

1. Come to the latter part of this great verse

Eph 1:18 (ESV) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, 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,*

- A. We've seen Paul is praying that his readers would understand their great blessings in Christ
- B. He has prayed they would come to know God better (v. 17)
And that they would have an assurance of their salvation (First part of v. 18)
 - 1). That they would know without a doubt that they have come to know him
- C. Now he prays they would understand their inheritance – what is waiting for those who know him
- D. Because these blessings are so great he asks that the Spirit would open their eyes to see them

There Are Two Primary Views Regarding this Passage About Inheritance

1. First view: This is referring to God's own inheritance in the saints

- A. There is scripture to back up this view
Dt 32:9 (ESV) But *the LORD's portion is his people*, Jacob his allotted heritage.
1 Pe 2:9 (ESV) calls us: *a people for his own possession...*
- B. This view says in this verse God is the one looking forward to a future inheritance
 - 1). It is when his people – Jew and Gentile are gathered together in the end

Point: Paul is praying that we will grasp the glory of this – That God looks upon us – you and me - as riches!

2. Second view: This is referring to the Saints inheritance given by God

- A. Praying we would understand more fully the greatness of our inheritance God is preparing for us
 - 1). That we might be thrilled more and more by the reality of what is lying ahead for us
- B. He is asking the Spirit to help us get a clear enough grip on this that it would affect our life

What Is the Right Interpretation?

1. Both interpretations are possible and can be backed up Scripturally

- A. I think context gives us the clue – Paul has already spoken of an inheritance that is ours
Eph 1:13–14 (ESV) 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, ⁽¹⁴⁾ who is the guarantee of *our inheritance* until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
 - 1). I think because of context - it is safe to say this is speaking of our inheritance

Transition: There are at least two benefits that flow into our life as we understand this

I. TWO BENEFITS OF THIS UNDERSTANDING

First: Considering Future Glory Brings Comfort During Present Trouble

1. Illustrated by Paul

- A. Paul was a man who knew much hardship – he lists what he went through in 2 Corinthians
2 Co 11:23–27 (ESV) Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ⁽²⁴⁾ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ⁽²⁵⁾ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ⁽²⁶⁾ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ⁽²⁷⁾ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.
 - 1). The NT doesn't teach the same way the false teachers do today
 - a). That Christianity is all about comfort and ease – health and wealth

- b). We are called to submit – to follow – and that can bring trouble into our life
 - 1a). But it also brings a real experience of God as he enters that trouble with us
 - 2a). Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego in furnace – One like Son of God joins them
- B. The amazing thing about Paul - he had great joy – the man that wrote that list in 2 Corinthians! How?
 - 1). I want to learn from him – if anybody could be whining it was Paul
“God I serve you – and I experience all those things – whippings – prison – beatings
Shipwrecked three times! Really Lord!”
 - a). But his writings are filled with joy – when he’s free and when he’s chained in prison! How?
 - b). I want to spend some time being disciplined by a man like this
- C. The secret: Paul viewed his troubles from a different perspective than most do
TURN: 2 Co 4:17 (ESV) For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,
 - 1). Paul is able to look at that list of affliction and call it light and temporal – how?
 - a). Because he saw value in those troubles! They were leading to something greater
Something that he wouldn’t have if they weren’t present
 - b). Everything on that lists turned into an eternal weight of glory
 - 1a). And that glory was so great the trouble that produced it couldn’t compare
 - 2). This is a scriptural view of trouble – Jesus instructed his followers to think this way
Mt 5:11–12 (ESV) “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ⁽¹²⁾ *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Point: To have victory in adversity – joy in times of trial – I have to make a determined choice

- A. By faith I have to see a divine design – a sovereign plan in my trouble
 - 1). I must realize the trouble is temporary – Paul calls it *“Momentary”*
But is achieving something that will be amazing– Paul calls the benefits *“Glorious and Eternal”*
 - B. This thinking isn’t unusual - we use this kind of thinking in many areas of our life to help us persevere
 - 1). Exercise – I keep going because I know it will end – but the results will carry on
 - a). I keep glancing at that count down timer on the stair master – this will end it’s worth it
 - 2). College – there is an end – a finish line – the work is achieving something – it will be worth it
 - a). We couldn’t continue if there wasn’t a finish line
We could not fight through the desire to give up if it wasn’t accomplishing something
 - C. This is how Paul lived his life – he preached this truth to himself – this won’t last forever
2 Co 4:17–18 (ESV) For this light *momentary* affliction is preparing for us an *eternal* weight of glory beyond all comparison, ⁽¹⁸⁾ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
2 Co 4:18 (NIV) So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
 - 1). If we view everything through our emotions – our problems will seem heavy and overwhelming
 - a). But the eye of faith focuses on eternal truth and that gives value to our suffering
“This trouble is worth it because it is producing something glorious”
 - 1a). Something I wouldn’t have if this trouble was not in my life
 - b). The trial is temporal but is working out an eternal weight of glory
 - 1a). Therefore I will fix my eyes on what is unseen – the eternal truths
 - 2a). That lightens the load – this pain is temporal and is worth it – hang in there
- Thought:** One day this pain is going to be redeemed by God – it will explode into glory

