

“Believing Into Christ—A Believing with a sitting down kind of belief”
Ephesians 1: 15-20

- I. God—Triune: Father, Son, Holy Spirit —One God, Three Persons. He is not the greatest of all gods; He is the Only God.
- II. Slide: **WHOLLY OTHER**
Everything else
- III. Recap—Eph. 1: 1-14
 - A. Paul begins with God. The starting point is always God. The starting point needs to be God. The letter starts with God, and it ends with God. And God doesn't share it with anybody.
 - B. Let's look at God's initiative as the First Mover before we get to our passage for today. Pay attention to God's initiative...Not on what is given to the believer.—NIV Version
 1. Slide: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **who has blessed** us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **For he chose** us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.
 2. Slide: **In love he predestined** us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with **his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace**, which **he has freely given** us in the One he loves.
 3. Slide: **In him** we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the **riches of God's grace that he lavished** on us.
 4. Slide: With all wisdom and understanding, **he made known** to us the mystery of his will **according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ**, ...to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.
 5. Slide: **In him** we were also **chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will**, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.
 6. Slide: **ESV: 13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the**

promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory.**

- C. Stop—grasp, even a little bit more than what you know now, the greater picture of Who God is. He is eternal, never ending, always intentional, persistent love, persistent grace, persistent mercy and unfathomable power towards His chosen ones. He is the First Mover. He and He alone. He shares with no one. Therefore, we know him personally.

Slide: 15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,...

A. *Slide: 15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,*

1. The Ephesians were sealed with the Holy Spirit through the work of God the Father.
2. Evidence of the Holy Spirit —Faith
 - a) Their faith finds its focus in Christ
 - b) Their faith finds its expression in love toward the saints- ie other believers.
 - c) The Gospel has been proclaimed to them. Not a formula of how to get to heaven or a 4 step plan that obligates God to act on their behalf.
 - (1) They have been given eyes to see and ears to hear and faith to believe
 - (2) They are sealed with the Holy Spirit
 - d) Transformation has begun and it begins from the inside out. The evidence is Faith in the Lord Jesus and love towards the saints.

3. Because Paul has seen evidence of God the Father's power toward the Ephesians through/in Christ in conjunction with the Holy Spirit,
 - (1) Paul is moved to continually and earnestly pray for them.
 - (2) In light of what God has done in 1: 1-14—Why? They are 'in!'
 - (a) Because knowing more doctrine won't hold them fast in the experiences of their lives
 - (b) Because they have a need to know God personally, intimately.
 - (3) So God the Father causes Paul to pray.
 - (4) My story:
 - (a) age 7 —God to saved me. I remember being alone in my bedroom on a Sunday night after church kneeling at the foot of my bed. Going to the bus stop the next morning I have the distinct memory of thinking that I could do anything I wanted from now on because I was now forgiven forever! I am 'in!'
 - (b) age 7-18—I was corrected regarding my 'do my own thing' belief. My thinking changed from 'doing whatever' to 'doing nothing that was sinful.' The correction taught and brought guilt for my ongoing sin and the incessant need to confess sin and ask for forgiveness so that God would continue to love me. For, I was taught, if sin was not confessed daily, then God would refuse to listen to me. Fellowship between Him and me would be broken until I fixed it through confession and repentance. I had to be cleansed from all sin in order to have a relationship with God. You see, I was saved enough to get into heaven, but I didn't know anything about how complete Jesus' work was on the cross. So, I believed with all my heart that this relationship depended on me. And God was standing ready to punish me for any disobedience!
 - (c) age 18-50—At 18, being so ridden with guilt and weariness, I had enough of being a Christian. I just could not keep up maintaining the relationship. I wanted to live my life free from all the rules; the rules were just too heavy to bear. **BUT God**

...showed me (shined his light and “opened my eyes”) in my 20’s that his love is unconditional. I remember distinctly the night I realized God loved me. The memory is amazing. So for the next 30+years, in an effort to show God that I loved him back, I focused my life on Not Sinning. I wanted to please God and I wanted to hear well done when I died.

(d) age 50-present—God continues to change my focus from one focused on not sinned to one focus on the Savior; to one of knowing Him; Of falling in love with Him. Of being overwhelmed with Him—because of who He is. I need to know personally, in my heart, that changing my behavior was not the path to righteousness. Jesus paid it all! Knowing God who causes change in my behavior is the path to freedom. And This is a process.

