

Text: Eph 1.15-19

Once again, we have a long sentence (15-23) to conclude Ephesians chapter 1.

Paul began by extolling the spiritual blessings we have in Christ, including:

1. God's choice that believers would be holy and blameless before him
2. God's gracious redemption, the forgiveness of every one of our sins
3. God's guarantee of salvation through the gift of the Spirit

"For this reason..." Paul launches into a prayer for the saints in vv. 15ff.

I. Preamble: the reason Paul prays (15-16)

The first reason refers back to the spiritual blessings (3-14)

But the second reason is what Paul has heard. The epistle is written approximately 5 years after Paul's last contact with Ephesus (Acts 20).

What has Paul heard about? (15)

1. **The faith among you**
2. **Your love for all the saints**

When Paul talks about faith here, what aspect of faith does he mean?

Various answers, will include "in the Lord Jesus", but also the idea of maturing faith as opposed to saving faith

What is evidence of the reality of their faith?

Their love for the saints

The main verb of the sentence comes in v. 16: "I do not cease ..."

1. To give thanks for you
2. To make mention of you in prayer

Does this mean that Paul spent every waking minute praying for them?

No, it means that when he prayed, they were always in his prayers

II. Content: Paul's object in prayer (17-19)

The word "that" points to the content of Paul's prayers. What is Paul's main request for them?

That they would receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation

Breaking this down, does "spirit" mean one's human attitude or the Holy Spirit? Why do you think so? (commentaries vary)

The translations seem to opt for human attitude, most commentaries think it is the holy spirit because of the combination of "wisdom and revelation"

What is "wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him"?

The growth and insight we gain through our walk with Christ in the Spirit

Note that "I pray that" in v. 18 is in italics. The translators are trying to break up the long sentence into smaller sentences. It should go something like this:

"I do not cease ... making mention of you ... that God ... will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation ... having the eyes of your heart enlightened ..."

What is the "eyes of the heart"?

Mixed metaphor for spiritual understanding/insight

What is this enlightening that Paul mentions?

The gift of the Spirit from salvation onward that allows you to grow in wisdom and revelation

From this request, Paul lists three things as the purpose of this growth.

1. That you will know the hope of his calling
2. That you will know what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance
3. That you will know the surpassing greatness of his power

Now let's think about what each of these things mean:

First, hope:

Assurance of salvation ("ultimate salvation")

Notice the word pileup (lit.): "the riches of the glory of the inheritance of Him"

Whose inheritance are we talking about?

Christ's inheritance (or God's inheritance)

What is the content of the inheritance?

The saints

What makes the inheritance rich and glorious?

The price paid and the willingness to pay the price

What is the power Paul talks about in the third item?

The power directed right now in the lives of believers

Paul talks about the “surpassing greatness” of this power, then he gives us another word pileup to expand on it: “according to the working of the strength of the might of him”

Four words for power are used:

1. His power: **potential** power
2. Working: **active** power
3. Strength: **forceful** power
4. Might: **inherent** power

“By way of illustration, a bulldozer has the ability, capacity, and potential of routing out trees (δύναμις). By looking at it, one senses its inherent strength (ἰσχύς) but when its engine roars and it begins to move, its power of mastery becomes obvious (κράτος). However, when it comes to a tree and knocks it over one sees the activity of its power (ἐνέργεια).”¹

The point Paul is making is this: I am praying for you that you will grow in insight and understanding for the purpose of comprehending:

1. The security of your salvation
2. The beauty and glory of your salvation
3. The power of God operating right now on behalf of the saved

III. Foundation: the work of God that guarantees Paul's prayer (20-23)

(Next week)

¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 271.