- A. God is going to make it beautiful – weighty – as it turns into reward

Transition: I'm trying to build a case here – let's call a few more examples into the witness stand

2. The power of an eternal outlook illustrated by Jesus

- A. The author to Hebrews uses the analogy of the Christian running the race – tells us how to run well

Heb 12:1–2 (ESV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ⁽²⁾ looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...

- 1). We can't run with endurance if we're carrying weights – cast them off
- 2). But there will be times running is not easy – it seems everything is trying to stop us
 - a). What is the secret that sustains us when running is hard – when we feel like stopping

- B. The author points us to Jesus – look at how he ran his race

Heb 12:2 (ESV) looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, *who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame*, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- 1). Jesus endured the cross by looking past the pain and humiliation to what was being achieved
 - a). The joy of securing salvation for mankind – the joy of finishing the work set before him
 - b). The joy of returning to the glory He had with the Father before the creation
 - 1a). He saw the cross as an answer to his prayer in John 17
John 17:5 (NIV) And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.
 - 2a). How many times our prayers can only be answered through trials

Transition: So Paul looked beyond the pain to what it was accomplishing – Jesus did the same

- A. Let's call one more witness before we move on – I want to drive this home

3. Illustrated in the life of Moses

TURN: Heb 11:24–26 (ESV) By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ⁽²⁵⁾ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ⁽²⁶⁾ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, *for he was looking to the reward.*

- A. His choice: Life of luxury or mistreatment – he chose mistreatment with people of God – Why?

- 1). He looked at both options and weighed them out intellectually rather than emotionally
 - a). Treasures of Egypt NOW or the riches of glory LATER
 - b). The best the world had to offer now – immediate gratification
Or an eternal weight of glory later – a greater gratification but delayed

- B. Truth enabled him to look beyond the temporal to the eternal – where trial turns into true riches

- 1). Where Christ will reward us with a crown of glory that will never fade away

- C. We see all this through eyes of faith – this truth comforts us greatly when we are in times of trial

- 1). This truth helps me with risky obedience – when others might rise up against me – it is worth it

Transition: So considering our future glory helps us to accept temporal hardships

This pain will be redeemed one day – it will be made beautiful by our Lord

- A. There is another benefit of seeing this truth

Second: Considering Our Future Glory Inspires Us to Live Holy Lives

1. The more we know of this glorious inheritance the more we will desire purity

1 John 3:3 (NIV) Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

- A. What hope – context tells us it is the hope the child of God has

That we will be with God and be like Christ

- B. I found a story about Martha Snell – shows how this hope can affect how we live

- 1). She was a Christian poet and her life was far from easy – but this hope gave her incredible joy
- 2). Listen to her words about how this hope affected her – this future look

Speaking about the blessed hope of his soon coming: How I ever lived before I grasped that wonderful truth, I do not know. How anyone lives without it in these trying days I cannot imagine. Each morning I think, *with a leap of the heart*, "He may come today." And each evening, "When I awake I may be in glory." Each day must be lived as though it were to be my last, and there is so much to be done to purify myself and to set my house in order. *I am on tiptoe with expectancy. There are no more grey days -- for they're all touched with color; no more dark days -- for the radiance of His coming is on the horizon; no more dull days, with glory just around the corner; and no more lonely days, with His footsteps coming ever nearer, and the thought that soon, soon, I shall see His blessed face and be forever through with pain and tears.*

Transition: The truth that we could be standing before him in the very next moment has a purifying effect

- A. Another story shows how this works

The story is told about a man who visited a one-room country school. As he was leaving, he promised the children that he would come again. But he did not indicate when. He also said that when he returned he would give a prize to the student who had the cleanest desk. After he left, one of the girls, who was notorious for her cluttered desk, announced that she was going to win the award. Her schoolmates laughed at her. "Your desk is a mess!" they said. Mary responded, "From now on, I'm going to clean it out every Monday morning." "Suppose the man comes on Friday?" someone asked. Mary quickly answered. "That's no problem. I'll clean it out every morning." "But what if he comes at the end of the day?" another pupil questioned. Mary was silent for a moment. Then her face lit up. "I know what I'll do! I'll just keep my desk clean all the time!"

