

LSB Ephesians 1:15-23

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the full knowledge of Him, 18 so that you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of the might of His strength, 20 which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

On October 7th of this year, Israel was blindsided. Thousands of rockets all launched within minutes overpowered the Israeli Defense Force which was basically asleep at the switches. It was a complete and overwhelming surprise attack on Israel. No one was ready. No one saw it coming.

What does that have to do with our passage this morning you ask? I think there's a metaphor there for us who are believers. A metaphor for the church.

Last week we began looking at this prayer and we took a very cranial look at what the words mean and what Paul is praying for on our behalf. This morning I want to begin by backing up and looking again at verse 17.

Paul prays for a Spirit of wisdom. And it's not the first time that word has come up in this letter. Back in verse 7 and 8 we have; *7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He caused to abound to us in*

all wisdom and insight,

Paul tells us that part of the riches we inherit is wisdom and then he prays for the Spirit to bring us that godly wisdom. Wisdom not available to this perishing world. Then again in the prayer, wisdom;

making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation

Wisdom and insight in vs 8 and wisdom and revelation, or the unveiling, if you will, in vs. 17. Why? Why wisdom?

In America, for 250 years, it's been easy - "ish" to be a christian. In fact for 200 of those years you were suspect, if you were not one. For 200 years it was simply expected. Unquestioned. And in the 50+ or so years of my experience as a christian, no one cares.

Oh, you're a christian? Wow man. Whatever floats your boat dude. Whatever blows your hair back.

Then beginning with covid, we began to see a mindset that we were completely unprepared for. An unequal pressure calling for churches to either cease or desist, or to so co-opt their meetings together as to render them impossible to achieve the fellowship and assembling of the church together that is mandated for Christ's church in this book.

Rioting was allowed. Casino's and shopping malls and restaurants were more rapidly uninhibited and the rules were different than for churches. No singing allowed. 20% or less capacity of the buildings original design intent. And on and on.

The church was blind sided. And instead of resisting tyranny, we fought amongst ourselves. Those who eventually defied the government and fulfilled the biblical mandate to assemble and worship were castigated by

other christians. Lots of name calling by folks who were previously thought to be co-belligerents.

That little dust up is apparently behind us, albeit with 43% of churchgoers never recovered post covid. But the storm is quieted. For now. Or is it?

We thought we had numbers in christendom that were enough to turn tides. Enough to keep a levy wall between us and the world. But after covid that original 40 percent of the nation that was identified as christian lost 43% and election by election we're finding out, biblical morality is now quickly and easily out voted on election days.

Parental rights, home-schooling, abortion, protections against LGBTQ+++ agendas, and many other shocking things are losing in every poll, every election. Non christian politicians who were conservative on those issues are losing and they're asking themselves, why is it that we should have to die on those hills. I mean, if you're not a christian and you have no fear of God, why lose an election over abortion?

Be a libertarian. Conservative on fiscal things but care less on moral questions. It kind of makes sense if you're conservative but secular.

These are things on my mind these days. The covid storm subsided, but what about the next storm, whatever it is, that's boiling our direction, just off shore.

When the next big challenge comes, and our number of co-belligerents has dwindled to maybe 22%, and the government orders us to stand down, then what?

I remember vaguely that movie, Perfect Storm, where the guys on the rescue boat can see where they're at and where they need to be but they can't see the invisible storm currents and ocean currents that will sweep them hopelessly out to peril. The perfect storm.

I see Christ's church poised and vulnerable to be caught in a perfect storm. And the answer I hear most is the same answer a politician recently stated; *"We're the United States of America for God's sake! The most powerful nation in the world, not in the world but in the history of the world,"*

Our government will never interfere with christian worship. "We're the United States of America for God's sake!"

Where am I going with all of these thoughts. I'm stating the case for wisdom. The church of Jesus Christ, those who are God's elect saints, those who we can say with Paul, have real evidence of their faith in their love for the saints, will need wisdom.

And I believe the church in this nation is asleep. We're sound asleep and no one is at the watch, as our spiritual enemy readies thousands of rockets to be launched at us, spiritually. If the church doesn't wake up, we're set for the most perfect storm ever launched by the enemy, upon the church.

