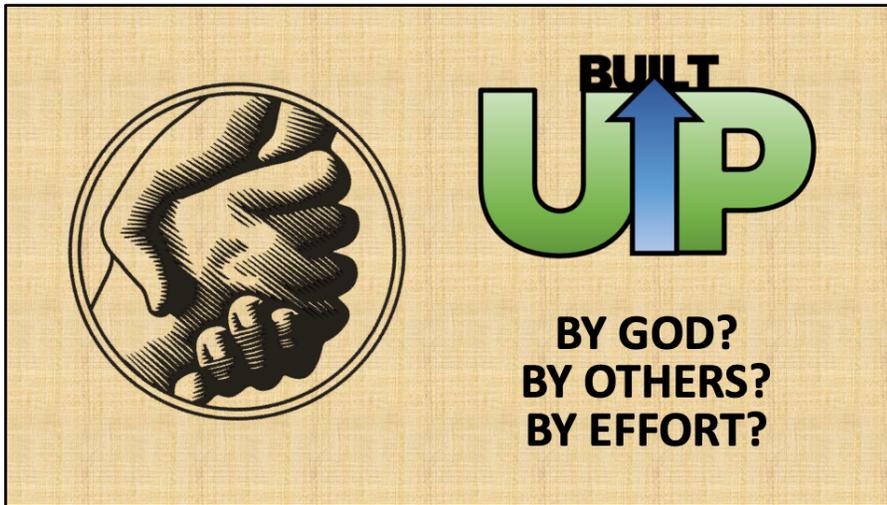
**TR: Many people get this so wrong that they think their answer is found somewhere in the Bible. You've heard it said . . .**



4

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: This lingering question of, “Who’s got what in their hand of responsibility?” impacts our 3-year vision.**



5

**Built^UP can be taken as passive . . . it is all in GOD'S hand to build us up.**

**-- It can be taken as a result of the work of OTHER CHRISTIANS, who have built us up.**

**-- It can be seen as the result of MY HARD WORK AND EFFORT, resulting in my being built up.**

**TR: What are some of the essentials for us to take in hand if we hope to see the results in 3 years, being that as a church and as individuals that we have been Built^UP in Christ, together, for more?**

**Ephesians 1:1-2 page 1078 in handout Bibles**

**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,**

**To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:**

**<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

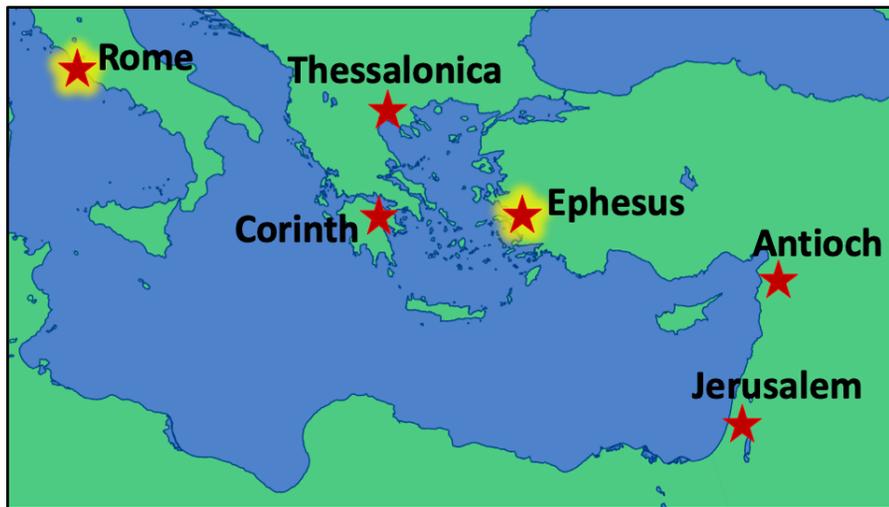
*ESV*

6

**This Fall we want to go through Ephesians with the lens of our 3-year vision helping us to find critical insights that could lead to us being Built^UP.**

**-- Turn in your Bibles, pull out your notes from your study of Ephesians 1 -- starting to work through the Pathways Bible Study Method.**

**TR: This incredible letter is written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the Apostle Paul. He's in . . .**



