

"A MAN PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH"

Eph. 1:17-23

Spiritual Blessings 1-16

INTRODUCTION:

If you were called upon to pray for the church -- what would come to mind.

Note - Your prayer is to be printed in the Bible!

Most meaningful prayers in all literature.

For spiritual insight into the mystery of God's purpose in the church - petition. He will give his Saints the capacity to make Him glorious in History. "That God would give you." V. 17.

Several marks of the church surface in the prayer -- wisdom - knowledge - hope - power - conquest.

True marks --

False marks are everywhere -- F. W. Boreham describes the Chapel of Hate. It stood in Brittany 100 years ago. It was in ruins; the walls were black and stained with the slime of centuries; around the crumbling altar were rank weeds breasthigh; rain, black mists brooded day and night over the gloomy scene. Over the door way of the Chapel, was its name. It was dedicated to our Lady of Hate.

"Hither; in hours of passion and pain came men and women to cry curses on their enemies. The maiden on her false lover, the lover on his false mistress, the husband on his false wife. Praying one and all, that our Lady of Hate might harken, and that the hated one might die within the year.")

With our Christian light, is the Chapel of Hate a concept with us?

I. SPIRIT OF WISDOM - V. 17-18A.

A teaching spirit - helps us open the mysteries of God. A spirit of revelation.

"Eyes of your soul may be enlightened."

Greek Word "Intelligent" means illuminated -- filled with light. (Eyes of the soul - found no where else in the Bible.)

Seeing with the eyes of the soul - intuitive insight - high Heavenly gift.

(Painter) - paints what he feels in his soul - sunset.

(Architect) - Cathedral, sees it first with soul.

(Engineer) - Panama Canal, see first with eyes of soul.

Paul prays eyes of understanding be enlightened -- eyes of the soul be filled with light.

I Cor. 2:14 - "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Can not know - Assignment of the Holy Spirit is to open eyes - to view things - he fits together all - building fitly.

Temple under Solomon, Hiram fitted every piece and when the building was put together there was not the sound of a hammer or the ringing of an axe. Spirit takes the things of God and puts them together.

Tragedy -- many eyes are closed.

Matt. 13:13-16 - "Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

Gift of the Spirit - A man can see, yet he never sees! Hear and yet deaf.
Must be illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

He suddenly sees -- hears. He has found the Glory of God in Jesus. Psa. 119:18.

He opens the eyes -- He gives the Spirit of Sophia, Greek word - gift of wisdom.

Deep things of God. Led deeper and deeper into the eternal truths.

Not logic -- a thing can not move from where it is because if it does, it is not there. Second, a thing cannot move from where it is not; that is obvious. Third, where it is, and where it is not are the only possible places that there are. Therefore, a thing cannot move.

You can think about that forever -- that is logic.

What God does is give us another faculty -- eyes of the soul -- makes a man go on and on.

Heb. 11 - By faith we understand -- one does not understand any other way.

Wisdom and revelation - unveiling, uncovering, everything of God is a mystery.

You cannot explain anything about God. You just see and observe.

A man wrote a book in field of science. He said I was an unbeliever, did not believe in immortality, the resurrection. I began writing a book, my father died.

My mother died and I cannot explain it or defend it, I cannot believe my mother and father have ceased to be and altogether gone. Today I believe in immortality and resurrection. This is the work of the spirit -- we can see unveiled Christ. Spirit of Sophia -- wisdom.

Fuller knowledge of God. Reason why we keep on studying.

II. SURE HOPE - V. 18

That ye may know -- to know experientially -- not second hand.

The hope of his calling.

This is age of despair -- men feel they are living in a world where the game is up. H. G. Wells wrote "Man, began in a cave behind a windbreak, will end in the disease ruins of a slum."

Hope has experience -- "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good." Ps. 34:8.

An engineer on verge of nervous collapse. Met and married glorious Christian girl. She brought him to the Lord. She laid him at the feet of Jesus. He said, I was dreading long sessions with a Doctor but I found the Lord, my mind is healed, I am sharper today, doing more work than I ever have."

