

Apostolic Prayer: Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation (Eph. 1:15-23)

After I heard of your faith...and your love...16 I do not cease...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 (Father), 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know (experience) what is the hope of His (Father's) 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, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead 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. 22 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. (Eph. 1:15-23)

I. CONTINUAL PRAYER TO THE FATHER OF GLORY FOR THE SAINTS (EPH. 1:15-17)

I do not cease...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 revelation in the knowledge of Him... (Eph. 1:16-17)

- A. Paul was writing from his prison cell in Rome to a Church that he knew well since he established the church of Ephesus (Acts 19-20). Paul received reports that that they were filled with faith and love. This greatly encouraged Paul in his imprisonment.
- B. We see Paul's revelation of the power of prayer. Paul did not cease to make mention of the Ephesian believers in prayer (Eph. 1:16). God will give the spirit of revelation to us to the degree that we ask Him to. We must not have "trust" God's sovereignty in an unbiblical way by "trusting" Him to do what He requires us to do. We cannot do God's part and He will not do our part. We must seek to obey Him as we fill our heart with His Word and ask Him for revelation.
Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened... (Mt. 7:7)
You do not have because you do not ask. (Jas 4:2)
- C. We see Paul's revelation of the power of prayer as well as his highest focus in prayer (for the spirit of revelation). Paul did not cease to make mention of the Ephesian believers in prayer
- D. Paul appealed to God as the God of Jesus and the Father of glory (Eph. 1:17).
1. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ – what God did for Jesus in His humanity is the ideal picture of what God is committed to doing for His people.
 2. Father of glory – the glory that God possesses is the glory that He longs to impart to His people according to their hunger for it. This is the core reality behind this prayer.

E. Paul had just outlined specific aspects of the Father's willing to give His glory (spiritual blessings) to His people in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14). This is one of the clearest and most comprehensive statements in the Bible describing the grace and glory that God lavishes upon His people (Eph. 1:8).

F. God, motivated by love, predestined (determined) that those who said yes to Jesus would be made holy and blameless before Him and would enjoy the exalted position of being His adopted children (Eph. 1:4-5). God established the final plan to glorify His people in His sight. Paul is revealing that God's plan was predestined (determined) not the chose of the individuals. For this reason, Paul continued in prayer that that saints would experience more of this predetermined plan which reveals God's longing and commitment to lavish His grace on us (Eph. 1:15, 17).

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons... (Eph. 1:4-5)

You have crowned him (the redeemed) with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands... 10 For it was fitting for Him...in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Heb. 2:7, 10)

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: (Eph. 1:15-16)

G. God's plan was always to bring us into His glory. He planned to bring the heavenly realm together with the earthly realm that we might experience His glory in fullness forever.

The mystery of His will...10 He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth... (Eph. 1:9-10)

H. Our spiritual foundation is in receiving from the Father who gives His glory in different ways:

1. He gives us His power, wisdom and love (tender mercy and affection).
2. He reveals His beauty in which He fascinates His people (Rev. 4-5).
3. He gives from His desire to share (impart) His glory to those He loves.

II. THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (EPH. 1:17)

That the Father of glory may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know (experience) 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 (Eph. 1:17-19)

- A. Paul prayed that they might come to more fully experience the knowledge of God in active intimacy (Eph. 1:17-19) as the only way to walk in the glory of these spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3-14) in this life. This prayer for active intimacy with God has one general request with three specific requests that flow out the main one. Paul understood that intimacy with God was the essential foundation for us to experience the three specific requests (Eph. 1:18-19).
1. It is helpful to know that Paul's primary prayer focus was that people know or encounter God by receiving the spirit of wisdom and revelation.
 2. In other words, to receive living understanding (divine illumination) as God the Spirit reveals God the Father and Son to the human spirit.
- B. Our greatest need is to receive a greater measure of the spirit of wisdom and revelation. This is almost always the greatest need of your loved ones (saved and unsaved), ministries, cities, nations or governments that you pray for. Satan's most common attack is the opposite of this by releasing accusation and deception to confuse our hearts.
- C. Our eyes being enlightened explains what it means to receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation. In other words, our minds are enabled to perceive God and God imparts grace to our affections to love God and feel His presence.
- D. God's glory is helps us sustain a lifestyle of receiving His supernatural influence on our heart. This is the most neglected spiritual treasure on this planet.
- E. The unaided mind cannot receive revelation because it is living understanding from the Spirit.
*We have received...the Spirit...that we might know the things...freely given to us by God...14
The natural man (unaided mind) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them... (1 Cor. 2:12-14)*

Blessed are you...flesh and blood has not revealed this...but My Father in heaven. (Mt 16:17)
- F. The Spirit reveals God by enabling our human capacities to receive more. Thus, it takes a lifestyle that aggressively pursues the things of the Spirit to receive more of the Spirit. The strongest eyes are useless when a person is in total darkness. The natural man has no spiritual sight. His eyes do not perceive Jesus' power and beauty.
- G. The Scripture is more than intellectual ideas, but it is a divine revelation, an unveiling of spiritual things which requires supernatural abilities and produces spiritual effects on the "eyes of our understanding being enlightened." In other words, we must pray for this as the top priority in our life. This must not be reduced to "our minds receiving new ideas."
- H. God as light imparts insight, holiness and happiness with anointed encounters.

