

A prayer for discernment

Review

- 7/25 iterated through Eph 1 and the blessings that our ours in Christ Jesus
- Every spiritual blessing
- The forgiveness of our sins
- An eternal reward

Intro

- Come back today and look at one of Paul's prayers for the believers there in Ephesus
- As we see these prayers - we see how to pray for ourselves and one another
- If this was how Paul prayed 2000 years ago, how much more should we pray now

Faithful prayer (v15 - 16)

Eph 1:15-16 (ESV) *(15) For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, (16) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,*

- For this reason: Paul has just reminded them of the future hope we have in Jesus Christ! We are called to an eternal reward!
- We all have that reward - and Paul is praying specifically for those who share in that hope
- In fact, he began praying for them immediately upon hearing news of their salvation!
- As evidence of this faith - their love has been reported everywhere
- Faith w/o works is dead. If we are believers there will be evidences of that - most importantly in our love for the body of Christ

- Pauls response - to pray and give thanks for them
- **Application:** Are we praying for one another? Do we give thanks for each other?

Paul's request: Spirit of wisdom and revelation

(17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

- Pauls prayer: That God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation.
- What is revelation? When God supernaturally makes known to us (reveals to us) something we cannot discern on our own
- We can study, read books on theology - all of which is good, but we can only know God through the Holy Spirit's revelation
- See **John 14:26 (ESV)** *(26) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*
- Paul prays for these believers that God will grant them the Spirit to give them wisdom about God, and reveal to them the knowledge of God
- We cannot know Him without the Spirit revealing him
- If I see one great need in our church it is this: We need a fresh revelation of Jesus
 - Our worship is stagnant
 - We have no hunger for his Word
 - We feel no urgency about his return
 - There's no rush into the harvest field
- I can plant the seed of His Word, but without revelation, that seed lies dormant and unfruitful

Now Paul prays specifically - that the Spirit would reveal...

Our hope (1:18)

(18) 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,

- Having the eyes of our hearts enlightened... that's what revelation is... opening

the eyes of our heart!

- To what should they be opened? Our hope
- On the 25th we talked about this hope
- We have lost sight of the goal, the reward, the end
- It has been (is) a difficult time - but we cannot quit yet
- Show us again the reward!

His power (1:19-20)

(19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might (20) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

- Next Paul prays that God will reveal to them the power He has for them
- This is a long and hard journey and at times overwhelming
- The enemy wants to focus us on our ability (or lack there of)
- But Paul prays that we might know God's immeasurably great power!
- For us: Believers!
- God has the power we need to be victorious. Remember **Rom 8:37 (ESV)** (37) *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
- See the extent of that power - God raised Jesus from the dead - and brought him to a place of authority
- There is nothing too difficult for God - and that power is for us today!
- We forget, focus on our own weakness and the impossibility of the race before us. We need the Spirit to reveal God's power to us!
- Paul was discouraged - the enemy was tormenting him, and his prayers ineffective. The Lord reminds him **2 Cor 12:9 (ESV)** (9) *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

His authority (21-23)

(21) 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. (22) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

- The final thing Paul asks God's Spirit to reveal is the authority of Jesus

- He was obedient to death, God has exalted him to the highest place, the highest authority
- There is no other power, name or authority greater than Jesus
- False thinking: Jesus and Satan are equals. Jesus is God - without beginning or ending. Satan is a created being. Fallen. Defeated at the cross
- We forget who is in charge - but Jesus defeated the enemy at the cross
- Remember **Phili 2:10-11 (ESV)** (10) *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Application

We are called to pray

- The first thing that spoke to me from this passage was how Paul prayed for these believers
- The enemy would convince us that prayer doesn't work - or maybe it should be tried as a last resort
- Paul prayed for them - prayed God's Spirit for them
- We pray in the natural: bless this, fix this - and there's nothing wrong with that...
- But our needs are spiritual first - and the physical is just the manifestation
- Pray for yourself this prayer
- Pray it for the church!
- Pray it for your loved ones!

God has promised us his reward and we will overcome

- This ties back to last week - but we have obtained an inheritance with Christ
- There is a reward for us
- Even the promise of the day: *Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.* refers to our reward
- Jesus will empower and equip us
- Victory is ours!

We need revelation

- The final takeaway - is for God to grant us a Spirit of wisdom and revelation!
- We need more of Jesus!! More of a knowledge of Him, His promise, power and authority

- *Open the eyes of my heart*