Last weekend as 4 of us went over to the men's retreat, one scripture that was read stood out in my mind as I thought about it. 1 Tim. 4:1 *But the Spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,*

There have always been deceitful spirits, always doctrines of demons, for the entirety of the church since Jesus floated up into the clouds. Always apostacies. Never a time when apostates didn't follow after ear ticklers.

But I think the message here is distinct. A time, perhaps just prior to the rapture, we don't know, but that would make sense since this is a particular event associated with end times, when a great portion of what calls itself christendom, leaves the faith behind and separates from the remnant of real believers.

Paul told the Ephesians, wisdom and insight are available in an abundance that corresponds to the riches of His grace. Wisdom is available. Insight is

available. And God is not stingy. He doesn't dole wisdom and insight out sparingly in small quantities. He gives it in the same abundance as the grace that saved us.

How interesting that the first thing in Paul's prayer for the survival of christians, the thriving of christians is wisdom and revelation. But I gaze out over the church, or what calls itself the church, and I hear snoring. Wisdom is not our defining quality. Slumber is. Sort of like Israel on October 7th. I see a church ready situationally for what Paul wrote to Timothy. Apostasy.

As long as I'm crystal ball gazing for what's just beyond the horizon for the church let me get everything off my chest and share another verse that I've never seen in the light I've just come to see it in the last month or 6 weeks.

John 17. The high priestly prayer. For us. Jesus praying for us.
16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.

Sanctify means to separate. Apostasy is a separation. Notice what it is that becomes the fork in the road that causes one group to go one way and another group to go a different way. The book.

It's going to be the book that suddenly causes the rift, the division within so called christendom so that there is a split and most will exit the true faith for something different than historic christian beliefs. *17 Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.*

If it suddenly costs you everything to hold onto the truths of this book, and the preponderance of those who call themselves christian are willing to abandon this book, and in fact call you names if you will not, which fork in the road will you take.

Wisdom says it's time to at least think about it. Truth will be the cause of the elect separating apart from this world. In history past, truth has cost

believers their lives. Are you ready to face that fork in the road, with all kinds of deceivers who say they are christians, telling you you're a lunatic to lose everything over a few verses in some old book.

I believe the separation of the final great apostasy will be over those who hold the truths of this book, the inspiration of the texts, the absolute moral authority of this book over peoples lives.

Col. 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and multiplying in the full knowledge of God;

Spiritual wisdom and understanding are requisite in order to walk in a way that pleases our Lord, and that is worthy of His chosen ones.

That little introduction was on my heart. I guess time will tell if your pastor is just a crusty old white hair shouting wolf wolf.

OK, with the Spirit's help now, let's look at vss. 18 and 19 this morning. I'll read from vs. 15 in order to put those verses in the context for you.

*15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the full knowledge of Him, 18 **so that** you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe*

To recap. Paul has prayed for God the Father to give these folks the Spirit (capital S) of wisdom and of revelation of their intimate oneship with

Christ;

So that. Vs. 18. So that . . .

Paul's setting this up. Spiritual wisdom. Jesus unveiled. Jesus revealed to them. Intimately knowing Him. Putting Him on, so that . . . what?

so that you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know

All of those other pre-requisites; wisdom, revelation, intimate knowing, are the cause of what Paul inserts here. Their spiritual eyes, inside their hearts, will have been enlightened.

When someone receives Christ, they ask Him to come into them, and forgive them of their sins, and they submit themselves to Jesus as their Lord, we call that being born again. The theological word is regeneration. We're going to see it in detail in chapter 2.

When Jesus comes to live inside your heart, the lights come on. Suddenly you are quickened from spiritual death, separation from God, and you are reconciled to God. Spiritual life. Intimacy with the very God of creation.

so that you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know

eyes of your heart seeing light for the first time, that's regeneration. That's the new birth. That's being born again, like what Jesus told Nicodemus. *You must be born again.* God's Spirit and my spirit, together. I in Him. He in me.

Paul is frustrating, how he strings words together. His brilliant mind can keep catalogue of all of the different descriptive words in a logical order that come to a logical conclusion he is building to. Mine cannot.

I have to go in and cut it up in smaller bites. Sort of like we cut things up in very small bites for our little ones.

So then, trying to hold this sentence together, Paul has called on God to give us wisdom and revelation in the knowing of His Son, in order that our inner eyes would be enlightened, our inner understanding that was previously dead to spiritual truths, would be regenerated and we would see and understand in the spiritual dimension of intimate relationship with Jesus.

