

## **The Book of Ephesians – Part 2**

### **Introduction:**

This morning we're going to continue our Fantastic Voyage through the Book of Ephesians.

And it's going to center around what many have called the Prayers of Paul.

### **Praying the Prayers of Paul**

Some of you may remember that we taught this lesson on June 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2018 but we separated it out as an individual teaching.

Now you're hearing it, in sequence, the way that it was taught when I taught it at the Word of Life School of Ministry in Shreveport, Louisiana.

But I can assure you that it's worth hearing again because there are always opportunities for us to apply the Prayers of Paul in our daily lives. Amen?

So, with that in mind, while writing the letter to the Ephesians, which he wrote from prison, I believe Paul became so overwhelmed with the revelation he had personally received from the Lord Jesus that he slipped into intercession for the saints on two occasions.

The first occasion is found in **Chapter 1:15-23** and the second is found in **Chapter 3:13-21**.

What is striking about these prayers is that Paul doesn't pray that the Ephesian believers receive anything from the Lord except revelation.

Instead of praying for them to receive blessings and benefits, he prays that they would be filled with revelation concerning what they already had, what already belonged to them as born again believers in Jesus Christ.

So Paul sets the tone of the entire letter in Chapter 1:3 by telling the Ephesians they have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Then he begins to enumerate the blessings and benefits they already have.

Then he slips into intercession and begins to pray that they get this vital revelation.

Ephesians was written to the church at Ephesus and the churches of Asia Minor but it also applies to us today.

Remember, it was the Holy Ghost praying through Paul in these prayers.

And if the Holy Ghost wanted them to receive these powerful revelations, you can be sure he wants us to receive them as well.

One more thing before we begin. I want to make it clear that the Prayers of Paul are prayers for those who are already believers.

There's another way to pray for the lost, but these kinds of prayers are intended to strengthen ourselves but also to strengthen our fellow saints.

## **I. Prayers of Paul (Ephesians 1:15-23) KJV**

**<sup>15</sup>Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,**

**<sup>16</sup>Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;**

- Notice that Paul did not begin to pray for the saints at Ephesus until he heard of their faith and love.
- This is opposite of the way most of us pray. We pray for people until we see evidence of their faith and love, until we see change in their lives, and then we stop.
- We need to continue to pray for our fellow saints even when they're doing great and living for God with all of their heart.
- You never know what they may be facing, or when they may come under attack.
- Remember, if you're living for God, more often than not, attacks will come when you're *doing something right* not when you're *doing something wrong*.
- Paul did not cease to give thanks for them in his prayers.
- Thanksgiving should be a vital part of our prayer life. We should be continually thanking him for our fellow saints and especially for our spiritual leaders. **(I Timothy 2:1-4)**

**<sup>17</sup>That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give (bring forth) unto you (spirit, soul, and body) the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:**

- Paul prays that God would stir up the wisdom and revelation that was already resident in them, in their spirits, as born again believers. That's why the word spirit starts with a lower case "s".
- He's referring to their human spirits not the Spirit of God.

- His prayer was that the wisdom and revelation that was in their human spirits would spring to the surface, and enter their mind, will, and emotions in the knowledge of Him.

**<sup>18</sup>The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,**

- In the King James translation “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened” is a little misleading.
- The literal Greek would read “The eyes of your *heart* being enlightened”.
- This is important because it shows us that true illumination or revelation occurs in the heart.
- Your heart is your spirit and soul in combination. Your soul is the realm of the mind, the will, and the emotions.
- Since your spirit man is already like God (**Ephesians 4:23-24**), he already has this revelation.
- Enlightenment occurs when your soul (mind, will, and emotions) sees what your spirit sees. Thus, your whole heart is enlightened.
- **Verse 18** introduces the major topics of the rest of the chapter. They are the hope of his calling and the riches of our inheritance as saints of God.
- The hope of his calling is a reference to our future physical redemption or the receiving of our new bodies.
- The riches of our inheritance refer to all the wonderful things that belong to us in Christ Jesus.

- And that includes things we'll receive in this life as well as things we'll receive in the next life.
- As we will see, verses **19-23** explain how the power of God made all of these things possible through the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

**<sup>19</sup>And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,**

**<sup>20</sup>Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,**

- For a little perspective on these verses let's look at other occasions where God used his power to accomplish certain things.

### **Psalms 8**

**<sup>3</sup>When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;**

**<sup>4</sup>What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?**

- When He created the universe, he used his fingers.

