

This morning we are continuing in Paul's prayer for the Jesus Followers in Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:18,19a *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will 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 surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.*

Let's look at some of the powerful principles contained in this prayer:

He prays that the **Eyes of their heart be enlightened.**

As we talked about last week, "knowing" God has to go beyond head knowledge or just information for our lives to be changed by the Him. Just "seeing" information about God doesn't transform us spiritually. We need to have "eyes to see".

Matthew 13:13-16 *Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.'*
16 But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

2 Kings 6:15-17 *Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

Psalms 119:17,18 *Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word. 18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.*

Hale Pule Discussion Question:

What do you think are some things in our lives that create an environment that either causes us to be dull and scarcely hear and see or have ears to hear and eyes to see?

Let's look at the next part of the prayer.

Paul prays that they may know **What is the hope of His calling?**

The Hope of His Calling in our lives is tied to who we are in Christ, our identity in Christ, who He says we are, and how He sees us.

When we understand these things, Hope is resident deep in our hearts. And the Hope that comes from us embracing His loving work in our lives through Christ and the Holy Spirit, we are not disappointed.

Romans 5:1-5 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

So many things in life can bring disappointment. If we are anchored in Him and the awareness of our calling in Him, we can walk in hope and victory.

Colossians 1:21-23 *And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.*

Titus 3:3-7 *For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Hale Pule Discussion Question:

What kinds of things distract you from focusing on the Hope of His calling? How can you focus more on the Hope of His calling in your life?

Let's look at the next part of the prayer.

What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints?

The previous part of this prayer dealt with our Hope of His calling in our lives. This part deals with His inheritance in us not our inheritance in Him.

Pastor Church Smith explained it like this, "He is not talking about your inheritance here. He is talking about His inheritance, and this to me is a mystery. If you only knew how much God treasured you. I have never thought much of that. I have thought a lot about my treasures in God. But God treasures me? Do you remember Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is liken unto a man going through a field and discovering a treasure." (Matthew 13:44). Now when you attribute that parable, the treasure turns out to be you. And the person who gave everything to buy the field, the world, in order to obtain the treasure is Jesus. He values you so highly that He gave His life to redeem you, to purchase you. You are His treasure. Peter said, "We are His peculiar treasure," God's treasure. If you only knew how much God treasured you, you would never treat yourself cheaply again. You would never look down at yourself again. 'Hey, I am God's treasure. I am God's inheritance. God values me. God treasures me, glory.' Personally, I don't think He is getting much of a deal, but I like it that He likes it."

Paul prays for the Ephesians to know richness of who we are in Him and how He treasures us. When we truly begin to grasp this truth, it transforms us from the inside out.

God's personal attention to us is rich and glorious!

Psalm 139:1-18

O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

You understand my thought from afar.

3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down,

And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before there is a word on my tongue,

Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

5 You have enclosed me behind and before,

And laid Your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

*8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.
9 If I take the wings of the dawn,
If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand will lead me,
And Your right hand will lay hold of me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,
And the light around me will be night,"
12 Even the darkness is not dark to You,
And the night is as bright as the day.
Darkness and light are alike to You.
13 For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.
14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;
16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them.
17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
18 If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.
When I awake, I am still with You.*

Hale Pule Discussion Question:

How would you see parts of your life transformed if you grasped more fully what the "riches of the glory of His inheritance" in you?

Let's look at the last part of this pray for today

What is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe?

Surpassing in Greek is hyperballo – it means to transcend, exceed, excel, to throw over or beyond anything.

There is an "over the top" power from God that is available to us when we believe (pisteuo – go all in) in Christ.

1 John 5:4,5 *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

We need to know that God has equipped us, from the inside out, with the power to be who He called us to be and do what He called us to do.

1 Corinthians 4:20 *For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.*

Hale Pule Discussion Question (This one is to work on in prayer before the Father - feel free to discuss the context of this question as a group and ask others to join you in prayer as you seek to grow in Him) :

Ask the Father to show you if there are things in your life that are obstructing the full flow of His power in and through you? If so, write them down and make it a matter of prayer before Him to begin to work with Him to remove them.

Let's enter into worship and I'll return to close us in prayer.