

Ephesians 1:15-23
Chosen... Together... & Walking in Christ

May 8, 2016

Special Announcements: HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

- Pray for Moms: **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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Intro:

1. One of the topics we'll talk about today is **riches**, which reminds me that...
 - a. [Joke:] There once was a rich man who was near **death**. He was very **grieved** because he had worked so hard for his money and he wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him.
 - b. An angel hears his plea and appears to him. "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you." The man implores the angel to speak to God to see if He might bend the rules.
 - c. The man continues to pray that his wealth could follow him. The angel reappears and informs the man that God has decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man gathers his largest suitcase and fills it with pure gold bars and places it beside his bed.
 - d. Soon afterward the man dies and shows up at the Gates of Heaven to greet St. Peter. St. Peter seeing the suitcase says, "Hold on, you can't bring that in here!"
 - e. But, the man explains to St. Peter that he has permission and asks him to verify his story with the Lord. Sure enough, St. Peter checks and comes back saying, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I'm supposed to check its contents before letting it through."
 - f. St. Peter opens the suitcase to inspect the contents that the man found too precious to leave behind and exclaims, "**You brought pavement?!?!"**

Let's look at our passage: Read Ephesians 1:15-23 (NKJV)¹ and Prayⁱ

1. Theme in Ephesians: We are **Chosen** in Christ, **Together** in Christ, **Walking** in Christ.
 - a. Like last week, the challenge today will be in trying to pause in order to break down this passage, as much of what Paul writes here is a long continuous thought.

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2. If you are a note taker, in today's passage, we'll see that we have...
 - a. **Hope – Riches – Power.**
3. In the preceding verses that we looked at last week Paul tells us that...
 - a. We are **redeemed** through Christ's blood.
 - b. That God has **revealed** the mystery of His will – that Christ saves sinners.
 - c. That He **rewards** us with an inheritance.

Ephesians 1:15-16 ¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

1. Paul **heard** about the Ephesians **faith in the Lord Jesus** and their **love for all the saints**.
 - a. What do people hear about you?
 - 1) What are people saying about you?
 - 2) Is it that you are one who is full of faith and love or are they saying something else?
 - b. What would it take or what would you need to do differently in order to be known as one who is full of faith and love?
2. Remember Faith and Love do not earn us a place in God's family.
 - a. Instead, Faith and Love are the evidence that we are a part of God's family.
3. Let me challenge you to FOCUS on the FAITH & LOVE!
 - a. Faith in the Lord.
 - 1) This is the attitude that you are going to follow the Lord, not matter what might come your way.
 - 2) May we be like Joshua who stood against the crowds who were turning their hearts away from the Lord and said to them...
 - a) **Joshua 24:15** And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
 - b) That is faith.

- b. Love for all the saints.
 - 1) **John 13:34–35** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*”
 - 2) Love for others is the mark of a true disciple.
- 4. Paul was praying some pretty specific things, as we’ll see in the coming verses for the Ephesians.
 - a. After talking to the Ephesians about the Lord in verse 1-14, Paul now talks to the Lord about the Ephesians.
 - 1) Paul is praying for the people.
 - b. Paul wasn’t just praying for those who were going through difficulty, he was notably praying for those who are doing well.
 - 1) Friends, don’t stop praying for those in need!
 - 2) But include those who are doing well, or so you think.
 - a) I can’t tell you how many times I was going through something and out of the blue I get a message from someone like Pastor Rick back in Okinawa who says he’s praying for me.
 - b) No idea of what I’m going through. To him I was doing well, but he still prayed and it came in a time of great need!!!
 - 3) Pray for people who come to mind, for you never know what they are going through.
 - c. Pastor **Jon Courson** issues this reminder and challenge, “Many times, we see strong people fall hard. Could it be that perhaps we could have propped them up, been a shield around them, a blessing for them if we had followed the example of Paul and prayed for them while they were doing well?”
 - d. What is it that fills your prayers?
 - 1) The charge in 1 Thes 5:17 is to Pray without ceasing.
 - 2) That’s a lot of praying! So what is it that fills your prayers?
 - 3) God wants to hear more from us than just “Bless this food, Amen.”
 - 4) There is **power in prayer**, even when you don't know what to pray.
 - a) Friday evening Sonya and I had had a sizable confrontation and we weren't making any ground on resolving the issue.

b) Frustrated... I Left, prayed. When I came back the situation had completely changed and we were able to reconcile.

Ephesians 1:16b-17 ...making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ 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,

1. Pray that others would have **wisdom** and pray that God would give you wisdom as well.
2. Why does Paul include **revelation** with **wisdom**?
 - a. Well in Paul's day they didn't have Bible Apps on their Smart Phones.
 - 1) They didn't have Study Bibles with notes at the bottom of each page.
 - 2) They didn't have the Family Christian Bookstore or Amazon where they could go buy a commentary on the Bible.
 - b. Paul was praying that as they read the epistles, the writings of the Apostles and the Old Testament Scriptures that God would reveal His will to them through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) That is the same for us today.
 - 2) Oh, sure we can benefit greatly from commentaries and study aids, but God Himself lives in us and helps to bring understanding to our reading and praying.

