

Ephesians 1: 15-23

Author: Paul

Recipients: Church in Ephesus

Location: Western shore of modern day Turkey; Aegean Sea

Key Theme: "The Body of Christ is Blessed"

v. 15-16

For this reason...

- Paul gives thanks to the Lord because of the faith of the Ephesians.
- Verses 11-14 explain what Paul is talking about.
- God had seen fit to grant them saving faith and they now were in Christ.
- This reinforces the idea in verses 11-14 that God is the One who must give faith.
- He continually prays for them as they walk in newness of life in Christ.

The Sovereignty of God Over Salvation

- The term sovereignty means supreme power or authority.
- Paul makes it abundantly clear in the first half of the chapter that God has chosen His people before the foundation of the world.
- Then He takes it to its logical conclusion by concluding that because the Ephesians had faith that God had given it to them.
- Paul returns praise and thanksgiving to the One who had mercy on them.
- If the Ephesians had anything to do with their salvation then Paul would have given praise to them but he doesn't.
- He gives praise to the author and perfecter of their faith.

v. 17-21

Paul prays specifically

- First he says that he is praying a prayer of thanksgiving for them and then he follows that up with a prayer of request on behalf of the Ephesian church.
  - 1) That God may give them a spirit of wisdom
    - This would be for discernment to distinguish false teaching.
  - 2) That God would give them a revelation of Himself
    - This time period was the Apostolic age and the sign gifts were still in force. We now live in the age of completed Scripture.
  - 3) Having the eyes of their hearts enlightened so that they could understand what it is they have been called out of and what they have been called to.
    - Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26
    - This new heart that comes after salvation is a work of the Lord. It happens when the Lord draws a sinner to repentance.

What is the glorious hope?

- 1) We have been made children of God through adoption
  - Ephesians 1:5
- 2) We have been put under the Lordship of Jesus
  - He is seated at the right hand of God the Father
  - He exceeds all other powers
  - He has been given all authority
- 3) We have been given the righteousness of Christ

- When God sees those that belong to Him, He sees the sinless perfection of His Son Jesus.
- He traded our sin for his righteousness and He put it to death on the cross.

#### v. 22-23

#### Christ Rules All

- God the Father has given all power and authority to Jesus
- Matthew 28:18
- This is not a future prophecy. This is the here and now.
- Jesus declared that He was reigning before He ascended to Heaven.
- This has massive implications for how we view the present as well as how we view the future.
- If Jesus is reigning now then everything about our thinking must change.

#### The Kingdom of God is at hand

- Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15
- This wasn't a futuristic look into the later coming kingdom, this was a declaration that the Kingdom had arrived in the person of Jesus.
- Everything that the church does is in light of this fact.

#### The Body of Christ

- The church is known by a few names such as the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, etc.
- The church exists for Him, by Him, and through Him. Not the other way around.
- We exist for His purposes but here the Bible says that He was given TO us.
- It is a gift to be under the headship of Christ.

- Sometimes we view being under the subjection of someone else as burdensome but as Jesus said Himself, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light”. (Matthew 11:28-30)

## Small Group Questions

- 1) To whom did Paul give thanks for the faith of the Ephesian church?
  - He gave thanks to God. This is vital to understanding the nature of our salvation. It is wholly the work of God to save His people. It's not that God sent Jesus and then Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sat down to watch it all play out. It is impossible to come to faith in Christ without the Holy Spirit granting faith to individual unbelievers. See John 6:44.
- 2) What is Paul specifically praying for the Ephesian church?
  - That they may be granted a spirit of wisdom, that God would give them a knowledge of Himself, and that they would be given the ability for their hearts to "See" and believe.
- 3) Is this still needed in our day?
  - Absolutely. As we have already established, people don't just come to Christ on their own. Then once there we are still totally dependent on Him to walk us through the Christian life. This isn't like one of those old rotisserie chicken ovens where God "set it and forget it", this is a work that God will have to finish. See Philippians 1:6.
- 4) What are the three parts of the glorious hope that we are called to?
  - We have been made children of God through adoption
  - We have been put under the Lordship of Jesus
  - We have been given the righteousness of Christ
- 5) When does Christ start ruling the world?
  - He is already ruling the world. There is a future kingdom to come that we will get to be a part of with Him in person but even now Christ is ruling over the affairs of men, nature, and the cosmos.
- 6) Who taught Paul about Jesus?
  - Jesus did. We learned that during our Galatians study. He didn't learn anything from the other apostles. This is further validation that Paul's account of Christ is true. Him knowing the details of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension without anyone telling him is evidence that he was telling the truth regarding his conversion and apostleship.