Ex. 15:26 - "For I am the Lord that healeth Thee."

Coming to Jesus men find hope.

No man can look at something beside him with one eye - and at something half a

mile away with the other eye. He will be blind to that in the far off -- the Spirit gives light "that ye may know the hope of his calling".

Another thing "hope of his calling" refers to God's hope in calling us. We are called as a part of God's great enterprise in humanity.

What we need to do is find our place in helping fulfill this hope.

18B - "Riches of the glory of his". We learn that Christ's inheritance is "His People" the church! This is His inheritance.

Dr. A. B. Simpson tells of a young woman who gave a testimony before her death. Her last New Year's Eve of life on this earth she was disturbed about not being useful enough. Her life had been busy and full of service. After agonizing prayer she said she told the Lord she would work in a mission school, but that did not settle her troubled heart. Waiting before the Lord, He seemed to say to her "my child, I do not want you to do more work for me; I want you to love me more." The last months of her life were enriched. We ought to make this His inheritance beautiful.

III. STUPENDOUS POWER - V, 19-21

V. 19 - "Exceeding - above greatness - the divine energy of God is the only power of producing this outcome. It is a super-abundant greatness. God's power in our believing.

To illustrate - V. 20. "On the scale of the active energy of the gripping strength of His might which he put forth in Christ raising Him from the dead. (Carver).

Paul prays for a new realization of the power of God. Supreme proof of the power of God was the resurrection.

Sin had done everything in its power to destroy Christ. Resurrection is proof God's power is stronger than man's sin.

No excuse for us living a defeated life. It was December 7, 1941, 7:55 A. M. Pearl Harbor. Mitsuo Fuchida Squadron Commander fingered the Buddhist prayer beads hung on instrument panel with the other pressed the throttle of his Japanese War Plane.

182 planes followed - he was first on target, bombs fell on battleship - flames.

Ship yard power plant Engineer R. E. Peterson saw the explosion and pulled the lever, 1st alarm to sleeping base.

Sunday, January 5, 1958, these two men met.

Fuchida after the war found Christ as Saviour.

Peterson has become a Baptist and helped organize the Waianae Church at Oahu Hawaii. Fuchida was guest speaker in the church Peterson had helped start.

Remember God is still in control with power to rescue me from spiritual death.

It takes resurrection power to do this.

IV. SUFFICIENT CHURCH - V. 22-23.

V. 21 - The conquest of Christ in making the church sufficient. Men believed in demons, Paul says "Far above all principality". There is not a being in earth or heaven superior to Jesus.

V. 22-23 - He calls the church by its greatest title -- "The Body of Christ".

We usually think of a building. N. T. Ecclesia "called out people of God." (For 300 years.)

Constantine was converted the word was changed to Kyriakos -- massive temple and referred to building not people.

(Book of Genesis - Begins "In the beginning God". Closes, ends "in a coffin in Egypt."

Put all things under his feet.

God is filling Christ and Christ is filling the church. All that Christ receives goes into the church.

The church as we see them fall short of Christ.

Jewish lady Maria Sone's saved. Lunch one day General Israeli Army victory six-day War. He asked what she was doing. "I'm preparing to go to Bethlehem, rejoice in Christ's birth, King of Jews and nations." She spoke with joy. He said

"my dear, you do not know how much I envy you."

V. 18) Eyes of soul - enlightened.

Christ is the head.

Old legend tells how Jesus went back to Heaven. He bore the marks of the cross.

Angels said, "Master you suffered much down there." Gabriel said "Do they all know about how you loved them and what you did for them?"

"Not yet, only a few in Palestine know."

Gabriel, "What have you done to let everyone know about it?"

Jesus, "I asked Peter, James, John and few others to make it their business to tell others about me, and the others to tell still others, and yet others until the news reaches the widest circle.

Gabriel, "You know what poor stuff men are made of."

Yes.

But what if Peter, James, John grow tired - what if the people who come after them forget?

Haven't you made some other plans?

Jesus' answer, "I haven't made any other plans. I'm counting on them."

The church is the Body and Jesus is counting on us!