- 1). That's the kind of attitude Christians should have about Christ's return.
 - a). We are warned over & over to "Watch & be ready - we don't know the time"

Thought: This kind of thinking will radically transform a life

- A. That is why Scripture tells us to set our thoughts on the eternal – stop being so earth bound

Col 3:2 (ESV) Set (fix) your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- 1). Paul says you're already seated in the heavenlies – start thinking like that!
- B. Start by getting your Bible out – asking God to show you his glory – read it again and again - prayerfully
- 1). Until your affections – your imaginations are captured by him! That will change everything
 - 2). That is why Paul chained in prison could write about joy
 - a). His thoughts weren't chained – they were fixed on Christ and glory – eternal matters

Transition: Sounds good but right now I have little appetite for heavenly things – where do I start?

- A. I've already hinted at this - but let's go deeper – how to build a desire for glory

II. HOW TO BUILD A FUTURE LOOK

1. You must understand truth about future glory

- A. How can you long for something you don't understand?
- 1). How can something affect you if you don't comprehend it?
- B. You must get your Bible out – ask the Spirit to help you to see these great truths
- 1). The more you see glory – the more you see what is waiting – the more you'll desire it
 - a). The more you'll be able to say with CHS: "I have a strong appetite for heaven."
 - 2). As you get a greater grip on glory – the more that will begin to direct your thinking
 - a). The more you'll be able to welcome anything that adds to that!
These troubles are light because they are creating a greater weight of glory!
- C. I say ask God to help you because the Spirit must give you understanding of this
- 1). This glory is so marvelous – it is beyond man to understand it or describe it
 - 2). Paul had a vision of heaven – he said "It would be illegal for me to write about it"

- a). My words would only ghetto-ize what I saw – it was so much greater than my ability

Transition: We must do our part – read the Word – we must rely on the Spirit to illuminate those great truths

- A. Let's end with a quick look at a few things pertaining to future glory – whet our appetites

III. WHAT WE CAN KNOW ABOUT OUR GREAT FUTURE

1. We will be with him

- A. This is the ultimate experience of this glory we will inherit

Jn 14:1–3 (ESV) “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ⁽²⁾ In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ⁽³⁾ And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

- 1). God is the main attraction of heaven – I will be with my Father – with my Savior – with the Spirit

- B. Look at what this did when Paul thought about death – it sweetened it

Php 1:21–23 (ESV) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ⁽²²⁾ If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ⁽²³⁾ I am hard pressed between the two. *My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

- C. There is nothing greater than this – nothing more exciting

1 Jn 3:2 (ESV) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, *because we shall see him as he is.*

- 1). Imagine that day when we first look into His face and see Him as He is

A remarkable incident occurred recently at a wedding in England. A young man of large wealth and high social position, who had been blinded by an accident when he was ten years old, was marrying a beautiful bride, though he had never looked upon her face. A little while before his marriage, he submitted to a course of treatment by experts, and the would not be known until the day of his wedding.

The day came, the bridegroom, dressed for the wedding, his eyes still shrouded in linen, drove to the church with his father, and the famous oculist met them in the vestry.

The bride, entered the church on the arm of her white-haired father. So moved was she that she could hardly speak. Would the one she loved at last see her face that others admired, but which he knew only through his delicate finger tips?

As she neared the altar, while the soft strains of the wedding march floated through the church, her eyes fell on a strange group. The father stood there with his son. Before the latter was the great oculist in the act of cutting away the last bandage.

The bridegroom took a step forward, with the spasmodic uncertainty of one who cannot believe that he is awake. A beam of rose-colored light from a pane in the chancel window fell across his face, but he did not seem to see it.

Did he see anything? Yes! With a dignity and joy never before seen in his face, he went forward to meet his bride. They looked into each other's eyes, and one would have thought that his eyes would never wander from her face.

"At last!" she said. "At last!" he echoed solemnly, bowing his head. That was a scene of great dramatic power, and no doubt of great joy, and is but a mere suggestion of what will actually take place in Heaven when the Christian who has been walking through this world of trial and sorrow, shall see Him face to face.

- a). One day the veil placed upon our eyes from sin and corruption will be removed!

