

] Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge [

Ephesians 1:17 - 23

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is visiting Paul in a dark, dank, damp, desperate and dire dungeon of an Italian Mamertine Carcere prison; known in antiquity as The Tullianum in the Comitium of ancient Rome; located on the northeastern slope of the Capitoline Hill facing the Curia and the imperial fora of Nerva, Vespasian, and Augustus, in this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. It was rather easy for us to forget about our formidable surroundings as we traversed the first eight reports from our study in Ephesians; because we were lifted right out of the prison house by Paul's writing and rocketed straight into the Heavenlies! But, the reality is, here we are.

To evaluate the effectiveness and value of our prayer life is to consider the things we pray for, and when we pray for them. I'm afraid too many of us are simply turning in a Christmas list of things we want, and a set of instructions for the Lord to follow as He runs our errands for us in this life. Many more focus completely on the physical needs of other people and their problems and calamities. Well, Paul didn't pray for any of those things down there in that prison; and if anyone had a right to complain to God, it was the apostle Paul at this time. So, this report may hurt a little bit as it becomes deeply personal, and we compare our prayer life and our circumstances to those of Paul at the time he made his prayer in prison during the time period that we are studying.

None of us even have an inkling of an idea of the appalling conditions Paul was facing at this time. When Paul heard of the love and faith in the church he had started in Ephesus, he was moved to prayer. For some reason, most people do not associate Paul with being a great man of prayer. Paul would be at the top of any list of great missionaries, to be sure; and there is no greater example of an apostle than Paul. We couldn't even list ten outstanding preachers in the early church of the Gospel without Paul being in the number one spot. He was also a very effective teacher, too. So, Paul would necessarily have had to have been a great man of prayer.

In Ephesus, Paul would also have been considered the best pastor they ever had, according to Luke, who said of Paul, “.... *weeping with the believers, and how they loved him.*” Any church can easily be judged by how genuinely they love their pastors – current and former. Frankly, that tells us everything we need to know about a congregation. That, combined with the love and attitude they have for the Word of God, reveals all spirituality, effectiveness for, and relationship to, the Lord Jesus Christ. Frankly, I have been in churches where everyone carried a Bible so big under their arm that they all leaned to one side; but they were literally as dead as a doe-doe bird spiritually. It’s tragic when that happens — because that isn’t a church — it’s a graveyard for the living.

When we think of anyone excelling in any field of service in the early church, Paul the apostle must be at the top of the list. However, we don’t always think of Paul that way regarding prayer. Moses, the great intercessor, was a tremendous man of prayer on Mount Sinai, to be sure. King David, who went before God in unspeakable circumstances that resulted from his awful sins, was also way out in front as a man of prayer. David made confession, and set an unparalleled example. Elijah stood alone before a rebuilt altar, drenched with water on a mountaintop, and prayed mighty prayers as four hundred fifty prophets of Baal mocked him. Daniel, in the ninth chapter of his prophecy, reveals extraordinary prayer capabilities as he defies the king of Babylon and opens his window towards Jerusalem, bowing down in prayer, in defiance. We could also mention Nehemiah and Ezra as they prayed with resounding effect. Of course, Jesus prayed, and His prayers are incomparable; so much so that the apostles asked Him to teach them how to pray.

Paul makes that honorable list, too; because, if we make a list of all the prayers Paul made in his epistles, you’ll notice that he is, once again, really second only to Jesus Himself. Take a look at how many people Paul prayed for, and it honestly staggers the mind. Well, we have two prayers of Paul in this epistle — this one, which sets before us the church as the body of Christ — and then, at the end of chapter three, we have another. Prayer just happens to be the defining mark of the child of God, friends. We can tell the closeness of any person to Christ by their prayer life. How much do

they feel the total and complete dependence upon God? When we utterly depend on God, we're going to go to Him *constantly* in prayer for ourselves and as intercession for others.

When I hear my pastor call on someone to pray, and they mumble out something like, "*.... thank You for this day and for just everything, Lord,*" – that's great – but they usually aren't really as close to the Lord as you might think they are. Make a note of that. When Ananias was disturbed by the angel in Damascus, who instructed him to go and receive Saul of Tarsus, Ananias objected saying, "*.... that man kills people and hates the church.*" The angel answered and said, "*.... behold, Saul prayeth.*" Well, in this prayer, Paul first gives thanks to God and then he prays....

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

~ Paul prayed for spiritual blessings; which is a critical prayer, friends. In fact, these things are all-important. I'm sure Paul prayed for all the churches, and I am also sure he mentioned almost everyone he knew by name. I'm also sure very few pray about their spiritual blessings today. Try praying for everyone you can think of by name and see how that works out for you. If you're going to do that, then you had better reserve several hours for your prayer time. Notice that Paul wasn't praying in a tongue, either, my small-minded glossolalia acquaintances. Why not talk to God and confess your sins in a language you can both understand? Only then can you truly pray in the Spirit. I don't think Paul prayed in a tongue because he didn't want God to get mixed-up and answered with something Paul really wasn't asking for. That's never a good misunderstanding to have if you're in prison. You'll want the Lord to know *EXACTLY* what you're asking for. Maybe you think God already knows – and He does – but just make sure that *Y-O-U* know what you're doing.

I am going to be honest with you dear readers – because I always am honest with you – I pray for each and every one of you that I can think of to recall, by name, every day. Of course, I can't pray for every single one of you every single day, because that would be impossible, and I'm not some sort of super duper saint — but it is something I do. Let's remember to pray

for each other every day. Pray for the salvation of the lost person you would like to see saved. Pray the Lord will draw other believers closer to Himself in His Word. Pray for each other's safety, peace, protection, prosperity, grace, joy, happiness, wisdom, judgment and discernment – among other things.

