

## A Powerful Prayer

Ephesians 1:16- 2:7

4/ 23/ 06

### Intro

We are now studying through the book that Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus. Here in these verses, Paul writes that he is praying for them often. Then he tells them exactly what he is praying for.

But the prayer is also for us. These same things God would desire in our lives as well. Let's study these verses and ask God to show us how this prayer applies to each of us.

Frankly, it's a powerful prayer that applies to Christians living in the new millennium because we are just the same in our hearts as they were in Ephesus.

Here's the problem, most people are running, and striving, and working and sweating, but what are they running for? They're climbing and clamoring after the stuff that comes with striving. They're striving as if their blessings were in front of them, but what they don't understand is that their blessings are behind them.

We have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus.

### **These are insights into what God desires to see in our lives because of what He has done for us.**

#### **I. Open the Eyes of Your Heart**

##### A. Desire wisdom and revelation

- Paul prays that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

- In other words, we need wisdom in this day and age to know how to live.
- May we desire the revelation and insights of spiritual things. Too many people have set all their desires on earthly things and they are missing out on the blessings of belonging to Christ.

**Illus – Look with your heart. If we see things as they are outwardly, we will miss the things that God sees.**

**I Peter 1:6-8, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

- The proving of our faith is to bring about the praise and glory of God – **the “Wow” effect.**
- B. Be careful what you fix your eyes on
- If you see with your eyes only, you will fix your eyes on the stuff of the world.
  - The problem is that the stuff of the world doesn't really satisfy. Paul prays that they would have eyes of understanding and could see that.

**Illus – If a child wanted something really special for Christmas and said, “If I had just that one gift, I wouldn't want anything else.” Would it be true?**

**Illus – The “If I just had that one thing and then I would be satisfied” mentality just isn't so. My first car was**

**something I wanted so bad... it was a yellow station wagon, with dents on every corner.**

**The problem is that there is always someone with a better car or a bigger boat.**

**Illus – When contractors were building the Panama canal, they hired local workers, but they all quit when they received their first paycheck – it was more money than they had ever received. The solution? Sears and Roebuck catalogues were sent to each home...**

**Luke 12:15, Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”**

**Hebrews 12:1-2, Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith,**

**C. Desire the riches of Christ**

- Paul is praying that they would know the riches of Christ, really know this; be convinced of it.
- Because not only does worldly stuff captivate, it will capture you as well.

**I Timothy 6:5-6, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.**

- Being captivated by Christ takes away covetousness and you will find yourself content with what you have.

**Illus – The year that we couldn’t afford Valentine’s Day cards, we went into the store, picked out the ones we would have given, presented them, put them back, and walked out arm and arm.**

- It’s really a question of what is in your heart; that is what determines who you are.

**Illus – If you take away position and possessions, who are you?**

**Matthew 10:39, He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.**

- It’s more blessed to give than to receive is true. Caring for the needs of others will be more of a blessed way to live than selfishly.

**Illus – Selfish living is not satisfying. Our cat, Angel, was the perfect example of selfishness. What a lonely way to live.**

**II. Seek Godly Change**

- Someone might say, “I can’t see any change.”
- That’s what Paul is praying that the eyes of our heart are opened.
- We need to see this...

A. We were dead

- This is something we must see because it will direct our heart to stay toward God.

**Revelation 3:1, To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”**

- We were dead. The course of this world is death, and God is the one doing something about it.

**Illus – After God brought Israel into the desert, they started to grumble that there weren’t enough graves in Egypt, perhaps that was why God brought them out there. Never mind that their shoes never wore out and they never lacked for food.**

**They were dead in Egypt, God was giving them life.**

B. But God made you alive

- Paul writes that we have been made alive with Christ. He was the victor over death and that victory is ours because we are in Christ.
- We need to open the eyes of our heart and see what God is doing.

**John 6:63, It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.**

- One of the best pictures of this is found in the parable of the prodigal son. He spent all he had

on worldly living and realized that he was dead, but he knew where home was.

**Luke 15:22-24, But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.” And they began to celebrate.**

C. God is rich in mercy

- Paul says, this is because of the great love God has for us. He is rich in mercy.
- How rich in mercy is God?
- He seated us with Christ “in the heavenly places.”
- And is for us – with all the greatness of His power – He is for us.

**Vs 1:19-23 – How great is His power toward us.**

Conclusion

**Paul’s prayer is relevant to each of us. May we open the eyes of our heart, may we see with eyes of understanding what God has done and is doing in our lives.**