### **Hebrews 1**

**<sup>10</sup>And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:**

- When he created the earth and the atmosphere around it, he used his hands.

## **Isaiah 53**

**<sup>1</sup>Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?**

- This is the chapter of Isaiah which details for us how Jesus would die for us to purchase our redemption. When God raised Jesus from the dead, he used his arm.
- So, God used his fingers to create the universe, his hands to create the Earth, but his arm to resurrect the Lord Jesus Christ!
- *So, the greatest display of God's power in the history of the universe occurred when he raised Jesus from the dead!*

**<sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:**

- The word translated as power here is the Greek word *exeusia* (authority). Why is this important? Because there is a difference between power and authority.

## **Matthew 28**

**<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (exeusia) is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

## **Luke 10**

**<sup>19</sup>Behold, I give unto you power (exeusia) to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power (dunamis) of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**

- The word translated as power in **Matthew 28:18** and the first word translated as power in **Luke 10:19** are both from the Greek word *exeusia* (authority).

- The second word translated as power in **Luke 10:19** is the Greek word *dunamis* (inherent power).
- Spiritual power comes from God. The authority to use that power is invested in the believer through the name of Jesus.
- We do not possess the power in our own selves but we have the authority in Jesus' name to use that power.

**<sup>22</sup>And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,**

**<sup>23</sup>Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

- Jesus is the head of the Church and the Church is his body. If Jesus has been placed far above all principality, power, might and dominion and every name that is named then so have we.
- If all things have been put under his feet then they have been put under our feet. We are subject to Jesus but Satan is subject to us!

## **II. Prayers of Paul (Ephesians 3:13-21)**

- **Since we're going to cover these verses from Chapter 3 now, just letting you know ahead of time that when we get to Chapter 3 in our verse by verse study, we'll be skipping over these verses and going straight to Chapter 4.**

**<sup>13</sup>Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.**

- Paul exhorts the saints at Ephesus not to focus on his natural circumstances. Remember he was imprisoned in Rome at the time that he wrote this letter.

- We can miss the glory of God if we focus on circumstances and not on His Word.

**<sup>14</sup>For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**<sup>15</sup>Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**

- Notice that the family in heaven and the family on earth are both named after God the Father.
- While we live on the earth we are in the Church but we are also in the family of God. If we die we are no longer in the Church but we remain in the family of God.
- He has family in heaven and family on the earth. When the rapture occurs, God will bring the two families together.

#### **I Thessalonians 4**

**<sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ (family in heaven) shall rise first:**

**<sup>17</sup>Then we which are alive and remain (family on earth) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

**<sup>16</sup>That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

- The word translated as strengthened comes from the Greek word *krataios* (ruling power). It's the word from which we get our English word democracy.

- Democracy means self rule. The word translated as “might” comes from the Greek word *dunamis* (inherent power).
- Put the two together and we see that Paul was praying that God would grant the saints a self rule that was based on the power of God available through His Spirit in our inner man.

**<sup>17</sup>That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,**

- If you want Jesus to feel at home in your heart, then live by faith. But don't forget that faith works by love (**Gal 5:6**).

**<sup>18</sup>May be able to comprehend with *all* saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;**

**<sup>19</sup>And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,**

- Here we see God's desire for the saints to comprehend the totality of his love for us in Christ Jesus.
- We also see that revelation from God is meant to be shared.
- Beware anytime someone separates themselves from the body of Christ with some new, mysterious revelation which they claim only a select few can comprehend.

**that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.**

- God sets high goals for us as his children. He says we are to be holy as he is holy (**I Peter 1:16**) and we are to be perfect (**II Corinthians 13:11**), knowing that the attainment of these goals in your whole being (spirit, soul, and body) is a lifelong process and is not possible apart from him.
- Similarly, the Spirit of God, through Paul, says that it is God's desire that we be filled *with all the fullness of God!*

**<sup>20</sup>Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,**

**(Amplified)**

**<sup>20</sup>Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]**

- This is an amazing scripture and one that requires constant meditation to grasp.
- I have some pretty big dreams. But according to this scripture God is able to do superabundantly, far over and above all that I could dare ask or think.
- In other words, he is able to do things for us which are beyond our wildest imaginations, according to the power that's already at work on the inside of us!

**<sup>21</sup>Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world (time) without end. Amen.**

- God authored the plan of redemption, Jesus implemented the plan, and the Holy Ghost revealed the plan to the church.
- He receives all the glory in the Church, now and forevermore.
- His desire is for the whole Church to glorify him throughout all ages. One of the major ways we glorify him is through praise and worship.
- It's sad but there are many in the Church who do not desire to worship him the way he desires to be worshipped.