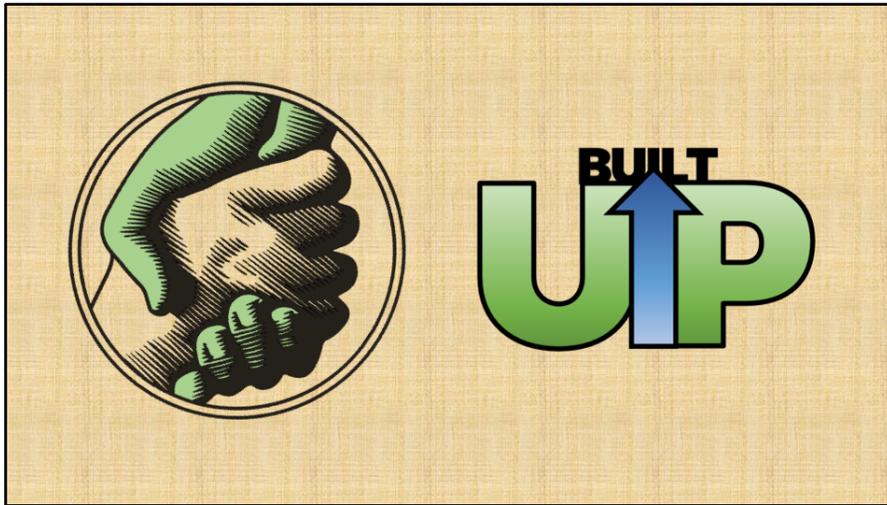
7

**. . . Rome under house arrest.**

**-- This letter, one of what has been called “The Prison Epistles”, is going to Asia Minor, the western coast of modern-day Turkey.**

**-- Specifically to Ephesus.**

**TR: What we find about . . .**



8

**... whose work it is to see us Built^UP ... begins by focusing on God's hand.**

**TR: We find that we are to praise God for His grace and glory.  
Begin with me in verse 3 ...**

**Blessed be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ **with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places,

ESV

## READ SLIDE

- Throughout this chapter we observed through careful reading (the first step in the Pathway Method) that Paul speaks repeatedly of “In Christ” and “In Him”.
- These blessings are for those who are now part of God’s family.
- Note that we are blessed with EVERY blessing. They are ours, even if the full experience of them awaits us being in heaven with Jesus.

TR: In our notes . . .



**... I'd want to remember that we are ... READ SLIDE**

**TR: God is to be "blessed" or praised, worshiped for giving us every spiritual blessing, but what are they?**

even as **he chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him (in love).

ESV

**Verse 4 begins the description of the blessings . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- In the debate between Christians of whether we should emphasize God's sovereignty or our responsibility, this passage underlines God's initiative.**

**-- As I've wrestled with this for over 4 decades, it seems interesting that passages like this one are found in the context of providing encouragement to believers.**

**-- Many of us know how hard it was in grade school or middle school . . . or high school . . . or college . . . or at work . . . to NOT be chosen. To be left for last in picking a team.**

**-- But that's not how it is with God. He builds us up by letting us know that He chose us.**

**-- Cf. my Big Rock story of God coming after me.**

**TR: Every spiritual blessing includes . . .**



12

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: In this context of encouragement and comfort from the Holy Spirit, it should amaze us that . . .**

**Ephesians 1:4b-6**

In love <sup>5</sup>**he predestined us for adoption** as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

*ESV*

13

**READ SLIDE**

- Your observations probably included the emphasis on God's will
- And on praising God's glorious grace.
- [grace] = giving us what we do not deserve, what we have not earned (contrast with "wages")
- All of this is **IN CHRIST, IN HIM, IN THE BELOVED.**

**TR: Every spiritual blessing includes . . .**

**BUILT**  
**UP**  
through every  
spiritual  
blessing . . .

- *He chose us*
- *He predestined us for adoption*

14

**READ SLIDE**

**-- We are now part of His forever family**

**TR: Like a birthday party when the gifts just seem to keep coming, we read in verse 7**

**Ephesians 1:7-8**

**In him we have redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup>which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

ESV

15

**READ SLIDE**

- The blessings have made their way to the hinge of history, the cross of Jesus Christ.
- Through Jesus' sacrifice we have redemption – we have been bought out of the slave market of sin.
- We have forgiveness – our debt of sin that forced us to be in the slave market has been fully paid off.
- And, again, we find ourselves praising God for His incredible grace . . . His riches of grace . . . which he lavished upon us.
- There is a question whether “in all wisdom and insight” helps us understand more about how he “lavished” or if it should go with verse 9.

