

What the Lord Wants for Us

Ephesians 1:15-20

1/02/05

Intro

Last week we were learning about what God desires to see *in us* in the New Year.

Today, I would like to discover together the things that the Lord wants *for us*. In other words, there are the things that the Lord wants to do in us this next year.

We find these things in a prayer that Paul wrote for the church in Ephesus. This was a church that Paul had started some years before he wrote this letter. The church had grown and Paul was thankful to hear about them, but here he wrote in the form of a prayer, the things that God would desire to do in them.

This is a good prayer for us as well as we look forward to what God wants to do for us this next year.

These, then, are the things that the Lord wants to do for us in this next year.

I. An Increasing Knowledge of God

A. In a spirit of wisdom

- God wants to give us a spirit of wisdom.
- The Lord Jesus is the example in this.

Illus – Isaiah gave a great prophecy about the Lord Jesus that shows us that wisdom is the counsel of God and the insight of truth.

Isaiah 11:2-3, “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear;”

- In other words, He will not judge by what he sees on the surface, but will look with insight to see into the heart.

B. And a spirit of revelation

- Revelation is the revealing of things that were once hidden.
- God wants to give us a spirit of revelation in that we need to increase in our capacity to receive from God’s Word.
- God does not desire to keep wisdom from us, but we so often lack the capacity to understand the depth of God’s Word.

I Corinthians 2:6-13 The revealing of God’s mysteries

- God has revealed the Old Testament through the His Words in the New.
- He also reveals to us *the knowledge of Him* through the experience of life.

Illus - Reading from “The Building of Character” by J.R. Miller, 1894.

II. To Enlighten the Eyes of Your Heart

A. Truth first comes to the mind

- There is a conversion that must take place in the mind.
- It is in the mind that much earthly trouble arises.

Ephesians 4:17-18, “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;”

- There is a hardness of heart in unbelievers and so the mind is in darkness.
- So the mind must be renewed...

Illus – Helping Misha change the way he thinks.

Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

B. To open your eyes is let in light

- That’s what the word “enlighten” means.

Illus – to close your eyes, is to shut out all light, and thus be blind; but to open your eyes, is to let in the light – the truth.

- To know something with your heart is very different than just knowing something with your mind.

Illus – When I was in college, I used to study for tests by using flash cards. The knowledge didn’t stay in my heart.

Illus – I learned Russian with my mind and then with my heart. I speak my deepest thoughts to the boys in Russian.

***** You know something with your heart when it becomes part of who you are...**

II Timothy 1:12, “Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

Romans 8:38-39, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- When you became a Christian, you not only believed with your mind, you believed with your heart.

C. So that you may know...

- **The hope** ... of your calling.
 - To believe with your heart is to have hope.
- And to know the **riches of glory...**

Ephesians 2:6-7, “and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

III. To Know the Surpassing Greatness of His Power

A. Our problem is that we like power

- The thirst for power is one of the great sins.

Illus – Power will help you get a wife in Africa... if you’re able to kill a lion.

1 John 2:16-17, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

B. His power is toward us

- In other words, His power is **for us**.
- One of my favorite scriptures...

II Chronicles 16:9, “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth in order to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is completely His.”

- **God wants us to know this; to be convinced of this, and to completely trust in this truth.**

C. According to the strength of His might

- He then makes a great point in showing us the strength of His might.
- Christ is above all things; all things are in subjection to Him.

Verses 20-23 the strength of His might.

Conclusion

God wants to bring to us an increasing knowledge of Him; opening the eyes of our heart and convincing us that God’s power is for us.