Ephesians 1:18-19a 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, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His **power** toward us who believe

1. The word **understanding** in this text could also be translated as **HEART**... that the eyes of your heart be enlightened.
2. **enlightened** – φωτίζω [Photizo] in the original Greek means *to give light to*.
 - a. Like the **light bulb** that turns on over someone's **head** when they have an **idea**.
 - b. Or like when the **flash on a camera** illuminates an object just before the shutter opens to capture the image.
 - c. It takes the light of the Holy Spirit to be able to **see** spiritual truth.
 - d. But it's with the **Heart** that spiritual truth is **understood**.

3. Here again Paul speaks of an **inheritance**, the third time in this chapter (see Vs 11 & 14).
 - a. God knows the **difficulties** that we face here on earth and He wants us to know that something better is coming!
4. Verses 18 & 19 reveal that we have **Hope – Riches – Power**.
 - a. **hope** – Of His calling
 - 1) Hope is a feeling of trust and confident expectation of things to come.
 - b. **riches** – in His Glory
 - 1) Not Gold Bars = AKA heavenly pavement.
 - 2) Eternal substance that can never be taken away or used up.
 - c. **power** – Available to **us who believe**.
 - 1) A power to overcome sinful desires and the temptation to sin.
 - 2) A power that gives us eternal life.
 - 3) A power that raises our soul after our physical body has breathed it's last breath of earthly air.

Ephesians 1:19b-20 ...according to the working of His mighty power²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

1. Having power over supernatural forces through **magic** and the **occult** was a great concern in ancient Ephesus.
 - a. But the power of God, which He has worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, is truly the greatest power that exists.
 - b. This reminds me of Jeremy Camp's song, **Same Power**:

I can walk Down this dark and painful road
 I can face Every fear of the unknown
 I can hear All God's children singing out
 We will not be overtaken - We will not be overcome
 The same power that rose Jesus from the grave
 The same power that commands the dead to wake

Lives in us, lives in us
 The same power that moves mountains when He speaks
 The same power that can calm a raging sea
 Lives in us, lives in us - He lives in us, lives in us
 We have hope That His promises are true
 In His strength There is nothing we can't do
 Yes, we know There are greater things in store
 We will not be overtaken - We will not be overcome
 Greater is He that is living in me He's conquered our enemy
 No power of darkness - No weapon prevails
 We stand here in victory

2. Back to Vs 19, notice the word **working**. It's something in **process/progress**.
 - a. He is working and He's not done yet!
 - b. This is what we call the **sanctification** process, where we are growing in the Lord as we rely on His power to change us from the inside out.
 - c. The process of sanctification is the process of growing in spiritual maturity in the Lord and ultimately becoming more like Christ.
 - d. But this is a process that takes time, and the Lord's not done working in any of us.

Ephesians 1:20b-21 ...and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ 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.

1. Where is Christ today? At the **right hand** of the Father in Heaven.
 - a. What is Christ over... Everything!
 - b. This is meant to **comfort** us because there are times when we can **feel so helpless**.
 - 1) And it often seems like things are **out of control**.
 - 2) But Christ is always in control so we are to seek Him and follow Him.

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²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

1. Paul is quoting from **Psalm 8:6** which says, You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,
2. There is an order established by God whereby roles and responsibilities are assigned.
 - a. Christ is head over all things to the church, which is His body.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 11:3** But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.
 - c. Remember this when we get to Ephesians 5.
 - d. These roles and responsibilities do **not** make one **inferior** to another, we simply have **different functions** within God's plan and family.
3. Vs 22, *all things* are under *His feet*.
 - a. What things?
 - 1) Dominions, powers, addictions, problems, pornography, profanity, gossip, depression, meanness, tempers, sadness, laziness...
 - a) Whatever it is you can't get over.
 - b. We can get in over our heads sometimes...
 - 1) But nothing is over His head, everything is under His feet.
4. The church is the *fullness of Him who fills all in all*.
 - a. How can we be full of the Lord?
 - b. The church is where the headship of Jesus will be enjoyed.
 - c. Perhaps you or someone you know is thinking, "I don't need church, I can study the Bible on my own."
 - d. But that's not the heart of the Father any more than if I went home and said, "Okay, kids, grab your plates, and each of you go into your room to have dinner by yourself."
 - e. If I did, they would still be getting nutrition.
 - 1) They would survive.
 - 2) But the heart of a true father is to see his kids together—interacting, loving, sharing, growing.

Conclusion:

1. In today's passage we saw...
 - a. We have HOPE – RICHES – POWER.
 - b. We have access to all that as a part of the body to which Christ is the head.
 - c. Are you a part of the body of Christ yet?
 - 1) Accept Christ!
 - d. Christian, are you a part of the body that is **in sync** with the rest of the body?
 - 1) My Twitching Eyelid...
 - 2) Let's not be a part of the body out of sync with the Head.
2. Let's be focusing of **Faith** in the Lord, **Loving** one another, and **Praying** for another.

¹ The following people and commentaries were used in preparing these notes: Life Application Bible, ESV Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, D. Guzik, J. Courson, J.V. McGee