**TR: In any case, every spiritual blessing includes . . .**

**BUILT**  
**UP**  
through every  
spiritual  
blessing . . .

- *He chose us*
- *He predestined us for adoption*
- *He redeemed us*

16

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: As if that were not enough . . .**

**Ephesians 1:9-10**

**making known to us the mystery of his will,** according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

ESV

17

**READ SLIDE**

- God did not keep us in the dark
- God did not treat us like kids who don't need to know what's going on
- God revealed to us the mystery of His will, His purpose, His plan
- As Jesus says in John 15:15 - *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

**TR: Every spiritual blessing includes . . .**

**BUILT**  
**UP**  
through every  
spiritual  
blessing . . .

- *He chose us*
- *He predestined us for adoption*
- *He redeemed us*
- *He made known to us the mystery of His will*

18

## **READ SLIDE**

- I'm picturing a realtor, like Randy showing us a house. He keeps telling us another fantastic thing after another.
- As we look at all the blessings, all we can think is that he has taken us to a listing that we could never afford . . . and we can't.
- We have zero down. No credit. Actually, bad credit . . . horrid credit.

**TR: But Randy doesn't stop showing us this incredible place.**

**Ephesians 1:11-12**

**In him we have obtained an inheritance,** having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup>so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

*ESV*

19

**Still emphasizing that all this is IN CHRIST, we read . . . READ SLIDE**

- Is God's hand sovereign? Does He build us up in Christ?**
- Note that it is HIS PURPOSE . . . ACCORDING TO THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL (not something he saw by looking into the future).**
- Did you observe that these verses use the pronoun WE?**
- Who is the WE? Who has first to hope in Christ?**

**TR: Every spiritual blessing includes . . .**

**BUILT**  
**UP**  
through every  
spiritual  
blessing . . .

- *He chose us*
- *He predestined us for adoption*
- *He redeemed us*
- *He made known to us the mystery of His will*
- *We have obtained an inheritance*

20

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The WE were the Jews, like Paul, but then verse 13 goes on . .**

•

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

**In him you also**, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,**<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

*ESV*

21

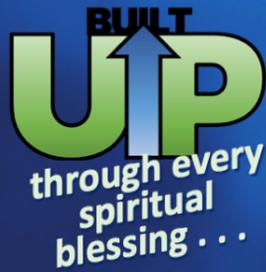
**. . . focusing on YOU. The vast majority of the believers in Ephesus were Gentiles.**

**-- Were they going to be second class citizens?**

**-- Were they going to be forced to live in the back shed while the Jews, God's chosen people, would get to live in the mansion of blessings?**

**-- NO . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Every spiritual blessing includes . . .**



- *He chose us*
- *He predestined us for adoption*
- *He redeemed us*
- *He made known to us the mystery of His will*
- *We have obtained an inheritance*
- *We were sealed with the Holy Spirit*

22

## **READ SLIDE**

-- The last two blessings are one blessing from two perspectives.  
-- The Jews and Gentiles have obtained an inheritance and were sealed with the Holy Spirit guaranteeing that inheritance until we take possession of it.

**TR: Can you imagine hearing Randy tell of even more fantastic things about the house? And then he asks us to sit down at the kitchen table. He pulls out some paperwork. And he says, "It is all yours if you will receive it by faith. Just "sign and date" here.**

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

ESV

23

**Salvation is the completely the work of God, yet we must choose to receive it. Notice again verses 13-14**

**-- We heard the word of truth, the good news that we can be saved through the work of Jesus in His life, death, and resurrection.**

**-- We must then choose to believe. To put our faith and trust in what we have heard.**

**-- To turn away from trusting in ourselves or the things of this world in order to be considered "blessed."**

**TR: This work of God to build us up in Christ can be yours. We've made the 8 Simple Drawings Booklet available on the platform. Please come take one after the service.**



