

Ephesians #2

Praying While We Sit (1:15-23, 3:14-21)

I. Introduction

Paul has not seen the Ephesians face to face for about 8-10 years. But he heard about their “faith and love.” Notice the backdrop for his prayers: he has heard how well they are doing. (Most of us only pray when we or others are in trouble.)

Notice too that he is addressing the “you all’s,” not an individual set off by themselves. But he is “making mention of them,” recalling their names and specific needs.

After having laid the ground work by outlining all our spiritual blessings and encouraging us to “sit” (spiritually reside/take up residence/mature in/take time to meditate on), he now remarks about his prayer life.

“I keep asking”-perseverance in prayer

See I Thess. 5:17 :“Pray without ceasing” This does not mean to pray nonstop, rather it means to be constantly recurring in your prayer. We should be punctuating our lives with intervals of recurring prayer.

See also Luke 11:5-28 and 18:1-8: calls for patient persistence

II. What Paul Prayed for in Chapter One

- A. Vs. 17- He prays that God would give them a Spirit of wisdom and revelation so they could know Him better.

“Wisdom”: “knowledge that has sifted down into the heart and affects daily life.”

“Revelation”: it carries the idea “of taking the lid off” and exposing something to an open view.

“May know Him better:”

- a. Know Him personally-our salvation (see John 17:3)
- b. Know him increasingly -our sanctification (see Phil. 3:10)
- c. Know Him perfectly-our glorification (see I Cor. 13:9-12)

- B. Vs. 18-19- He prays that their heart would be enlightened so they would know what they have in Christ:

1.The Hope: The hope of being changed into His likeness

Life is a “training period” (consider the dot and line) and it is “working towards an end”

2. The Riches: The deposit of resources that God has given us as an inheritance in Him. It is a depository of resources from which we can draw strength, comfort, encouragement and receive correction and rebuke.

3. The Power:

Vs. 19: dynamis (miraculous strength), energia (operating power), kratos (strength), and ischy (strength and might).

Vs. 21: This power is far above every "rule," "authority," "power" and name.

"The resurrection of Jesus is the model of the power we possess." That power is manifested as we begin to exercise the gifts the Father has given us.

III. What Paul prays for in chapter three (3:14-21)

A. Vs. 3:16 He prays that they would be strengthened with power so that Christ can dwell in their inner being. He wants them to be able to face their inner conflicts.

B. Vs. 17 He prays that they would be strengthened with power so that they may be rooted in love. He wants them to draw from the sweetness of relationship with Christ.

Consider the dimensions of love: how wide, how long, how high and how deep
See Romans 8:35-39

C. Vs 19 He prays that they would know that love surpasses knowledge. He wants them to be filled up to the measure of all the fullness of God. He longs for them to be filled up, mature, lacking nothing spiritually.

IV. So What?

The act of recognizing and appropriating the incredible blessings we have in Christ allows us to SIT (rest in, be absorbed by) and pray.

A. Learn to pray scripture back to the Lord. Notice the prayer examples in Eph. 1:17-19, 3:16-19; Col. 1:9-12; I Thess. 5:23-24; II Thess. 1:11-12.

B. The Town Church (online) had a good one derived out of Eph. 3:

Approach God
Ask God
Adore God

C. Some practical thoughts

-Don't just sit there...get started with your prayer life (or renew and enhance it!)

-Establish a time and be consistent. Make an appointment with the Lord, and keep it. Give Him the best part of your day.

-Set a reasonable goal. Start small, maybe just 5 minutes and over time, watch the time fly.

-Establish some kind of accountability. Let someone know what you are starting (or renewing) a prayer life. Give them permission to ask you about your progress.

-Develop an attitude of perseverance. Don't be discouraged if you miss a few days. Start again.

-Consider some new things in prayer:

1. Writing out your prayers in a journal
2. Writing letters to God
3. Making detailed lists of prayer needs
4. Use tools like the ECHO app on your phone

Let's kneel before the Father.....