

What are you doing WITH your Christian life? What did you DO yesterday, what are you doing today, and what will you do Tomorrow? Are you complacent 自满 and doing nothing? Are you dissatisfied and looking for something better to come along?

Let me ask our hearts, mine own included: Do you have what you Need or do you feel there is something missing? Are you hungry for me?

The last few sermons Paul has laid out for us all the Greatest things we have in Christ. A) the Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, B) Christ has accomplished our Redemption 救赎, C) and the Holy Spirit has secured and sealed us for the Day of Eternity.

But does this make us Frozen and do nothing today ... are we supposed to just sit around and wait for Christ to Come back No. This is not the Christian Life. Some think and live as if the Things of Christ are for the Future. That Salvation has to do with His Return.

But Paul teaches us that the Gifts and Beauty of Christ are yours right now through Faith. We come to SEE the HUNGER AND ZEAL Paul has for more of Christ. We find what all Christians should be praying, and what I should be praying for you..

- Confidence for His Prayer
- Consequence of His Prayer
- Christ's Position before Us

Confidence for His Prayer

What is it that motivated and moved Paul towards prayer? The letter of Ephesians is the only letter where there is not a specific reason mentioned for its writing. There is no problem in the Ephesian church which necessitates Paul writing to them; nothing like the attacks on the Gospel we find in Gal. or internal issues like we find in 1 Cor. Paul is purely writing to them as a good Pastor to check in on them and build them up in the Gospel. And so to that end he mentions two things which provoke him to pray:

1) Doctrine truths just laid out: Decreed 谕旨, Accomplished, and the Applied

You see Paul does not pray whimsically 异想天开 as if he *hopes* there is a God who is powerful enough to hear him and fulfill his requests. That is called being credulous 轻信, the act of believing something simply because you want it to be true. Like wanting to believe in Unicorns, it doesn't make them exist. This is not Paul at all, he prays Confidently knowing The Covenant Keeping God, hears our prayers.

Beloved, Paul is motivated to pray for the same reasons we are this morning. The Truths of Scripture enable us to pray. Our Great God says that we now have access to him through the Son, that we can come and make known our requests & petitions, to praise him for his great gifts. Paul, like us, is motivated to Pray because God is God.

2) Hearing about their FAITH & LOVE:

Paul does NOT *Plead* with God as if he were an outsider. Nor does he pray as a dead-calvinist, a 'frozen-chosen,' who misunderstands God's love in Election.

Paul is moved to incessant 不间断 passionate prayer, As a Child of God BECAUSE the Fruits of the Gospel are beginning to blossom in the Ephesian church.

As it says, v.15, I hear of your faith in Christ. As v.13 has it, you heard the word of truth, the proclamation of your salvation, and you believed. This is itself confirmation of the Gospel at work, manifesting love towards all the Saints. Paul does not mention how he has heard or what it is exactly they are doing: but we should think of the fruits of the Spirit- love to one another, bearing with one another, building up one another in the bonds of peace. Oh to see churches living this way does not cause Paul to become complacent nor slacken in his labor for them, thinking they had become a perfect church. That is how Churches forget the gospel and die. Rather, seeing their faith in fruitful action, spurs Paul onwards all the more in prayer, prayer without ceasing (v.16).

You see this is the **reward for Pastors** while on earth: seeing God's elect come to faith and live in gratitude to our God. These are the Shepherds the church needs; seeing the church doing well immediately drives them to their knees, rushing to the Throne 宝座 of God asking for even more of Christ for His sheep. With all confidence Pastors need to go unceasing to the Father of Glory asking that he should shower you with his Grace more and more.

Side: {this is also a way to talk with your neighbors, Christian & Non. Ask them if they have a Pastor who labors in the Word for them, who Labors on his knees for them. I wonder how that would go over in these mega-evangelical churches where the people have never even met the pastor!! Or people who feel alone in this world}

Paul asks the Father to give his children a v.17 'spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him'. Since we are now adopted through Christ, Oh Lord, give us a spirit to know and understand you.