24

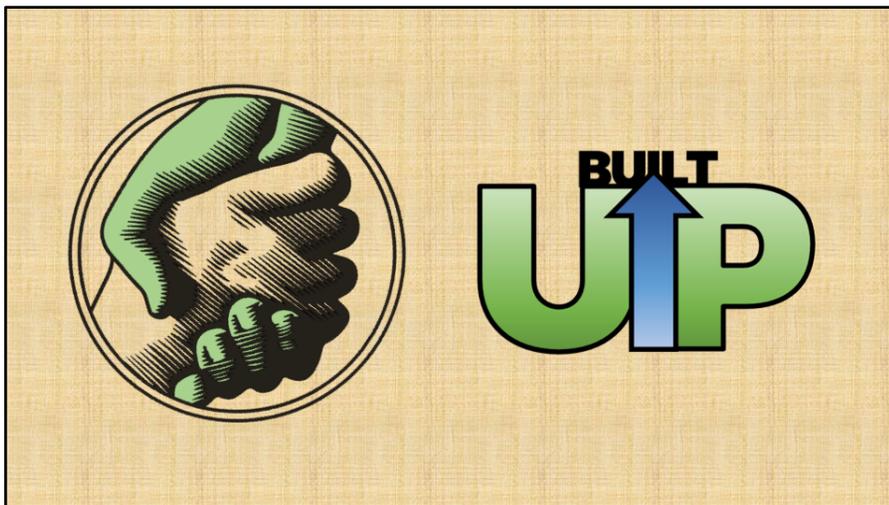
**You'll note that there is a model prayer of belief in what you hear (or read) about the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.**

**-- And at the bottom is a place to "SIGN & DATE."**

**-- This was an idea I learned early in my ministry from a great evangelist . . . he suggested having people write their own statement and signing it in the Bibles on one of the blank first pages. I just adopted it to the little booklet.**

**-- Let's take a moment to pray for those who are right now considering whether to cross the line of faith and sign & date.**

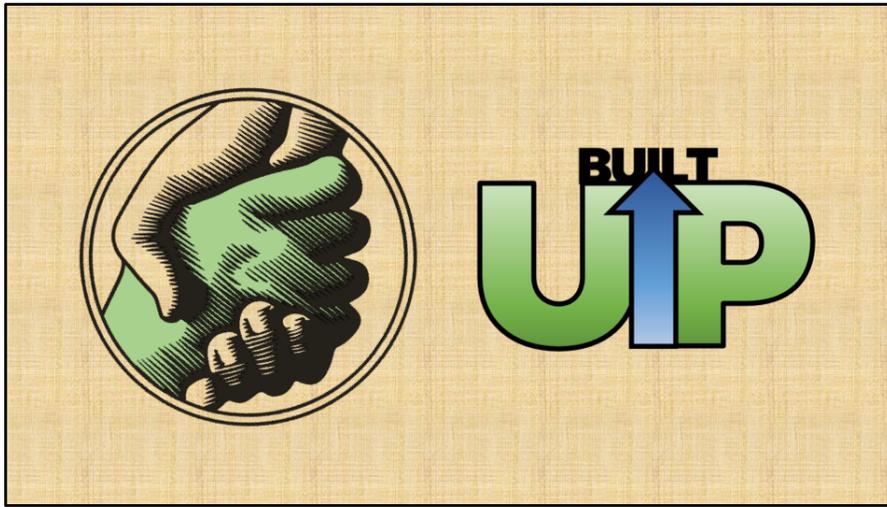
**TR: Remember, our goal today was to deal with this lingering question of who's got what in their hand of responsibility when it comes to us being Built^UP**