But he's still going somewhere with all of this;

*18 so that you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the **riches** of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe according to the working of the might of His strength,*

Now that Paul has prayed for our inner lights to become turned on, there are three things that Paul specifically prays for us to understand and see with our spiritual eyes.

Hope. Riches. Power. Watch for them now;

*what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the **riches** of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe*

Paul prays for spiritual eyes, so that we will be able to perceive, and know some things about our position in Christ. We are in Christ, but we are still on Satan's turf. There are elements of our new life that are promised, but not realized. Yet. Not in this life.

It's like we're orphans here, but not orphans because of the presence of Christ's Spirit living in us, but still, we are incomplete compared to what we'll have in our next life, with Christ. Never the less, Paul says, I want your spiritual eyes to turn on so that you can see who we really are.

It's like Daddy Warbucks adopted us but we're still at the orphanage scrubbing the floors, waiting for the limousine to come and pick us up and whisk us off to the new mansion and our new life. It's out there. The paperwork is done, It will happen. But for now, we're still in rags scrubbing floors.

Paul wants us to glimpse with our spiritual eyes our massive wealth that's waiting for us. Wealth that is already ours, positionally. We just haven't realized it yet practically. That's why we need regenerated inner eyes, the eyes of our heart, to see and understand just a little of what we have in Christ, and Who Christ truly is.

*18 so that you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the **riches** of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe*

Let's parable push our Little Orphan Annie metaphor a little bit. It's silly, but if it helps you understand the basics of Paul's prayer for us, maybe there's some value. Hope. Riches. Glory.

Annie has been told that Daddy Warbucks has adopted her. Zowie! But she doesn't really have any concept of what will be hers, or if it can even really happen. So the kind administrator of the orphanage calls her into her office.

She spreads out all of the documents that have been signed and sealed by the governing authorities of the State of New York. And she explains to Annie, this is already complete. This WILL happen. It's all signed, sealed, and legally finished.

Then she gets a picture book and some bank statements. She shows Annie the bank statements of the numerical value of her adoptive Daddy's wealth. Annie can't really understand what those numbers mean. She's got no

concept. Then the lady opens up books of pictures of where Daddy Warbucks lives and she explains to her, this will be your home. Soon. This will all be yours.

And Annie is dazzled but she says, does anyone really have that much wealth and the power to make all of that happen. And there's a picture of Daddy Warbucks shaking President Roosevelt's hand. He's the president's friend. He has enough power to do anything he wants to do, and he wants Annie to be his daughter.

Finally, she's beginning to understand. This **is** actually going to happen. As soon as that long black limousine pulls up, you **will** step into that new life. It's a done deal.

That's a poor metaphor for what we've inherited. But Paul wants us to just begin to grasp who we are in Christ, why this **WILL** happen, what the wealth entails, and the power that is strong enough to wrestle us away from our previous evil owner and transfer us into His wealth. Hope. Riches. Glory.

*18 so that you—the eyes of your heart having been enlightened—will know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the **riches** of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe*

First the hope. What is the basis for my hope in this future wealth with my adoptive Father and Christ, my new brother. Do you see it there in vs. 18. What is the hope of His **calling**. Hope is grounded in calling.

My hope is based in the doctrine of election. My secure hope has nothing what so ever to do with me and anything I've done or not done or will ever do. God chose me, outside of me. I wasn't . . . when He did that.

The Father knew me and chose me to belong to Him and to be an adopted brother to Jesus, before time began. He chose me before the foundations of

the world. He chose me in eternity past, before the worlds existed. He knew me and He chose me. His claim on me supercedes any other claims against me.

That gives a whole new meaning to hope. My hope is based on my positional status in Him. The documents are all finished. The deal is made. He promises to never let me go. Chosen means chosen. So my hope is based in God's choice and promises. God is unchanging. Therefore, I am secure in my hope. All I need to do is wait for the limousine to pull up out front. This is happening.

Then Paul prays that I will begin to grasp how rich my new family actually is;

*what are the **riches** of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

Paul prays that I would understand how rich I actually am. But like little Annie, my brain has limits. I look around at the majesty of the creation and I think, my adoptive Father owns all of this. His glory created this. If the creation is this glorious, how glorious is HE?? My brain fails me.