Now it might seem odd at first that Paul would ask for wisdom & revelation: as the Eulogy 颂词 already had pointed out: **in v.8** that with all wisdom and understanding he made known to us the 'mystery of his will' (which we will discuss more in ch.3). So why would Paul ask this for us:

Well the answer is not all that surprising: the same problems with Christians today have always been a problem. You ever hear people say they don't want to study the Bible or learn theology, they just want to love Jesus and be happy. As some have said, 'N. American Christianity is a mile wide but an inch deep'.

But approaching God like that is sort of like dating someone but not wanting to learn about them, you say, 'look, I like you but I don't want to really know you. I might learn something I don't like, so let's just keep it surface level and be together, but never learn the *nitty gritty* 细节. It will keep the relationship safe.' What a joke, try that with your spouses!

Christ himself says in John 17:3, that eternal life is: knowing the only True God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." Knowledge is not something merely for the head, a stone cold intellectual experiment. If that was all that Christianity was then we should want nothing to do with it.

But **God** wants us to know to intimately him and his Son through his living and active word. Children of God, this is why Paul prays for them: so that they might not be tossed back and forth by every wind of Doctrine, but instead be rooted and grounded, a firm foundation in the Gospel Truths.

So Paul prays for two Gifts: v.17

First: Wisdom- continue learning and growing in the Knowledge of Christ. When we begin our Christian lives we all start at square one, the fundamental 基本 grammar of the Gospel. For some this was as a child of the Covenant 盟约 in a Covenantal home. Like you children here now; your parents are teaching you about Christ. And for others, you begin your Christian journey latter, also starting at square one.

BUT we never turn or graduate to some other scheme of doctrine, we always learn more about Christ and His work, seeing him unfolded in all of Scripture. His infinite Beauty, and his Eternal Gifts to us will always overwhelm. When we really grasp the 'basic' truths about Christ, we will be so overwhelmed with ecstatic 欣喜 Joy, that we will be hungry for More.

No Christian should ever say, 'I have learned all I need to, I am done.' We will always be coming to the means of Grace in order to continually be feed and nourished.

Second: Revelation 启示 is not some deep gnostic or hidden knowledge. Remember again **v.9** God has made known to us the mystery, and **v.13** we have heard the Gospel. So Paul is not here referring to some secret revelation that goes behind Scripture. Rather just like the wisdom, it is the revelation of Christ, his person and work. For as the text says this wisdom & revelation both serve to open the eyes of our hearts, which is the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in teaching us the Whole counsel of God. As Christ said, the Spirit comes to guide us in all truth, reminding us of the Living Word abiding with us (Jn. 15:12-13, 14:26).

Purpose of His Prayer

Paul explains the very reason he prays for us to receive wisdom and revelation and open our eyes, is so that we might have these truths understood in our lives: These things change us:

- A. Hope of HIS calling
- B. Wealth of HIS glorious inheritance 荣耀的传承
- C. Extraordinary greatness of HIS power towards us

This is what the Pastors here are Praying for you: that these Fruits Blossom in your Heart.

Each week we desire to deliver Christ: that we all might live and breathe in these truths.

First: Hope of his Calling. Now Children this is not like when you Hope for something for Christmas, not sure if you are going to get it or not. This is not like hoping that you are going to get that job, or keep that job. This is a Hope of an entirely different variety. It is the kind of Hope which Abraham had. Confidence not in yourself, but pure Confidence in God who always fulfills his Word. It is a Hope that rests confidently in the God who elected us even before the World began.

Remember **v.13-14**, where we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Our Salation is written in the Blood of Christ and Stamped & Sealed with The Holy spirit Himself.

The HS 9s the down payment on our souls, the guarantee of our salvation. Your confidence is not skin deep, His guarantee cannot ever be removed. You are marked and sealed, like a tattoo 纹身 on your souls.