- i) Now: I know that ‘not sinning’ is born from knowing Him
- ii) Not from fear or from ‘falling from his grace.’

b) Now, in this context we see WHY God moved Paul to pray and why the Eph needed what Paul is praying for. There is a Present and an Eternity in which we will be knowing Him.

B. He prays:

1. *Slide: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,*

- a) He prays to the Father of Glory/ the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Wholly Other—consider the magnitude of what Paul is doing in light of verses 1-14. Paul, the rule-following Pharisee—now chosen, prays to the I AM.
 - b) And ceaselessly asks Him to give the Eph, “The Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of him”. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit who, remember, has already been given to them as a downpayment, so Paul is not praying for them to be given the Holy Spirit.
- (1) The Spirit of wisdom: What Paul prays for on behalf of the Ephesian believers is that God might continue to give to them the gift of his Holy Spirit in a *greater measure* so they may become wise/discerning in their understanding of the things of

grace and gain a deeper understanding of who God is-
(paraphrased from The Expositors Greek New Testament:
StudyLite.org)

- (2) The Spirit of Revelation: refers to the "insight and discernment the Holy Spirit brings into the mysteries of divine truth"- It's a clearer picture of God's divine character and will.
- c) The Holy Spirit has been given to the elect so that they can know God and gain a greater understanding of who God is — His divine character and will.
- (1) **Slide:** *I Cor. 2.12—So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*
- (2) The Spirit of wisdom and of revelation is given In the knowledge of Him— This is a knowledge, a knowing (epignosis) that is true, accurate, thorough , and so might be rendered 'full knowledge'
 - i) This 'knowing' (epignosis) is the fullness of knowledge acquired through personal acquaintance. (It is experiential in nature)
 - ii) **Slide:** *Paul is asking God to give them the Holy Spirit in greater measure so that they may have a deeper and greater understanding of the mysteries of His character and will, to know Him personally. To know Him more thoroughly and intimately.* (Experientially)
- (3) The relationship that God unilaterally created for his chosen is the ability for them to know Him—REPEAT**
 - (a) In this instance, the knowing is a personal knowing born from personal experience, not factual knowledge. Paul differentiates between knowing God personally and experientially from Knowing of God factually.
 - (b) In this context, he is emphasizing the personal knowing but he is only emphasizing it—the emphasis is not at the expense /does not exclude the need for right doctrine/ knowing factual truth. (Vs. 1-14 are doctrine)

(c) The gift of the 'Spirit of wisdom and of revelation' is , once again the work of God—the sending and sealing WITH the Holy Spirit.

i) He, the Holy Spirit, causes the people of God to understand the things of God more fully and completely. (Spirit of Wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God)

ii) Their faith is deeply rooted in personal, life experiences

(1) Living life matters

(2) Experiences matter—these lead to knowing God

(4) The Holy Spirit is a constant, a persistent, an ongoing, a never stopping interaction in us and toward us. He, himself, seals us. He did not place a stamp or a seal on us—He is the seal!

(5) He, the Holy Spirit ,teaches us 'all things' regarding Christ in every experience of our lives.

(6) "God (at His good pleasure) has radically changed the relationship between Himself and his chosen." JT

(a) The Eph. need to understand that God has not saved them to leave them alone to fend for themselves. The gospel is not and was not and never will be about getting into heaven.

(b) He did not adopt them and make them His sons and not provide for them in this life and in the life to come.

(c) Paul prays that the Eph may come to know Him in every moment of their lives—not only have head knowledge of Him.

C. Paul continues his prayer. Referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life he writes:

1. **Slide: having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know:**

a) This is a deep, inward (eyes of the heart), personal enlightenment 'provided by the Holy Spirit which leads the believer to realize all that God has made available to him". (The Expositor's Bible Commentary of Ephesians)

b) To have an experiential, personal knowledge of all the promises of God. To have a deeper knowing of all His initiatives (vs. 1-14)

