

EPHESIANS 1:18a-b
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 27, November 21, 1999

INTRO: We are looking at the first reason Paul gives for praying for the Ephesian believers. We looked at the content of this reason; that God might give to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Then we looked at the means by which this was to come to them and that is that these come to us in the knowledge of God. It may well be that Paul was praying for these two things because he saw this church lacking in these things. If so, he knew also that the way they could receive these was to grow in their knowledge of God.

Now Paul will illustrate what happens when a person receives the Spirit of wisdom and revelation through knowing God. And so we want to look at the second purpose of Paul's prayers for the Ephesians.

b. The second purpose

This second purpose is that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened in order that they might know certain things. Now the mind is an immaterial thing. It is made up of at least three parts and maybe more. In the OT one word is used to help us understand the vitality of the mind. It is the word *heart*. In the immaterial realm, the mind is as vital as the heart is in the material realm. The mind has a data processor. It is called the *phreen* in the Greek language of the NT. It has a data storage place and I mentioned it to you in the last message. This is the *nous*. Then there is one other part and it is called the *mneemee*, or the memory. The memory is that part of the mind into which data from the *nous* is placed when you begin to think about something that has been stored in your mind already.

I gave you a bit of data in the last message. I am going to engage the *phreen* part of your mind and it will search the *nous* part of your mind and if it can unlock the right files you will be able to place in the *mneemee* or memory again the data I gave you last time. Let's see

if it works. I did not really tell you how old I was, I told you when I was born. Who is able to open the right files and place in your memory the date of my birth?

Now this morning we have before us several new words. The first one is the word *understanding*. Let me deal first with the differences in the Bible versions. If you are using a newer version it will read, "...the eyes of your heart..." The KJV and NKJV read, "...the eyes of your understanding..." There is a difference in some of the Greek texts and therefore this translation difference. Now I hold to the text that the KJV comes from and thus believe the word here is not *kardia*, heart; but *dianoia*. When the Bible refers to the heart as the mental faculty it speaks of the whole thing; the storage part, the processor, the memory, the conscience and whatever else there is. But when you speak of the *dianoia*, now we are dealing with a very specialized part of the mind. Turn to Matthew 22:37. (Read). The word translated mind is not the word *kardia*, heart; but *dianoia*, just as in our text.

Now in our text, Paul speaks here of the eyes of our *dianoia*. What is this? The word *dianoia* comes from the word *nous*, the storage part of the mind and the preposition *dia*, meaning through. When I pull some piece of information from the *nous* part of the mind into the phreen and think it through, that is *dianoia*. It is literally a *thinking through*. Now it is possible to think something through and not come to a fruitful conclusion. But when the eyes of my *dianoia* are enlightened, then I come to a happy fruitful, right conclusion (pephostismenous, acc. pl. part. mas. perf. pass.).

Now the word *enlightened* comes from the word *phwteuw*. We get our word photo from this word. It means to give light to. In order to take a picture with a camera, light must be allowed through the eye of the camera. The camera eye

must be enlightened. Now in order for the eyes of our understanding to receive light, we have to first know certain things. Earlier you were able to tell me when I was born, now I ask you how old I am. (Landen Driedger boy, Janice Derksen). You see, in order to be able to tell me how old I am you have to have at least a limited knowledge of mathematics. And if you have a knowledge of mathematics to a high enough level, the eyes of your understanding will be given light enough to know how old I am.

Now I want you to go back to Ephesians 1:17. Paul prayed that the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory would give to the Ephesians the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. So in life's many decisions I need wisdom to know what to do. I need something to give light to the problem at hand to illumine what I ought to do. When I read the Bible I need the Spirit of revelation to give light to my understanding. And in order to have these two things I must first have a knowledge of God. When I have a knowledge of God, the eyes of my understanding may then be enlightened and when they are, then I find satisfying answers to life's questions. You see, the greater my knowledge of God, the greater may be the light that shines on the subject my mind is contemplating.

Now I want you to notice that the word eyes is plural. Paul does not speak of the eye of the understanding. He speaks of the eyes of the understanding. I think the understanding may have many eyes. There is the eye that sheds mathematical light. There is the eye that sheds scientific light. There is the eye that sheds mechanical light and so on. Then there is the eye that sheds light on what to do in various situations. That is the eye of wisdom. Then there is the eye that sheds light on Scripture. That is the eye of revelation. And I propose to you that education or knowledge sheds light in the dianoia and helps me live life to a greater degree of fulfillment.

We have in our congregation teachers through whom the students can gain knowledge which will shed light on the various eyes of our understanding, such as math, reading, history etc... Then we have SS teachers and youth leaders and a pastor whose task it is to give spiritual knowledge which is necessary for our spiritual eyes to be enlightened.

Now let me give a caution here. Education or knowledge, as important as it is, is not a cure all. But on the other hand let me say this; the greater the knowledge the greater the possibility for light to be given to the eyes of my understanding.

(See Psalm 119:18).

In the following verses Paul gives another purpose for his prayers for them. This second purpose flows out of the first purpose. It is that the Ephesians might *know* three specific things. Now the word for know here is a word that stresses fulness and completeness of knowledge. The word *enlightened* in this verse is also in the perfect tense, stressing a completeness of knowledge.

Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers might receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God so that their spiritual eyes of their understanding being enlightened they might know with a perfect knowledge what is:

1) The hope of His calling

Surely this must be a significant matter if Paul puts this as the first in a list of three things he trusts God will enlighten their understanding on. I would love to give you an assignment to study what this might be and have you come back next Sunday to report. When I first looked at this I said to myself, "So. What's so important about this?" That thought

reveals that I need the eyes of my understanding opened. Is that true for you too?

Let's consider the words, "His calling" first and then the word "hope." His calling refers to God's calling. The NT Scriptures have so much to say about the call of God that we must limit ourselves here.

Let me say first that there are two calls spoken of in the Bible. There is a general call to salvation and then a specific call to ministry of some kind. Though there are those who feel this refers to the specific call, I think it refers to the general call to salvation. I think Paul wants us to know the hope of God's call to us in salvation.

So, let us begin by defining the call of God. Henry C. Theissen, in Lectures in Systematic Theology says that it is, "...that act of grace by which he [God] invites men to accept by faith the salvation provided by Christ". In Matthew 22:1-14 we have a parable on the call of God. You see, the call of God is that event that takes place when God speaks to the heart and conviction of sin takes place and the invitation to salvation is given. It may take place by reading, listening to a message whether by radio, TV or in church like this morning. The call is God's invitation to salvation by some man of God, through the Word of God, by the conviction of the Spirit of God. Many people say "no" to the call of God. Matthew writes in the closing verse of the parable of God's call, "Many are called but few are chosen." I have spoken to you about that when we discussed the doctrine of election for this verse deals with both. Many are called but few are chosen because few choose Him. Are you like that this morning?

The Lord says in Genesis, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Many people have said "No" too God for the last time and they have passed out of this life into the next only to enter the fiery flames of hell, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth for all eternity.

But Paul in this passage desires for the Christian to know the hope of God's call. Immediately when we see the word *hope* our minds must go to the future. Hope always has to do with the future. Secondly, hope is always positive. It is anticipation for good things. When looking into the future does not give hope, it gives dread. Many people studiously avoid talking about their end, physical death, because they do not have hope. But the call of God gives hope.

I think this hope does not have to do with being delivered from hell fire. Maybe you are here this morning and you say, "Well, I sure hope I'll be saved from hell fire." If such is your response then you have not been saved yet or you lack assurance of salvation. You see, Paul is not speaking to unbelievers here. He is speaking to the saints at Ephesus, the saved. And he wants them to know the hope of their calling. He is speaking of the hope of the saved, not the hope of the unsaved. If I am saved I am already delivered from hell fire. It is a past fact and therefore is no longer a hope. No, this hope has to do with something else I think.

What is this hope Paul was speaking about. I do not know that the Bible tells us in exact words. You see, this hope can only be revealed when the eyes of the believer are enlightened. I would like to suggest to you this morning that the hope of the believer has to do both with this life and the next and that it has to do with those

very things to which we have been predestined.

Let me give those to you in chronological order. We have already covered these in earlier messages. First in order is that we might be conformed to the image of God's Son (Romans 8:29). In this life the one great hope revealed in the Bible is that we might be conformed into the image of Christ. The deeper my life grows in spiritual things the greater becomes my desire to be like Christ.

The second thing we have been predestined to is to adoption. The adoption, as you will recall from Ephesians 1:5, is the redemption of the body (Romans 8:23). You young people will hardly be able to identify. You are strong and healthy. But as age begins to take toll on our bodies we begin to look ever more longingly to our new bodies. I can recall years ago, My Mom would sit down with the T.Eaton's catalogue in front of her and order new things for us. I can remember looking forward with great anticipation to a new pair of Peace River runners. You know the ones with a red rim on top and red soles. They were known as rubber boots. After walking to school and back with cold feet because my boots let in snow through the bottom, new Peace River runners were a bit of heaven. But now that this body is beginning to wear down I am starting to look forward to the adoption, the redemption of the body.

The third and last thing we are predestined to is to ever exist to the praise of God's glory (Eph. 1:11-12). Now I'll tell you something that shows how darkened the mind of the unbeliever is and how much we need the eyes of our own understanding opened. I hear from time to time of those who think how boring

eternity will be. Just existing to the praise of God's glory. And then I cannot help but think of these words. You see, Paul prays that the eyes of the Ephesian believer's understanding might be enlightened that they might know what is the hope of His calling.

I ask you this morning: Do you have any idea what the other side is like? I can tell you how great or how little your understanding of the other side is. If you are looking with great anticipation to going to be with the Lord, your understanding is likely growing. If you think of the other side and there are only questions in your mind and you have no great longing, then you have not yet had the eyes of your understanding opened with regard to the hope of God's calling.

CONCL: So in conclusion, Paul prays that God would grant to the Ephesian believers the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. He prays that the eyes of their understanding might have light shed on them that they might know the hope of God's call to salvation. Our salvation assures us of power to overcome sin and become like Jesus Christ. That is a wonderful hope. Then we have the hope of the redemption of this physical body. That hope grows sweeter with age and with each sickness we experience. And then last but not least, the hope of God's calling is that someday we will ever be in God's presence to exist to the praise of His glory.