25

**This first section of Ephesians certainly highlights the work of God.**

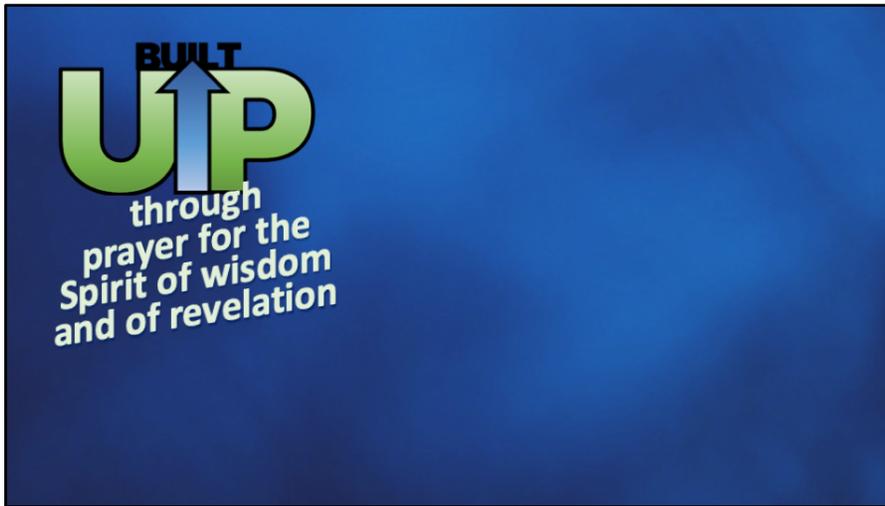
**TR: But is there some responsibility on our part? Beyond just hearing and believing?**



26

**We just saw that the blessings of salvation are offered to us by God's glorious grace, but we need to receive it by faith.**

**TR: I think the second half of Ephesians 1 helps us learn more about how we face our paradoxical dilemma of what responsibilities are in whose hand.**



**In our hand it the responsibility to pray.**

**-- Even as we must pray to receive salvation . . .**

**-- . . . we must pray for the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation.**

**TR: Verse 15 makes the transition between the two sections . . .**

**Ephesians 1:15**

**For this reason, because I have heard  
of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your  
love toward all the saints,**

*ESV*

28

**READ SLIDE**

- For WHAT reason? Because of the faith and love.**
- Interestingly, Scripture never separates faith in Jesus from love for the brothers and sisters.**
- We fool ourselves to think we can be OK with Jesus and not OK with His bride, His family, His body.**

**TR: Verse 16 continues . . .**

**Ephesians 1:16-18a**

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup>that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,** <sup>18</sup>having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,

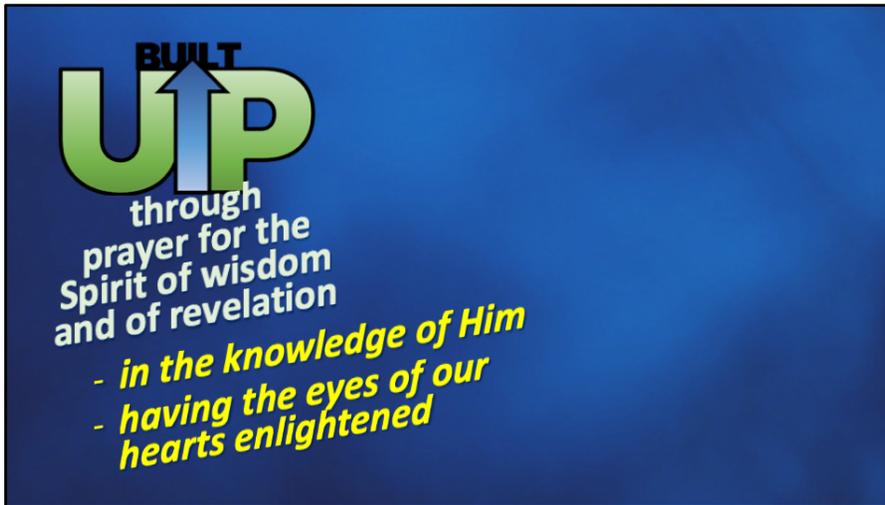
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29

**READ SLIDE**

- Because of their faith . . . and therefore that they have every spiritual blessing in Christ . . . Paul prays.
- The summary of his prayer is that we would receive the Holy Spirit's work of wisdom and revelation . . .
- . . . specifically in **KNOWING GOD**
- . . . resulting in having our hearts enlightened.