- Bottom line, you may as well learn to praise him now because it's something we'll be doing through the unending ages to come.

### **III. Conclusion**

The prayers of Paul are powerful and Holy Ghost anointed.

You can apply them to yourself, your spouse, your children, or to other saints who need to grow and mature in the things of God.

Just replace the appropriate words to personalize them or to apply them to others that you're praying for.

Let me wrap things up here, with a testimony that happened years ago, when Trish and I were stationed at NAS Corpus Christi, back when I was flying as an Instructor Pilot for the Marines.

#### **An Example Prayer for Jeff and Cammie:**

When we transferred from MCAS New River here in North Carolina to Corpus Christi, we moved into base housing right next door to a couple whose first names were Jeff and Cammie.

Jeff was a Navy pilot who was also assigned there to be an Instructor Pilot for the Naval Training Command.

We became friends and soon found out that they were Fundamentalist Baptist and we, of course, were Pentecostal in our beliefs.

So it wasn't long before friction developed between us because of the vast gulf that existed between what they believed and what we believed.

We were very open about our belief that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8) and that he performed miracles and moved through gifts of the spirit and that tongues was a key to operating in the supernatural realm of the spirit.

They were completely closed to such ideas and we pretty much had to agree to disagree on those issues.

And it was a long time before we spoke of such things again.

Especially when it came to tongues and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But there was one thing that proved to be a catalyst that began to open their eyes to the truth.

Jeff and Cammie had been married for 8 years and although they desperately desired to have a baby, she had not been able to conceive.

The doctors had no answers and they expressed their pain to us on several occasions, especially Cammie.

And it didn't help that Trish and I had just had our first baby, our oldest Marcie.

And we had gotten pregnant a few weeks after I had returned from my last deployment on the USS Guam.

I decided that I would pray the Prayers of Paul over Cammie and ask God to open her eyes to the deeper things of God's Spirit. This is how I prayed. I just substituted her name in the appropriate place and prayed the Prayers of Paul exactly the way they read in Ephesians Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

## **Ephesians 1:17-23 NKJV**

I pray <sup>17</sup> **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto Cammie the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,**

<sup>18</sup> **the eyes of her understanding being enlightened; that she may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

<sup>19</sup> **and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward Cammie, who believes, according to the working of His mighty power**

<sup>20</sup> **which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,**

<sup>21</sup> **far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.**

<sup>22</sup> **And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,**

<sup>23</sup> **which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

And Lord, if You have put all demonic principalities and powers under the feet of Jesus, You have put all demonic principalities and powers under Cammie's feet, because she's a member of the Body of Christ.

## **Ephesians 3:14-21 NKJV**

<sup>14</sup> **For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**<sup>15</sup> from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**

**<sup>16</sup> that He would grant Cammie, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,**

**<sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in her heart through faith; that *she*, being rooted and grounded in love,**

**<sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—**

**<sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that she may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

**<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,**

**<sup>21</sup> to Him *be* glory in the church, and in Cammie, by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**

After 3 weeks of praying this way, I ran into Cammie in the common hallway between our two housing units.

She told me that she had been doing a lot of soul searching and was beginning to wonder if there might be something to the supernatural things that Trish and I had so freely shared with her and Jeff about when we first met.

Sensing a divinely appointed opening, I asked her if she would talk to Jeff and see if Trish and I could come over one night and pray for them to have a baby.

Well, she talked to Jeff and a few nights later, we found ourselves over at their house and we prayed for them that they might conceive and have a child.

We didn't pray in tongues because we didn't want to do anything that might turn them away from this tiny opening that had opened for us to demonstrate the power of God to this precious couple.

I figured that us just laying hands on them while we prayed was about all they could handle.

We stayed for a short while after we prayed and then we left.

A few days later, I was driving into the base one night, and I heard the word of the Lord clearly say to me:

Jeff and Cammie have conceived and they're going to have a baby boy. They will call him David.

I got home, I wrote it down, and told Trish.

Nine months later, Jeff and Cammie had a baby boy, and they called him Jeffrey David.

Amen? There is power and revelation released into believers' lives when you pray the Ephesian Prayers of Paul for yourself, your spouse, your relatives, your friends, and your fellow saints!

When you pray like this, when you intercede for others, and for yourself, in this manner, consistently, you'll be amazed at the changes you'll see in your life, in the lives of your family, and in the lives of your fellow saints.