- I. It takes God to know God, thus, we must earnestly pray for more of this. To Paul this was the primary need for the Ephesian saints. Revelation is the most powerful influence that equips our hearts for wholeheartedness. If we can see what Paul saw, then we can embrace what he embraced. Seeing determines the depth of our sustained choices for holiness.
- J. ***That you may know*** (experience) (Eph. 1:18) – to know is to encounter and experience God’s glory. Revelation is the unveiling of God Himself.
1. The Greek word "knowledge" (epignosis) refers to experiential knowledge which is much more than informational knowledge of true facts about God.
 2. To know or encounter God is the essence of eternal salvation (John 17:3; Phil 3:10).
This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only God and Jesus Christ. (Jn 17:3)
- K. Paul prayed a general prayer that they receive more revelation of God. Then Paul added three specific prayers that flow out of encounter. He wanted the people with enlightened eyes to know (Gr. eidenai) or experience three specific dimensions of God’s glory:
1. First, to have assurance (hope) related to their life calling (assignment) in God.
 2. Second, to experience the wealth of being God’s inheritance (what He desires most).
 3. Third, to experience God’s power in our mind, heart and ministry.

III. EXPERIENCING THE ASSURANCE OF GOD’S CALLING FOR OUR LIVES (EPH. 1:18)

That the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...that you may know (experience) what is the hope (assurance) of His calling... (Eph. 1:17-18)

- A. The first specific request relates to ***what we are to do***. Paul wanted them to have assurance or confidence in knowing God’s calling or divine assignment for their lives and how God evaluated their calling or lives work.
- B. God has a tailor made mandate or assignment for each person’s life that includes both the present and future. This brings us confidence in our dignity and greatness before God.
- C. God offers us a great future. He wants to impart confidence in us now, that is related to our present labors and struggles that are so small and weak and seemly insignificant in man’s eyes.

- D. ***What we are to do:*** our calling (destiny) speaks of our unique assignment that God has given us. This is a vast subject that encompasses time and eternity. In this age, our assignment changes through the seasons of our life. The revelation of our destiny, Divine mandate, unique purpose and design is essential to walking with our hearts fully alive.
- E. This specific part speaks of knowing God's revealed will in our life.
Epaphras...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Col. 4:12)
- F. This is one of the main emphases in Paul's prayer for the Colossians.
We...do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will...10 that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God... (Col. 1:9-10)
- G. We have the glory of a significant function now and in 50 years, 500 years and 5,000 years, etc. We have a specific work in our life that we must faithfully carry out with meekness and a servant spirit. The significance of these labors is only clear to those with enlightened understanding.
For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)
- H. We do very small things that are great in God's esteem. Wisdom is knowing what God esteems. We can live with certainty that our small labors will reap great rewards before God.
Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. (Mt. 25:21)
- I. To evaluate our lives and labors with living understanding. The very small things are evaluated by God as great. Every compared to God is very small. There are 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy. However, God has created over 100 million galaxies in the known universe. We will never produce something that is big to Him. Our freedom is in seeking to establish something that is great in terms of love, meekness and understanding not in terms of seeking to impress God or men but the biggest of what we build with our hands.
- J. Our small and weak function now will dynamically impact our position and calling in the New Heavens and Earth. We must have assurance related to our present calling and labors to live fully alive. We must be anchored in eternity to walk steady in our assignment in this age.
- K. Our life is dynamically changed when we have assurance that what we are doing is valuable to God. In other words, we feel powerful when we know that God esteems the way that we spend our life (even if men do not see its value). It is powerful to have confidence that what we do and the sacrifices we make matters greatly to God and that He will remember it forever.
- L. It includes the revelation that there is continuity of what we do in this age with the age to come. Much insecurity and fear is related to lacking this revelation of our greatness in God.

- M. This specific part speaks encompasses more than having assurance of salvation. It is vital to be assured we are partakers of God's effectual or regenerative call. Paul was laboring in prayer that they have more than assurance of salvation since they were already fervent in love and faith (Eph. 1:15).