- b). One day we will gaze upon that head that was crowned with thorns for us

- c). Gaze upon that face that was spit on for us

- 1a). Up until that moment we lived viewing Him by faith - but then it will be by sight

1 Cor 13:12 (NIV) Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.

- 2a). That is a moment I long for! That is the hope of the believer

Thought: This is something of what Paul means by “The eyes of our heart being enlightened”

- A. That the Spirit would give us a greater view into what is waiting for us – thrill us with that
- B. This thought is life changing - it changed the way Paul looked at everything
Ro 8:18 (ESV) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
 - 1). No matter how tough it is – there is no comparison – hang on!

2. We will have a new glorious body like His

Php 3:20–21 (ESV) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁽²¹⁾ *who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body...*

- A. Again the promise of 1 John 3:2
1 Jn 3:2 (ESV) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears *we shall be like him....*
- B. My body will be like his! – what was his like – get a glimpse on Mt of Transfiguration
Mt 17:2 (ESV) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.
 - 1). No longer will we suffer the limitations of these "Lowly" bodies
 - a). So subject to aging, disease, tiredness, pain
 - b). Perfect bodies that do not experience aging, pain, disease, tears, tiredness
 - 2). A body that has put off the flesh for good - *no more fight with sin*
 - a). Our sanctification will be complete

3. We will have a new home

Rev 21:9-21 (NIV) One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." (10) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. (11) It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. (12) It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. (13) There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. (14) The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (15) The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. (16) The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. (17) He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. (18) The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. (19) The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, (20) the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. (21) The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

- A. There will be no sun or moon – the glory of God will light up the universe
 - 1). Just imagine the purity of that light shining through the translucent gems
 And bouncing off the beautiful building materials
- B. This is something of what Paul means by "The eyes of your heart enlightened"
 - 1). A view by faith into this great heavenly city where we will be going
 - 2). How this thought of heaven should affect us - but we don't think about it enough
 - a). We walk around acting like none of this is true - like Spurgeon said to his students
 "When you talk about heaven let your face light up with a heavenly glory. When you tell about hell, your everyday face will do."
 - 1a). That shouldn't be true of you with what God has for you
 - 3). I remember when we were buying our first little condo - how exciting it was
 - a). I anticipated it - drove by it - looked at it
 - b). How much more should I be excited looking at this future home – SOON!

4. We will be surrounded by a wonderful purity

1 Pe 1:3-5 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁽⁴⁾ *to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled*, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁽⁵⁾ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- A. Incorruptible and undefiled = nothing sinful there
 - 1). We cannot conceive of this - we are so accustomed to a world filled with sin, death, decay
 - 2). Here everything will be pure - nobody will be trying to harm you, rip you off
- B. And that does not fade away
 - 1). We are living in a world right now that does decay
 - a). We see it in our bodies as the years go by – gravity is taking effect
 - b). We see it in our cars as they rust up - we see it in everything
 - b). We see it in our cars as they rust up - we see it in everything

III. WHO WILL ENJOY THE RICHES OF THIS INHERITANCE?

1. This is only for the Saints - nothing that defiles will enter there

Re 22:14-15 (ESV) Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

- A. Only those who have washed their robes - How? - In the blood of the Lamb
 - 1). Only those who have fled to Him to take care of their souls
- B. For those who are "In Christ" this inheritance is for you - & nothing can rob you of it

CONCLUSION

1. Do you know that you are a saint?

- A. First step is to make certain of this
- B. THEN having made certain of it - dwell upon what that means - what your future holds
 - 1). Apply your mind to these great truths - read scripture, dig in, meditate, memorize
 - a). Set your thoughts upon those things He has prepared for those who love Him
 - 3). Seek God praying as Paul did "Enlighten the eyes of my heart to understand"
- C. When these things begin to be more real to you - starting to grip your imagination & heart
 - 1). You will spend less time dwelling on the things of this earth
 - 2). You will find a new comfort and encouragement to fight the good fight
 - a). Those huge tribulations will lose their weight & become lighter
 - 3). You will find that you have a new desire to walk as He did in holiness

2. Start practicing this today

- A. What are you going through? What is troubling you? See it with an eternal perspective
 - 1). Live for God's glory in it – the way you view it – your attitude towards it – your actions
 - 2). Then rejoice that the momentary is going to blossom into an eternal weight

Martyn Lloyd Jones: My whole outlook upon everything that happens to me should be governed by these three things: my realization of who I am, my consciousness of where I am going, and my knowledge of what awaits me when I get there.

- a). Is this your outlook? It can be and it should be - it will change your life