Now that Paul has revealed the church is the body of Christ, that God the Father planned it, the Son paid for it with His Blood, and the Holy Spirit protects the church in this present, wicked world, he recognizes these people wouldn't be able to understand all of that unless the Spirit of God was there to be their Teacher and open the Scriptures to their understanding and comprehension. In this so-called Spiritual Safari, I am *NOT* your teacher. All I do is guide you along through the Bible, and point out the significant passages. I'm not even very good at doing that, as most of you will certainly agree. Frankly, I cannot teach you anything anyways. I found out a *LONG* time ago that if you do not want to learn – and if the Holy Spirit does not enlighten you – then this Book called the Bible is *CLOSED* — and locked — to you. If the Spirit of God doesn't teach me to teach you, then we are not going to get very far, friends. So, I pray for your understanding – and that's all I can do. Join us today, friends. Christ is calling you to service.

Long before I decided I would forsake my life and go teach the entire Word of God to the entire world, the Lord placed a wonderful man of God into my life; a man whom the Spirit of God used tremendously and wonderfully while he was alive. This man was utterly Spirit-filled and Spirit-led – and he was, without question, a superb man of God; who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and loved the Word of God like I have never known any other man to do. This man had been previously used for five decades as a Bible professor, a successful pastor, and radio Bible teacher. This man opened the Scriptures to my understanding like no other man ever had; and I dare say, as no other man ever will again. I had never heard half of the things he taught. My desire remains to emulate his walk with God.

Well, the only way I understood his teaching was by spending a whole lot of time in prayer and Bible study; asking the Lord to open the Scriptures of Christ to my heart so I might know the Bible properly, correctly and

completely. I hear some people say it's not that important to know the entire Bible, and they also say we *cannot* know the entire Bible. Well, it's important to me to know the entire Bible. Maybe it isn't important to you. If it's not important to you then — may I say this kindly? — I highly suggest you not function in a church. Further, perhaps we cannot know the entire Bible, I actually agree with that, because I am amazed that the more I learn, the more I realize I don't understand very much. I am also horrified at the things I so easily seem to forget. Even so, making the attempt to understand the entire Bible is important to me. Why? Because I just happen to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I just happen to want to know Him. I consider myself a serious student of Scripture — and I take it all *VERY* seriously. The writer to the Hebrews said, “... *exhort one another while it is called today lest any of you fall into sin.*” Well, if you're going to do that, then I suggest you know what you're talking about as it pertains to topics like the Great Tribulation, the Sabbath Day, sign gifts, Mosaic Law, and so on. It's pretty important – in fact, it's *ALL*-important.

The man who taught me has produced an *interpretation* of the whole Bible and, as some of you already know, that's the only interpretation I use in this safari. It's the only interpretation and teaching that has ever satisfied my own heart. What a wonderful and glorious thing it is to have the Holy Spirit be our teacher through a person that we know we can trust with *ALL* of it. If you make a serious effort, then who knows, maybe the Spirit of God will give *YOU* the whole of understanding and the wisdom of revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ someday?

The only way that will ever take place, though, is through an educated, sincere, systematic, daily, proper, correct, and complete searching of Scriptures; and by the Holy Spirit opening His truth to you. Line upon line. Precept upon precept. If you aren't fully and completely invested then, my friend, you can forget plenary penetration or full and sincere understanding – because it's never going to happen. You are going to have to dedicate your life to Christ, or you are going your own way – period. I'm not saying you are not saved – I'm saying you will never come to a full-orbed comprehension of all things Christ has to offer sans the above – you can just write that down....

18 The eyes of your heart being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

~ You may be brilliant, intellectually, but that is in *NO WAY* a guarantee that you will understand spiritual truth. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them who love Him. You simply must *L-O-V-E* the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to grasp what I am conveying now. Only as we are willing for the Spirit of God to teach us will He open our heart to enlightenment. The Spirit of God wants to teach us all, but one of the main reasons people are not learning is because they aren't willing for the Spirit of God to teach them. They read books *ABOUT* the Bible incessantly, and listen to so-called Christian music, but they *DO NOT STUDY THE BIBLE* in any sincere form or meaningful manner. That's more than beyond tragic; particularly when those people are the pastor of a church, or in some other office of teaching. There are many organized religious groups down here today that are not listening to the Lord Jesus when He speaks. That is a paralyzed church, and it is a *tragic* church; because their members are literally lying helpless on a bed with their brains detached from the body. Christ is the head of the church, and we are the body; and when Christ says

for the little toe to wiggle, then that toe wiggles – or it isn't attached to Him.

Notice verse eighteen says, “.... *of His inheritance in the saints.*” See, actually, our inheritance isn't even in Christ, but His inheritance is in us! When the children of Israel came to the land of Canaan, the land of Canaan belonged to God. He gave Israel possession of that land. In the proper dispensation of time, Christ will take possession of this entire universe, and, through His saints, we are going to rule and reign with Him *in that day*. That's a truth you will likely have a very difficult time grasping. I know I have a difficult time with it.

We're tied into Christ; just as the children of Israel were inextricably intertwined with that land. Those who suffer with Christ are going to rule and reign with Him someday. There are many modern believers who are *not* going to rule with Christ, though — because they never suffered with Him. Some never suffered one moment for the cause of Christ in this life. They're saved; I don't doubt that – but, my friends, not everyone in Heaven will rule and reign with Christ. There's something else you can just write down. Now, I say this all in love, and may God richly bless each of you dear readers forevermore as you continue to walk with Him today ~

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