IV. EXPERIENCING THE GLORY OF BEING GOD'S INHERITANCE (EPH. 1:18)

That the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...that you may know (experience)...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:17-18)

- A. The second specific request relates to ***who we are to God***. This prayer is to realize that we are God's inheritance. By making us His inheritance, God has revealed His passion for us. Paul spoke of both our inheritance in God (Eph. 1:14) and of God's inheritance in us (Eph. 1:18).
- B. Paul is making a reference to Moses' revelation from God in Deut. 32:9.
***For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.* (Deut. 32:9)**
***"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "...I will make them My jewels."* (Mal. 3:17)**
***Jesus...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...* (Heb. 12:2)**
- C. We are God's inheritance. We are what the Father has given to the Son as His reward. God's valuation of his people is established by his valuation of Christ. To see the value that God places on us, Paul wants us to experience some of the "riches of the glory" of being God's inheritance,
- D. ***Who we are to God***: this touches the issue of our spiritual identity. This is very different than what we do before God in our calling or mandate. It is the revelation of who we are in God's heart and affection. We see our greatness, value, dignity, honor and beauty that we have in Jesus' eyes. We are the prize of all the ages that the Father gave the Son. We are the reward that He most longs for. In this revelation, we see the greatness that we possess before Jesus' heart.
- E. Much of our insecurity and fear is related to lacking this revelation of our dignity.
- F. We confess that we are Jesus' favorites in that He loves us as the Father loves Him.
***As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you...* (Jn. 15:9)**
- G. We confess that we are the Father's favorites in that He loves us as that He loves Jesus.
***That the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me.* (Jn. 17:23)**
- H. There are infinite riches (wealth) in being the focus of God's affection. The power of knowing this is without precedent in human experience. We confess that these truths as Satan's attacks us.
***My Beloved is mine, and I am His.* (Song 2:16)**

You have ravished My heart, My sister, My Bride... (Song 4:9)

I am my Beloved's and His desire is toward me. (Song 7:10)

V. EXPERIENCING THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER (EPH. 1:19)

That the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...that you may know (experience)...19 what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe... (Eph. 1:17-19)

- A. The third specific request relates to ***how we are empowered to live out our life in God***. This prayer request is to experience the power of God. Power (Gr. *dunamis*) refers to a God's strength and energetic grace that we need to overcome temptation. This is the power available to all believers (Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:11).
- B. **How we are to live out our life in God**: We must not be content with powerless Christianity. Rather, we contend for NT Christianity that experiences the power of the resurrection. Much of our insecurity and fear is related to lacking this revelation of our provision.
- You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me...to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)***

VI. THE WORKING OF GOD'S MIGHTY POWER IN JESUS (EPH. 1:19)

That you may know...19 what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead 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. 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. (Eph. 1:18-23)

- A. God manifested this power in Christ in three different instances. This is the same power that we experience when we say no to sin or pray for the sick or for God's justice to break forth.
- B. The first manifestation of God's power in Christ was manifest in Jesus' resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand (Eph. 1:20-21).
1. Jesus was exalted far above all rule and levels of authority in the demonic, angelic and human realms (Col. 1:16; Phil. 2:8-11) in the present and future (1 Cor. 15:23-28).
 2. Jesus as a Man was elevated to the Father's right hand because of His obedience to death (Phil. 2:6-11). The destruction of death occurred when Jesus was raised as the firstfruits of our resurrection.

- C. The second manifestation of God's power in Christ was the Father making all things subject to Christ (Eph. 1:22). God will show forth Jesus as a Man the head over all creation. God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything (1:22). All God's sovereignty is mediated through Christ (1 Cor. 15:27; Ps. 110:1).
1. Adam lost his lordship over creation when he sinned. Jesus re-gained it by His obedience (Eph. 1:10; Rom. 5:12-21). Jesus' lordship over creation will be obvious when He reigns over the earth in the Millennium (Ps. 8:6; 1 Cor. 15:27; Heb. 2:6-8).
 2. Jesus will exercise authority over everything in creation including the land, seas and skies.
- D. The third manifestation of God's power in Christ is when the Father placed all things under Jesus' feet and appointed as Him as the Head over the Church which is His body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18).
1. Part of this dimension of His lordship is evident now. We can claim the authority of Jesus our head as we resist sinful and satanic opposition against us. The church is both the body of Christ and the fullness of Him who fills everything in with God's presence and blessing through Jesus (Eph. 4:10-11).
 2. The Church could not come into being as a body filled with God's Spirit until Jesus had ascended into heaven to become our head.
- E. All God's power works through and for the good of His Church. Jesus' sovereignty is exercised for the benefit of His church.
- F. Paul continues with these ideas in Eph. 2, where he describes that God made us alive with Christ and raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:4-6).
- G.