Second, Wealth of His glorious inheritance. Now this can be a little bit of a tricky verse, but we have to read carefully and not just presume 假设 to immediately understand. Remember, this is part of Paul's prayer for us to learn and grow.

If you look closely it does not say, the 'riches of our inheritance', it says 'his glorious inheritance'. Now what does that mean? Could it really be that Christ regards us as his inheritance? Could people like you and me be a prized possession of the Lord of Glory?

That's exactly what its saying. Those who are called and made holy and blameless will be with Christ in heaven forever. And this is what Christ wants, he asked for it. **John 17** when he prayed that all his sheep might be One, and **v.24** "I desire that they also, whom

you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my Glory...” WOW!! What an overwhelming 铺天盖地 concept, that Christ wants us with him.****

And the last piece of what Paul prays for us to learn: the **Extraordinary greatness of His power** towards us who believe.

Now notice what Paul has done, he first mentioned our Past calling and our Present Hope. Then he refers TO Christ’s inheriting us, And now he rounds it out by praying that we come to learn how God powerfully works to accomplish all these things.

This is a powerful element in the Christian life, in fact for Christianity as a whole, the very working of our salvation.

Ultimately Paul wants us to learn about the Powerful work of God: The power that brings Christ up from the Dead, The Power that Kept Christ from the corruption of the Grave, and Burst him out of the Bonds of Death ...

That is the Power of God working in you today.

Now Paul goes on in Ch. 2 explaining in greater detail how we are saved by Faith alone. But think here for just a minute: the **climax** 顶峰 of our learning in the Christian life, in both wisdom and revelation, v19 His Immeasurable Power Towards Us.

The number one thing you are to be learning, is not how to give to the offering plate, its not how to dress as a Christian, its not 101 dos/don’ts ... Those are not on Paul’s radar at all-

The number One thing: Is Christ’s exalted Glory

and how we live by Faith in the Exalted King

V21-22 READ

O Beloved, think of the riches of Christ, and the privilege of Being His.

We could and should spend our lives learning more and more about our magnificent and multifaceted 多面 salvation by Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, and current Exaltation

Notice something with me: in vv17-18 Paul prays that You & I would learn these things. But v19. Paul includes himself. but Paul can’t help but include himself in desiring to see even more of God’s great glory ... Paul is still overwhelmed in learning about the Powerful work of God UNTO US

Position of Chris

Lastly, Paul expands on how great his power has been in explaining where Christ our Lord now reigns 统治 The One who in power authored our salvation is the same One who raised Christ from the dead.

So here in this Passage we see that the one whom we are adopted through in v.5 is the one who is raised from the dead. More than that he is the one who has completed the work he was sent to do, and now he enjoys his exalted Kingly rest. He is exalted in the heavens even this very hour.

Who shall separate you from his love? Who shall stand in his way to work in you and love you?

He is greater than all who could ever try to break up your relationship. He has already defeated Satan, there are no foes left: his authority and power rule over all things. His name alone is above every name, and there is coming a day when all knees will bow and confess that name.

Awe, Christian doesn’t this make you want to sing. Doesn’t this cause the weight to fall off your chest, the weight of fear and anxiety. Your Savior, has adopted you, he has redeemed you and forgiven your sins, and now sits in Kingly repose in heaven.

This is your hope, the confidence for your Inheritance. If you are a member of Christ by Faith, then Know and learn more of who it is you are united to;

When the Fruit begins to blossom in the gardens of Christians, this in no way makes us arrogant and complacent. Instead the first fruits are the very thing that gives him confidence to pray for more.

We are hungry and strive for more of Christ: a) because of how Great and Beautiful and Powerful he truly is; b) and we are confident to Pursue because we Know where our Kingly-Savior is now Reigning.

Beloved of the Lord, do not fear or become frozen in your Christian life.

Do not stop with a Mere snack at the Table of Christ ...

Feast Upon the Gifts. Feast and Drink Deeply. Let us pray for even more Fruit to be blossoming in this place, and in our hearts.