That's why I, from my youth, wanted to live out here in a place like this. I was born and raised in Los Angeles. The city is all about the glory of men. Mighty freeway systems and massive mountains of glass and steel.

None of that thrilled my heart like when I go just a few miles out into the Toiyabe's and gather fire wood. My Father's glory eclipses man's glory any place I go out here.

It's funny, when we moved here in 1982, I understood the idea of public lands. The BLM and the Forest Service. We were so poor we juggled putting food on the table and keeping the rent paid on time. I pretty well knew I would never own much. But when I went out in the open spaces I could think to myself, I own this. Well as much as the rest of the citizens also own it, but they don't seem to care to use it, and I've got the place to myself.

Much later I understood, far beyond that, my Father owns all of this, and I am heir, with His Son who spoke it into existence. Not only that, but as lovely as it all is, we learn that this planet groans with pains, waiting to be redeemed when we return with Jesus and deliver it from the usurper Satan. It's glorious now! But how much more glorious when Jesus returns it to Edenic splendor!

We don't have a clue, really, how rich we are. Paul says, Father, give them a little glimpse of the glory that's waiting in the future. Like Annie, we can look in the book at pictures and wonder, wow, what will that be like!

Jesus Himself will be the crown jewel of His creation. We will be fellow heirs, with Him. Made glorious. John says; *See how great a love the Father has given to us, that we would be called children of God; and we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not been manifested as yet what we will be. We know that when He is manifested, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.* 1 Jn. 3:1 -

3

See, I'm in good company when I say I don't really have a clue how glorious it will be. John didn't either. When we see His face, we'll be changed. We'll be made glorious, like His glory.

And finally, Paul prays; *19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe*

This idea of the surpassing power of Jesus launches Paul into the final section of this prayer. We'll spend at least another week luxuriating in just the thought of the power of our adopted brother, the Lord Jesus.

Paul says open their spirit eyes in their hearts so they can understand just a little bit of the hope they hold because they are called, chosen. Let them

glimpse and just begin to imagine the depth of the wealth of the glory of belonging to Jesus. And help them to imagine the vastness of the power that is on tap and available for those of us who belong to Jesus.

You know it's one thing to think about the power it took to speak all of the universes into existence from nothing. Created physicality by words from His mouth. Everything from nothing, by mere words. That's the power our God dwells in with His Son.

But that's not what Paul prayed for. *19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe*

Help them to see the power toward them. Power available for us. Toward us.

When you think about the power of God and of His Son, the Lord, Jesus, you can't help but think, that power will be on display two ways. The power that spoke the worlds into being will also be the power of punishment and retribution towards those who hate God and rebel against His power. Those who reject His authority.

*and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe*

Power toward us. We're on the good side of that power. It's toward us. Ro. 8:31 *What then shall we say to these things? If God is **for us**, who is against us?*

God is for us. All the powers that spoke the worlds into being is for us, toward us.

But the reciprocal is true. If you rebel against God, against His ownership, His Lordship, His will; If you hate God and chafe under His Lordship, that unlimited power of wrath is against you.

The power that spoke the worlds into being will be unleashed against you.

God's fierce wrath and anger will come against you in full force.

That's horrifying to us, but it also adds inexplicable value to this verse where Paul prays, open their spiritual eyes to see what is the surpassing greatness of His **power toward** us who believe

There is a grand battle raging beyond our vision here and now. Good is real. Evil is real. Behind the curtains of our senses the battle for this planet rages between Jesus who is rightful owner and Satan who has usurped control over men because all have sinned.

The powers that be are mighty. We have the power of free choice to choose a side. Two authorities to reign are at war and battling over this planet and the souls of those who are born into this world.

If Jesus is your Lord, you are on the side of the power that spoke everything that is, into existence. He is **for** you and you love Him. But if you reject the Lordship of the authority to reign of Jesus, the power that spoke the worlds into existence from nothing, is against you. This curtain will be lifted and His wrath will come. Fierce power of wrath in outer darkness forever will be for those who reject Christ now.

Next week we'll talk about the extent of those powers. Paul mentions the power of the resurrection of Jesus and he just launches into a full discussion of the unlimits of that power. His glory and power are limitless.

You want Him to be **for** you, not against you. You want to be clothed in white garments on white horse charging out of heaven behind Him when He returns to this rebellious world in full wrath. With Him, not against Him.