

6.16.19 ~ Ephesians 1:15-23, God's Blessings in Christ...

Read Ephesians 1:15-16... "For this reason," relates back to **verses 3-14**, i.e., to the many blessings we as Christians have been given in and through Christ.

Paul praises the believers for their expression of Christian love toward one another for this reflects Christ in them (cf. **John 13:34-35**; see **1John 4:7-11**).

Read Ephesians 1:17... Paul prays for us to know God better, by God's indwelling Spirit, as we spend time with God and His Word, growing more intimate with Him and more knowledgeable of all that He has given us in Christ.

Paul isn't praying for Christians to have more of Jesus or God's resources, he is praying for us to understand, appropriate, and apply what we already have, revealed in God's Word, made effectual by God's Spirit in us.

William Randolph Hearst (Hearst's Castle) loved art, and so he purchased many masterpieces for himself. The story is told that he once read about a certain expensive piece of art and decided to have it, so he hired an agent to act on his behalf and search the galleries of the world to find and purchase this piece of art.

After several months of searching, the agent returned to inform WRH that he already owned this piece of art; evidently, WRH had previously purchased the artwork, stowed in one of his many warehouses, forgotten all about it, and then initiated a search to find and purchase something he already had.

Christians have all they need in and through Christ. We don't need more of Jesus or more of God. You can't get more of God, every believer in Christ is fully and eternally equipped at the very moment of salvation, that we might serve God honorably and victoriously.

Ephesians 2:10, "For we are His [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body and one Spirit... one Hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all, through all and in all."

1Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

2Peter 1:2-3, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His [God the Father's] divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him [God the Son] who called us by His own glory and excellence."

When a person repents of their sin, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, and believing in Him as Savior, that person is granted all they need for this life and eternity.

Mr. Hearst's agent reminded him of what he already had; just as the Holy Spirit enlightens and reminds us concerning what we already have; although, we may have either forgotten, or may have failed to apply God's divine provisions.

John 14:26, "But the Helper [Counselor], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

Read Ephesians 1:18... The Holy Spirit is able to speak to our heart, not the fleshy organ in our chest that pumps blood through our body, but our spirit.

In the Greek/Hebrew culture, the "heart," really "heart/soul," was considered to be the center of self; whereas, both psychology (lit., study of the mind), and psychiatry (lit., healing of the mind) use the terms EGO and ID, for Self); Scripture says psyche is much more than cognitive brain function and memories, the "heart/soul" is our spiritual person (cf **2Corinthians 5:17**).

The "heart" is the place of deep understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, it is the seat of our mind and will, our true spiritual self, capable of understanding what the brain cannot comprehend.

Have you ever known in your heart something was the right thing to do, but your brain, sound logic, and perhaps members of your family, told you not to do it?

Psalms 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer."

Who are we trying to please, God, or others?

Proverbs 15:14, "The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on folly."

Proverbs 15:28, "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things."

Proverbs 16:23, "The heart of the wise instructs his mouth, and adds persuasiveness to his lips."

Romans 10:9-10, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

(Ephesians 1:15-23, God's Blessings in Christ... continued)

Paul is praying for the believers to be able to understand in their hearts (in their deepest self), what they have been given, and who they are, in Christ.

Romans 8:29, "For those whom He [God the Father] foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son [Jesus Christ]."

2Corinthians 13:5, "Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"

1John 2:4-6, "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him' [God's Son], and doesn't keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God [the Father] has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He [Jesus] walked."

1John 5:10, "The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself" (concerning God's Son).

God's master plan allows Christians to display the very power and presence of God in their lives, as they feed on the Word of God, following Christ's example.

Paul prays for a divine awareness of just how great this power is that believers possess through Christ.

Read Ephesians 1:19-21... The greatest example of this power, was displayed when Christ rose from the grave, proclaiming victory over sin, death and judgment; this same power is now being revealed in the lives of those who believe, follow and obey Him who has all authority, power and dominion (see **Philippians 2:8-11; Revelation 1:8, 17-18; 5:11-13**).

Read Ephesians 1:22-23... Jesus is the Head of the Church [His Body], of which all Christians are members; this is the fullest expression of God's mystery, Christ is eternally joined to all who trust in Him for salvation!

All that we have as believers is according to God's plan, God's power, and God's provision in Jesus Christ. Paul prays for us to fully understand and appropriate all that we have been given in Christ.

The very power that God displayed in raising Christ from the dead and seating Him above all rule and authority, is the very same power by which God has saved us, marked us as His own, and promised to bring us to be with Him in heaven forever!

This is God's plan and provision in Christ, and He will sovereignly bring it to completion; we can trust Him to do so, for He is the Faithful, Merciful, Almighty God of Creation, the Sovereign Lord, Savior and Judge over All.

But, while we are waiting to be joined with God in heaven, we have plenty to do here on earth.

In light of all that has happened in our nation this past decade, and all that is going on around the world, God's people must join together in prayer and purpose. We must shine the light of Christ in the darkness, and spread the salt of salvation across this decaying world.

God's people are fully equipped to proclaim and to live out their faith in God, while expressing their love for one another, serving as God's witnesses - for His glory, honor and praise - so that others might come to know Jesus Christ: crucified, resurrected, and coming again!

And all God's people said, Amen!

Pastor Mike
>'(((><