

Introduction

1. Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul in about A.D. 60 from a Roman prison to the saints in Ephesus (the most important city in western Asia Minor).
2. Paul spends the first half of the book (chapters 1-3) reminding them who they are in Christ and the second half of the book instructing them how to live because of who they are in Christ.
3. Illustration: "Justification" class with R.C. Sproul. It was both what he said and how he said it. → We will be instructed by what and how Paul prayed.

What Paul Prays

1. That God would give:
 - a. A spirit of wisdom and of revelation (verse 17b) – Paul's prayer is that the Ephesians would be given revelation and wisdom by the Holy Spirit... that Christ might be revealed and known.
 - b. A knowledge of Him (verse 17c) – Paul prays that the Ephesians would know Christ... not know about Him, not know data regarding Him, but truly know Him. That they might have true life experience with Him.
Application: Do you know Christ? Or, do you just know about Him? Is your life characterized by a deepening life experience with Jesus?
 2. That the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened that they might know:
 - Why did Paul pray for this enlightening? What does this indicate about the unenlightened state of our hearts?
 - a. The hope of His calling – *"In common speech we generally 'hope' for uncertain things. In the Bible the word is used of that which is certain because it is grounded on what God has done for us in the work of Christ."* (Boice) What is our calling?
 - We are "*saints*" (Ephesians 1:1), set apart, "*chosen before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4).
 - We are to be "*holy and blameless*" (Ephesians 1:4), "*to walk in a manner worthy of our calling*" (Ephesians 4:1), "*to imitate God and to walk in love as He loved us*" (Ephesians 5:1-2), "*to walk as children of light (putting away deeds of darkness)*" (Ephesians 5:8).
 - We are "*sons/daughters through adoption*" (Ephesians 1:5), called into "*the household of God*" (Ephesians 2:19-22), called into "*one body, one faith, one baptism*" (Ephesians 4:4-6).
 - We are called to use our gifts for the building up of the body (Ephesians 4:11-12), to engage in spiritual battle... pushing back the kingdom of darkness and advancing the kingdom of God (Ephesians 6:10-20).
 - We are called to godly, god-honoring relationships (Ephesians 5:22—6:9).
- Application: Our hope in all this is... if He has called you to it, He will equip you for it.

- b. The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints – What is our inheritance?
- In Christ we have “*grace and peace from God our Father*” (Ephesians 1:2) and the “*riches of His grace*” (Ephesians 1:7).
 - In Christ we have “*every spiritual blessing in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:3).
 - In Christ we have “*the love and kindness of God*” (Ephesians 1:5-6; 3:17-19).
 - In Christ we have “*redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of our sins*” (Ephesians 1:7).
 - In Christ we have “*an inheritance to come*” (Ephesians 1:14). “*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known*” (1 Corinthians 13:12). We enjoy a part of our inheritance now, we will enjoy it in its fullness in that day.

Application: Do these realities make any difference in your life? Have you come to the point where you can say Christ is enough?

- c. The surpassing greatness of His power – What is our power?
- We are “*in Him*” (Ephesians 1:4 and 7 other times in 1:3-12) and we are “*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*” (Ephesians 1:13).
 - We have resurrection power (Ephesians 1:20), that same power that raised Jesus from the dead.
 - We serve the One who rules over all (Ephesians 1:21-22).
 - We have been given grace to serve through the use of our gifts (Ephesians 4:7).
 - We have the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and we pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17-18).

Application: Do you know the power that is yours in Christ? Is the Holy Spirit’s presence evident in your life?

How Paul Prays

1. Paul heard about and considered their faith and love (Ephesians 1:15). His heart and his mind were set on others, not himself. As he considered them, the Lord moved Paul to pray.
2. Paul did not cease giving thanks for them (Ephesians 1:16a). Ponder this in light of Paul’s circumstances. Not only is he thinking of them but he is constantly giving thanks for them... from prison!
3. Paul made mention of (remembered) them in his prayers (Ephesians 1:16b). Note: he prayed. Note again: he prayed for them.

Application: Do you make time and space to “hear about” and consider others? Are your prayers filled with giving thanks and remembering others? Would you be willing to pray this prayer (and other prayers of Scripture) for others?