**TR: Grabbing that in our notes . . .**



**(Leave slide up momentarily)**

**TR: . . . we press on to find out what is so important for us to know . . . to have the eyes of our hearts enlightened to.**



31

**What should we be praying for?**

**TR: Verse 18 tells us . . .**

**Ephesians 1:18b-19**

**that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might**

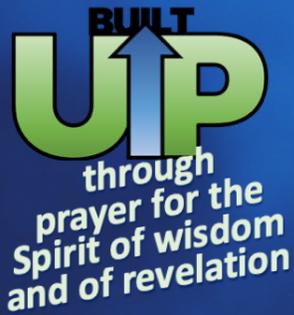
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32

**READ SLIDE**

- In covering EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING, Paul has talked about hope and a lot about our inheritance.
- Now he adds that he wants us to know the greatness of God's power towards us who believe.

**TR: There are three specific results to the prayer for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation . . .**



*... that we may know:*

- *what is the hope our calling*

33

**... we will have our eyes enlightened to ... READ SLIDE**

**-- We've been called by the God Who chose us and predestined us to adoption.**

**-- Through the redeeming work of Jesus' blood, we have been called out of the slave market of sin and shame ... we have been forgiven.**

**-- He has called us into a friendship with Him so that He tells us what His plan is.**

**TR: Paul prays that our eyes would be enlightened ...**

**BUILT**  
**UP**  
through  
prayer for the  
Spirit of wisdom  
and of revelation

*. . . that we may know:*

- *what is the hope our calling*
- *what are the riches of His inheritance*

34

## **READ SLIDE**

- **An inheritance kept for us in heaven, as Peter says elsewhere.**
- **But also an inheritance IN THE SAINTS.**
- **Part of God's inheritance to us is our brothers and sisters in Christ.**
- **Yet so often we don't see each other that way.**

**TR: The Apostle prays that our eyes would be opened to . . .**

**BUILT**  
**UP**  
 through  
 prayer for the  
 Spirit of wisdom  
 and of revelation

*. . . that we may know:*

- *what is the hope our calling*
- *what are the riches of His inheritance*
- *what is the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us who believe*

## READ SLIDE

- Built^UP people are people of power.
- We imagine that we have to conjure up our own power . . . but we just need to understand the power that is towards us.
- . . . the very power that raised Jesus from the dead.

TR: This power is further described in verse 20 . . .

**Ephesians 1:20-21**

that 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 rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

*ESV*

36

**READ SLIDE**

-- This power not only raised Jesus, but seated Him above all other powers . . . forever.

**TR: The power that made Jesus the Victor is the same power that**

. . .

**Ephesians 1:22-23**

**And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**

*ESV*

37

**. . . God manifested when He . . . READ SLIDE**

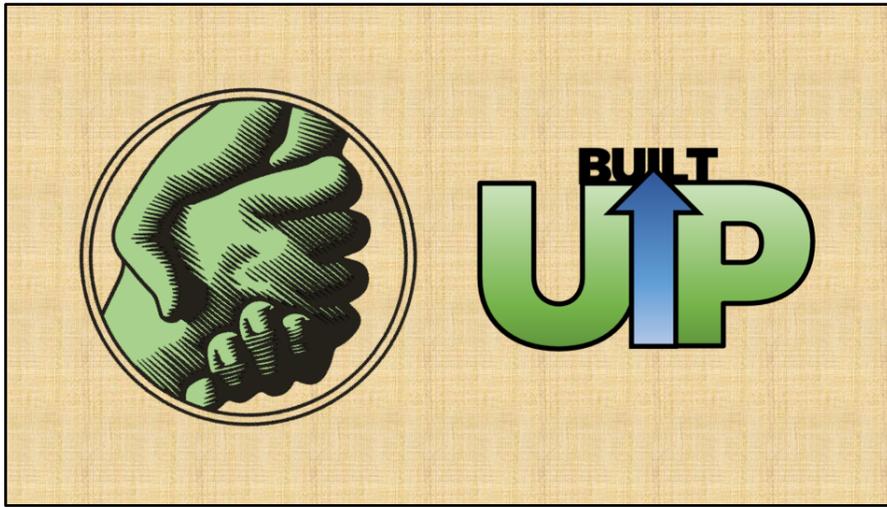
**-- How horrible when we treat the CHURCH like it is a building on a corner . . .**

