

Message Two

The Two Greatest Prayers of the Apostle Paul

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:17-23; 3:14-21

- I. In Paul's first prayer in Ephesians (a prayer for revelation), he prays that we would have a spirit of wisdom and revelation with the eyes of our heart being enlightened to know the hope of God's calling, the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and the surpassing greatness of God's power toward us who believe—Eph. 1:17-23:**
- A. We must be God's friends, those who understand His heart; we have to see, know, and have the vision of eternity, a vision that seizes us and captures us to the extent that we live the life of eternity and work the work of eternity—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Cor. 2:9-10; 6:17; 15:10; 16:10.
 - B. The hope of God's calling is "Christ in you, the hope of glory"—Col. 1:27:
 - 1. Christ realized by us, experienced by us, and gained by us to the fullest extent to be our ultimate manifestation and consummation as our glory is the hope of our calling—Phil. 3:14; Rom. 5:2.
 - 2. God called us and justified us, and He will glorify us, conforming us to the image of His Son; eventually, we all will be absolutely the same as Christ—8:29-30; 1 John 3:2.
 - 3. The hope of God's calling is the ultimate consummation of our enjoyment of Christ, which will be the transfiguration of our body and the manifestation of the sons of God—Eph. 4:4; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:19, 23-25.
 - C. The riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints speaks of God's sealing us with Himself to make us His inheritance for His enjoyment and God's pledging Himself to us to make Him our inheritance for our enjoyment—Eph. 1:11, 13b-14, 18:
 - 1. God's glory has its riches, which are the many different items that constitute God's divine attributes, such as light, life, power, love, righteousness, and holiness, expressed to different degrees.
 - 2. Since we are God's inheritance, the Holy Spirit is a seal upon us; since God is our inheritance, the Holy Spirit is a pledge to us of this inheritance.
 - 3. The sealing and pledging of the Holy Spirit continue to permeate and transform us with God's divine element for our enjoyment until we are mature in God's life and our body is transfigured in glory—vv. 11, 13b-14; 4:30; Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21.
 - D. The surpassing greatness of God's power—His resurrecting power, ascending (transcending) power, subjecting (subduing) power, and heading-up (overruling) power—is operating "in us," is "toward us who believe," and is "to the church"—Eph. 3:20; 1:19-23:
 - 1. The church is the depository of this surpassingly great fourfold power of the Triune God.
 - 2. When this power operated in Christ, it made Him the Head; when this power operates in us, it makes us the Body.
 - 3. To experience the divine transmission of this power, we need to realize that this power is in us already—3:16, 20; Phil. 3:21b; 4:13; Col. 1:29.

4. To experience the divine transmission of this power, we need to have a strong desire to get completely out of death—Rev. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:6; 5:4.

II. In Paul's second prayer in Ephesians (a prayer for experience), he prays that we would be strengthened into our inner man for God's unique work to build Himself into our being—3:14-21:

- A. In verses 16 through 19 the word *that* is used four times in the apostle's prayer: the apostle prayed *that* the Father would grant us to be strengthened; the result of such a strengthening is *that* Christ makes His home in our hearts; the result of Christ's making His home in our hearts is *that* we are full of strength to apprehend the dimensions of Christ—the breadth, length, height, and depth—and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ; and the result of this apprehending and knowing is *that* we are filled unto all the fullness of God; these steps make up a metabolic process by which the Body of Christ is constituted with the riches of Christ through our enjoyment of those riches.
- B. In Ephesians 1 our spirit is revealed as an organ for us to receive revelation concerning the church; in Ephesians 3 our spirit is a person, the inner man, for us to experience Christ for the church; in order to experience Christ unto the fullness of God, we need to be strengthened with the fourfold power of the Triune God into our spirit through the Holy Spirit.
- C. Our heart is the totality of our inward parts (our mind, emotion, will, and conscience) and the center of our inward being; when Christ makes His home in our heart, He controls our entire inward being and supplies and strengthens every inward part with Himself.
- D. In our experience of Christ, we first experience the breadth of what He is and then the length; when we advance in Christ, we experience the height and depth of His riches:
 1. Our experience of Christ must become three-dimensional, like a cube, and must not be one-dimensional, like a line.
 2. In our experience of Christ we must go back and forth and up and down so that eventually our experience of Him may be a solid "cube," like the Holy of Holies—Exo. 26:2-8; 1 Kings 6:20; Rev. 21:16.
 3. When our experience of Christ is like this (balanced by the Body), we cannot fall or be broken—cf. 1 Cor. 12:24.
- E. We eventually can know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that we may be filled unto all the fullness of God—Eph. 3:19:
 1. The love of Christ is knowledge-surpassing, yet we can know it by experiencing it.
 2. The fullness of God is the issue of our enjoyment of the unsearchably rich Christ as the embodiment of God dispensed into our being; through His indwelling, Christ imparts the riches of all that God is into our being to make us the fullness of God, the corporate expression of God.
- F. God superabundantly fulfills not only above all that we ask but also what we think concerning the church according to the power that operates in us—v. 20.
- G. We are being strengthened into our inner man according to the riches of God's glory, and then unto Him is glory in the church; first the glory of God is wrought into us, and then it returns to God for His glorification—vv. 16, 21.