- (1) The 'eyes of your heart' is the whole inner person, encompassing the mind, will and emotions.
- (2) Thus, "the inner eyes are enlightened when they open and light is shown on them, allowing them to see and understand the things of Christ" gotquestions.org
- (3) Do you see the progression of my life- the experiences of my life- as an example of the Holy Spirit opening eyes of the heart?
- c) Paul desires that all believers comprehend or know, in the depths of their soul, in an ever increasing fashion- 3 things: the hope to which He has called them; the riches of His glorious inheritance; and the greatness of His power toward them who are in Christ.
- (1) Slide: **having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know: what is the hope to which he has called you,**
 - (a) This is Paul's first desire for the Ephesians.
 - (b) Why does Paul desire them to know the Hope to which they have been called?: (This is NOT wishful thinking, Not 'being hopeful'—this is a noun with the article 'the')
 - i) The Hope Paul speaks of here is the Christian's anchor of their soul because it is anchored to God himself.
 - ii) Heb 6.19—¹⁷ So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
 - (c) The hope, anchored in Jesus, is this new relationship with God—not through sacrifices or intermediaries—but a personal relationship with the Wholly Other.
 - (d) The hope is the fullness of all the promises of God anchored to Christ.

- (e) The Hope to which the believer has been called enters into the inner place—behind the curtain—where Jesus has gone.
 - i) This hope “shapes our present lives” because it is intertwined into God Himself and our new privilege of knowing him personally and intimately.
 - ii) The hope is an inside, faith-knowing hope, a living-hope. —because it’s connected to Jesus who is alive!
 - (1) This hope cements a believer’s life into Christ because we can now know Him.
 - (2) Jn. 16.33-Jesus speaking: “I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble/tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world.”
 - (3) In the experiences of our lives we can know him. He has overcome the world!
 - (4) Slide: This Hope is a sitting down believing-faith into Christ.—it’s the anchor. The resting place for the believer’s soul.**

- (2) Why can I say this? Because The Hope is rooted in the word ‘Called’ (*The hope to which you have been called*)
 - (a) The ‘call’ in which God is the author is a call that is complete and finished. (Effectual call) -2 Timothy 1.9; Rom. 8.28ff
 - (b) The ‘called of God’ have a hope that is firmly set both in the past, in the present and in the future- BECAUSE OF THE ONE WHO CALLED—GOD
 - (c) The hope (The fullness of all the promises of God anchored to the risen Christ who has called you) is rooted in The past:
 - i) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us.
 - ii) This is eternally true. The believer has been adopted—the legal work is done. We wait for the future reality.
 - (d) The hope is active in the The present
 - i) The promise that he who began a good work in you will complete it.

- ii) The promise of Titus 2:11-12—For the grace of God...(not the club of God) trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.
 - (a) A believer's present difficulties are nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed
 - (b) Romans 8: ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us... we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved.
 - (c) The hope reminds the believer that this life is not all there is and it reminds the believer that Today is to be lived for the praise of God's glory.
 - (e) The hope is sure—It is future
 - i) The reality of a bodily resurrection
 - ii) The reality of a new earth where Christ reigns—no more sin, the believers will have earthly bodies.
 - iii) The reality of eternal glory
- (3) After Paul prays that the Eph may know the hope in a personal way, he prays for them to know another thing.
- 2. Paul's second prayer—that they might know:
 - (1) *Slide: having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know: what is the hope to which he has called you, **what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,***
 - (a) 'His' glorious inheritance means the one given by Him, just like 'his' calling was the call issued by Him and made effective by Him." William Hendricksen: "
 - (b) God the Father has given a glorious inheritance and this is as sure as the Call. The inheritance and call are anchored in God Himself. Therefore they are true and unchangeable.
 - i) *The inheritance is the sum total of all God has proclaimed in the gospel.*

- ii) What the Ephesian know of God now through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit is a foretaste of what is to come! (Eg. Snow is a foretaste of the winter to come).
- (c) One day, they will take possession of their full portion; the full inheritance. John Calvin writes of this inheritance, "We do not have the full enjoyment of it at present. . . . We walk . . . in hope, and we do not see the thing as if it were present, but we see it by faith."
 - i) Example: "Most Christians simply believe that believers die and 'go to heaven,' (Mom: "Is there anything between salvation and heaven or are we miserably waiting for death or the rapture?")and the idea of some kind of 'inheritance in the saints' *in this vague 'heaven' or 'up there' or in the 'sweet by and by' does not line up the reality around them or with any concrete teaching found in Scripture.*
 - ii) The reality is: The riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints is—the sum total of all that God has promised and all of God's actions toward His chosen (vs. 1-14)
 - (1) They will not be left as orphans now nor in the future
 - (2) He will complete his work in them and for them-both now and in the days to come.- into all of eternity.
 - (3) They need not fear or worry and be consumed by Today or Tomorrow for God holds them both.
 - (4) Jesus is the Good Shepard now and will continue to be in the future
 - (5) Jesus leads them beside still waters currently and will care for them in the future.
 - (6) Jesus plants them near the springs of water so that in times of drought their 'leaves will be always green.'