**-- . . . or a social organization that we can join or quit at any whim.**

**-- The Church, including the local representation in Ephesus or in Big Rapids or Newaygo . . . is the fullness of Jesus, she is His body.**

**-- His presence and power fills her.**

**TR: So, which is it? Is it in God's hand of responsibility to Built^UP our church? Or is it in our hand?**



38

**Actually, that is a false dichotomy . . . it is not one nor the other. It is both.**

**TR: Paul makes that point in his letter to the Philippians.**

**Philippians 2:12-13**

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out** your own salvation with fear and trembling, **<sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

*ESV*

39

**READ SLIDE**

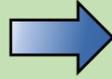
**TR: Our 3-year vision's first key result is that we are a people and as individuals would demonstrate . . .**



## READ SLIDE

**TR: For that to happen, our text today is being used by God to tell us that we need to take what is in our hand of responsibility and do it. Actually, do THEM. The first is . . .**

**GRATEFUL  
PRAISE**



**COURAGEOUS  
PASSION**

41

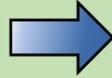
**READ SLIDE**

-- "Blessed be . . ."

-- If we are bored by the Gospel, it is likely that we are not saved.

**TR: In our hand of responsibility, joining grateful praise, is . . .**

**GRATEFUL  
PRAISE**



**COURAGEOUS  
PASSION**

**FOCUSED  
PRAYER**

**READ SLIDE**

-- Prayer is a mystery. God knows everything and He knows our needs.  
-- Jesus teaches us that we don't have to babble on like unbelievers trying to convince God, and yet He also taught us to persevere in prayer.

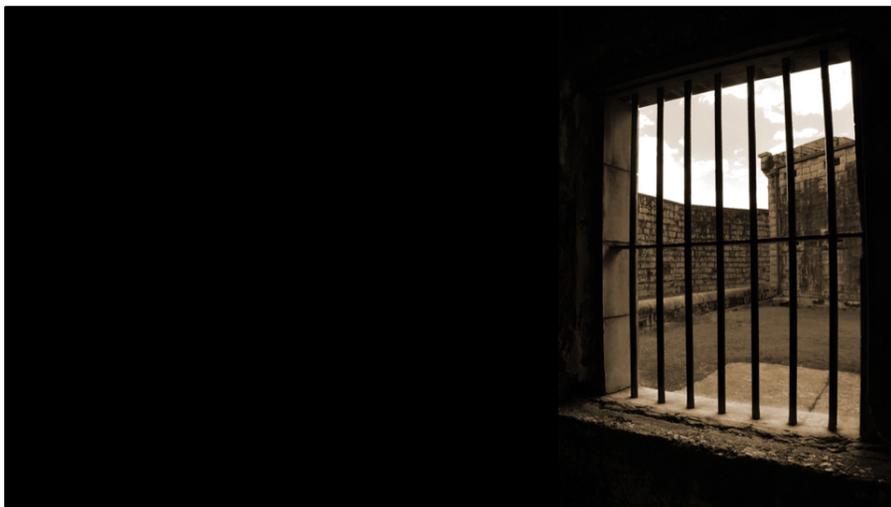
-- Why God has decided that He won't act apart from our prayers . . . I don't fully understand.

-- But, if I realize it, I need to pray.

-- Especially for my protectorates.

-- CF my desire for my children to be secure in my love . . . God has provided for our significance and security, but we need to be able to see it if we are to be courageous in loving each other and those in our communities. It is from a deep-seated sense of security that we risk . . . risk forgiveness, kindness, mercy, grace . . .

TR: How many people we know that are still behind . . .



43

**. . . prison bars . . . because they have never believed in Christ.**

**TR: And how many still live . . .**



**. . . behind the bars because they don't know that the door is unlocked.**

**-- They don't have the blessed sense of significance and security that they were chosen, predestined to adoption, redeemed and forgiven, entrusted with the knowledge of the Father's will, and ensured an imperishable inheritance by the sealing presence of the Holy Spirit.**

**-- They need us to pray that they would see, being enlightened to EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING that Jesus lived, and died, and was raised again to give us.**