

Ephesians pt 3 (1:15-23)

A prayer of thanksgiving

15-16 For what reason is he referring to? The previous song of praise is all about the wonder of God making rebellious man into a creature that is to the praise of the glory of God. So when he considers the redeemed Ephesian Gentiles and Jews conversion to faith in Christ, evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit, love, he can't stop thanking God. He says that he never stops thanking God for doing that amazing work in them. When people hear about your church does it carry the testimony of your love for all the saints? Then he prays to God for them and we find out just what his prayer is in the next verse.

17 He keeps asking that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Some translators would put a small s on Spirit. I would go with the capital S meaning the Holy Spirit since the Holy Spirit is the One that imparts wisdom and reveals Jesus. That is why he wants God to give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to know Him better. You see, studying the texts can inform your intellect, but only the revelation of the Holy Spirit can show Jesus to you in a fuller way. Isaiah 11:2, John 14:26, 1Corinthians 2:10

18 His prayer continues with a request that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened to know two things. Some things we can't see with our natural eyes. We need God to open our spiritual eyes, to enlighten them, to give a spiritual light that lets us see spiritually. The three things he wanted their spiritual hearts to see were the hope to which they were called and the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints are the first two. Have you seen the hope to which you were called? Do you see the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints? I could try to explain it to you, but that would be futile. It comes via revelation. Would you pray that for me and for yourself? We must need this revelation to help us stand firm in our faith and to go on to maturity. Open the eyes of my heart, LORD. I want to understand the hope to which I have been called and the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

19 -21 The third thing he prayed that their spiritual eyes could see was the incomparably great power for us. NIV says the power is "like" the power that raised Jesus. I prefer the KJV "according to" the power that raised Jesus. It is the power of God that brings new life. Sometimes we get discouraged thinking we will never change. We need to get our eyes off our failure and onto the power that is at work in us making us a new creation! It is the mighty power which raised Christ to the right hand of God. In Jesus we are there also (see 2:6). That is incredible power that takes a rebel and makes him fit to rule and reign as a representative of God. That power puts Jesus over all things, all powers, all authority, and every title that can be given. You can't trust people with that kind of power unless they have been totally transformed to the likeness

of Christ. Give any man that kind of power and they turn into megalomaniacs. But Jesus can handle it and in Him we participate in that mighty power.

22-23 Everything is under Jesus' authority. It is done. There is still the rebellion of Satan and His angels and rebellious man but only until Jesus says "Enough!" He is the head of the church. Many men think they head up the church, but they are mistaken. When man tries to head up the church it turns into a mess. If the church is really going to affect the world, it has to get back to letting Christ be the head, the One from Whom we all receive direction and instruction. Man has led long enough. There are leaders like the Apostle Paul, but they are only valid as long as they follow the head.

The church is His body. It is the fullness of Christ. He fills everything in every way. How can we be the fullness of Christ? He has chosen to work through us in this world. He acts when we pray. He ministers through us. His Spirit gives us the words as we witness. His life enables us to be examples to other of Jesus. The church represents Jesus in every corner of the world (see 3:19). Compare this with Colossians 2:9,10. Do you think of the church as the fullness of Christ? We should because God does! Start seeing Christ working through the church.

What should we learn from this passage of thankfulness?

We need to pray for each other to be able to see in the Spirit 1. The hope of our calling 2. The riches of God's inheritance in the saints 3. The incredibly great power of God for us who believe.

We should thank God for believers and see what an amazing thing God has done in them and in us.

We should let Christ be the head of the church. Let Him lead us.