This is true now and is true of the future.
- (d) The inheritance given by God to the believer is eternal and unchangeable because the inheritance is rooted in God Himself who is eternal and unchangeable.
- (2) The past, present and future for the believer is sure. God has said so! Here lives hope.

3. Paul's third request: that they may know—

a) *Slide: having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know: what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,***

- (1) Paul has an earnest desire for the Ephesians to know in a personal, experiential way the enormous power of God toward them as the Called. Paul calls God's power immeasurably great!
 - (a) Only Paul uses this term 'hyperballon' which literally suggests that God's power is so great and immeasurable that it exists in another sphere altogether. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)
 - (b) And this immeasurable, great power is directed toward the believer! This is amazing, hope-sustaining and Hope-anchoring. Inheritance affirming Power.
 - i) This is the same power God brought about in Christ when He raised Christ from the dead. And this power belongs to God alone.
 - ii) God's power is Wholly Other. The power of the demonic world (which the Eph. were familiar with) is a power of the Everything Else and, therefore, does not compete with God.
 - (c) God's power is directed TOWARD the believer.
 - i) This power is not given TO the believer who then have the ability to wield it—to command it to make things happen as if it is now their power.
 - ii) "The power of God is God's power...He uses it "for us" or directs it 'towards us'—for our profit and blessing."
- (2) Notice God's power is manifested toward Paul experientially and personally: 2 Cor. 12: 9,10 (in the context of Paul's thorn in the flesh)—⁹ But he said to me, "***My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.***" Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am

content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

IV. Application:

A. Knowing the God who is all-powerful and directs His wholly other power toward us who believe is intimately linked with unbreakable and unchangeable bonds to the believer. Thus allowing the believer to live in the confident hope he has in Christ and in the believer's present and future inheritance

1. Knowing God personally is the Hope.

2. Knowing God personally is what lies between salvation and death.

Knowing God is the work of the Holy Spirit who Himself seals us.

a) This is what Paul is praying for.

(1) God has radically changed the relationship between Himself and his chosen. JT

(2) God's purpose is NOT to take a believer's low views of self and replace them with high views of self. Rather, His purpose is to take a believer's low view of God and replace them with high views of God.

(3) God's purpose is not to take a believer with little sense of worth and fill him/her with a greater sense of worth. But rather His purpose is to take a believer who by nature makes himself the center of the universe and show him that he was made to put God at the center of the universe and to get joy not from seeing his own tiny worth, but from knowing Christ who is of infinite worth. (From John Piper's message on adoption. I have changed it, but the thought and some of the language is Piper's)

3. Knowing God is the way of transformation of the mind, the will and emotions.

a) **Transformation (SMARTY WORD)** is an act of God's grace by which we who are his children are set apart; we are made holy, via a conformity of the mind, heart and life to the will of God.

(1) *2 Cor. 3.18: And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

- b) Transformation does NOT begin with changing or altering behavior, but begins and ends with God himself.—with us knowing him.
- c) Transformation is God's process of grace through which we become what we were originally purposed to be in Christ. It's the state of proper functioning of someone set apart for God's use
- 4. God the Father, God the Son-Jesus, God the Holy Spirit —The Triune God; The Wholly Other —
 - a) Has changed the relationship between Himself and us. Radically.
 - b) He is Emmanuel. God with us. He knows us and has made Himself known; therefore, we can know Him
 - c) He has given us Hope. He has directed His power towards us so that in all in all things we are more than conquerors.
 - d) He has given us an inheritance which is the sum total of all God has proclaimed in the gospel.
- 5. Why? Because you're so good? No, because Jesus is so good. Why? Because you have perfectly obeyed? No, because Jesus perfectly obeyed. Why? Because you've made atonement for your sins? No, 'cause he made atonement for your sins. You see, this is "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation," which, as you believed, you "were sealed with the ... Holy Spirit." ... it is in the purposes of God, so that everybody will know how great God is. (Allister Begg)—For the praise of his glory.

B. Slide: "I can believe everything about (Jesus) and never sit down (into Him), and you can believe everything about Jesus and never believe into him. Give up yourself into him. Trust yourself into him. Fall into him. Rely on him entirely...." Allister Begg: