

Paul's Prayer For The Ephesians

Ephesians 1:16-19 contains the prayer Paul offered for the Ephesian church. In these verses Paul prayed that God would *"give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe ..."* One should not be surprised that the essence of Paul's prayer was that the Ephesians might appreciate the blessing they had in Christ; a prayer which needs to be uttered again and again today with thoughtful reflections by all God's children. Do we perceive God's infinite blessings to us? The first part of his prayer is that the Ephesians might have proper spiritual discernment, viz., that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that the eyes of their heart might be enlightened.

Spiritual and physical sight do not always go "hand in hand." Some see physically but not spiritually; some see spiritually who have no physical sight. When Jesus healed the blind man, great conflict and controversy raged between the Pharisees and the blind man who have been given sight. Jesus said, *"For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see, and that they that see may become blind"* (Jn. 9:39). The man who had been given sight "saw" more than just the world around he had never seen before; he saw that the fact that Jesus could work such a miracle proved God was with him, approving of him. In his words: *"If this man were not from God, he could do nothing"* (Jn. 9:33). And, if he were from God, then it was necessary that men do what he instructed. On the other hand, though the Jews (who claimed to be able to enlighten men, to be a guide of the blind, Rom. 2:19) ultimately grudgingly had to admit that Jesus had worked a genuine miracle; they still did not perceive that God approved Jesus to whom they must give heed. Of them Isaiah had written, *"Go to this people and say, by seeing ye shall see and shall in no wise perceive ..."* (Mt. 13:14; Isa. 6:9f). Paul's fervent prayer was that the Ephesians have a heart of discernment and not be spiritually blind. What did Paul wish the Ephesians to see?

Paul wished that they might *"know what is the hope of his calling."* The Ephesians and all men receive a call from God, for His call is universal (Tit. 2:11). Not all answer the call, issued through the gospel, a call from darkness to light (2 Thess. 2:14, 1 Pet. 2:9). But there is an inducement in that call, a call to eternal life. We should never forget the enormous value of eternal life!

Paul desired that Ephesians might see *"what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"* consisted of. Christians are God's inheritance; his own possession. What glory it is to be numbered among those God chose as His own! Peter reminded his readers that, as God's possession, they *"should show forth the excellencies of him who called them"* (1 Pet. 2:9). As God's children, we should *"let our light so shine before men ..."* that our heavenly Father might be glorified (Mt. 5:16). Paul was anxious that Ephesians might *"see the exceeding greatness of his power to usward that believe"* (Eph. 1:19). This power is according to *"that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead"* (Eph. 1:19b-20). We do not serve an impotent God but one who *"is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20). We need to have faith in His power. An anguished father pleaded that Jesus heal his son, saying, *"If thou canst do anything, help us!"* Jesus said, *"If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth"* (Mk. 9:22f). God is the force which created the world and all things therein. He demonstrated his great power which he raised Jesus from the dead. We need to "tap into" this great source of strength and life. Do we realize what God is able to do?

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