

EPHESIANS 1:15-23

REVIEW...

- **THE BACKGROUND OF EPHESUS...**
 - Ephesus was the largest and most powerful city in Asia-minor (*modern day Turkey*)...
 - Paul first visited Ephesus on his 2nd missionary journey - **Acts 18**
 - Paul then returned to Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey - stayed for 3 years...
 - While Paul was in prison in Rome - he wrote the letter to the - Ephesians...
 - Outline of the Book of Ephesians...
 - Chapters 1-3 - The doctrine of the blessings we have in Jesus Christ...
 - Chapter 4-6 - The practical duty we have in following Jesus Christ...
- **THE BLESSING OF GOD...**
 - 1st - The book was written by Paul to the Saints in Ephesus - and faithful in Jesus...
 - It was not a book of reproof - like I and II Corinthians...
 - It was a book of encouragement - meant to build up the believer in their faith!
 - 2nd - We have been blessed by - God the Father / Son / and Holy Spirit...
 - Chosen by the Father before the world was made - to be adopted as the sons of God!
 - Redeemed by the Son - the great debt of sin we all owed was paid in full!
 - Sealed by the Spirit - as a down payment / promise God would bring us to heaven!

THE 1ST PRAYER OF PAUL ... (3 THINGS)

- **THE PRAYERS OF PAUL...**
 - There are two prayers recorded by Paul in Ephesians...
 - The first prayer is a prayer for saints to understanding - enlightenment...
 - In **Ephesians 3:14-21** - Paul gives a prayer for strength - empowerment...
 - Paul opened up the book talking to the church about the Lord...
 - Now he is going to talk to the Lord about the church!
 - We often talk to people about Jesus - but we forget to talk to Jesus about the people!
 - We can try our best to convince people - show them their need for Jesus...
 - But only God can change their heart - only He can give them a hunger for Jesus...
 - So take the time to talk to God / pray - for those you tell about Jesus!
- **1ST - THE REASON FOR PAUL'S PRAYER... VS. 15-16**
 - Paul prayed because - he heard of their faith and their love for the saints...
 - Paul was not praying because they had problems - but because things were going well...
 - To often in life we only pray when things are falling apart - trial / troubles...
 - Yet the reason why we face trials - is because we get our eyes off Jesus...
 - Why wait till everything has gone wrong - pray while things are going right...
 - That way we keep our eyes on Jesus - and avoid having to go through the trials!
 - It turns out this was a needed prayer...
 - When Jesus spoke to John in Revelation about Ephesus He had this against them...

- **Revelation 2:4** - "I have this against you, that you have left your first love."
 - Ephesus was a VERY successful church - but in their success they forgot about love!
 - The danger when everything is going right - it is to forget about Jesus...
 - I think of some of these HUGE ministries today - 15,000 people on Sunday morning...
 - Their pastors write books - 'Purpose Driven Life' - telling people how to be blessed...
 - Forgetting that being blessed is not about what we do - but whom we know - Jesus!
- **2ND - THE FREQUENCY OF PAUL'S PRAYER... VS. 16**
 - Praying for others...
 - Knowing the trials / temptations – as well as opportunities – for believers in Ephesus...
 - Paul prayed for them – to stand strong/uncompromising in their faith...
 - Recall that the Ephesians had previously believed in the goddess Dianna...
 - They had abandoned their faith in false gods - and placed their faith in Jesus!
 - But Paul prayed for them so they would remain strong - not go back...
 - There are always going to be temptation to go back to our life before Jesus...
 - We slowly get tangled back up into the life and sin Jesus saved us from...
 - **II Peter 2:22** – "According to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit...'"
 - We live in a very dark world – so we pray for our brothers – that they will stand...
 - Pray they will be strong in Jesus – uncompromising in their faith towards God...
 - Pray to keep them from the temptation of going back to their old lives!
 - It was not an occasional prayer - it was CONSTANT prayer...
 - The typical view of prayer is coming to God with a list - needs / wants / ect.
 - It is treated as a ritual - part of what God expects a Christian to do...
 - As if somehow if we recite some words to God once or twice a day - it is enough...
 - Rarely do we take the time in prayer to listen - it's a one-way conversation...
 - It makes you wonder - if no one is answering - is anyone listening - **Luke 18:11**
 - Prayer should be a conversation with our Father in heaven...
 - How can we have a relationship with God - if we never get a chance to talk to Him...
 - Telling Him about our day - getting to know the God who created us...
 - Taking the time to listening to the wisdom He has for our lives!
 - When we have a good day / when we have a hard day / when things go right...
 - When we do not know what to do next – find a quiet place and pray!
 - Prayer is not something we do - it is the definition of how we live our life...
 - **I Thessalonians 5:17** - "Pray without ceasing..."
 - It was not a repeated prayer...
 - * **Matthew 6:7** - "When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do."
 - Its Ok to repeat a prayer - Jesus asked the Father 3 times to take away cross...
 - It is OK to ask for the same thing more than once - the persistent widow - **Luke 18:1-8**
 - But the idea of scripted prayers is just silly - that is a speech - not a prayer...
 - And we must be careful not to make prayer a ritual rather than a conversation...
 - Imagine if a 'friend' came up to you the same time every day and said the same thing...
 - Never any variation - never waiting around for a reply - no relationship!
 - When we simply repeat ourselves out of habit there is no conversation...

- o Paul did not pray to change God's mind...
 - God sees the end from the beginning - everything - knows what is best for our lives...
 - So it is only logical for us to desire 'God's will' for our lives...
 - **Luke 22:42** - "Nevertheless not my will, but Your will, be done."
 - Prayer is not about changing God's mind - getting Him to agree to our plans...
 - Prayer is about God changing our mind - getting us to line up with His plans - His will!
- **3RD - THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S PRAYER... vs. 17-23 (6 THINGS)**
 - o 1st - Pray for Wisdom... vs. 17
 - Paul prayed that God would grant wisdom to the church...
 - Not the wisdom of men - the ideas that come from men - but Godly wisdom...
 - **I Corinthians 2:13** - "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches..."
 - Men are quick to give us advice - their ideas about how to deal with our problems...
 - I remember praying about going on a missions trip to Russia when I was 19...
 - I asked the two Godliest men I knew for advice - my pastor and my father...
 - My pastor told me he had prayed - and the Lord told him I was not to go...
 - My father told me he had prayed - and the Lord told him I was to go!
 - People want to help - but more often than not it is just their opinion'...
 - We do not need the wisdom of men - we need the wisdom of God!
 - o 2nd - Pray for Revelation...
 - Paul prayed the Lord would reveal His will to the church...
 - Maybe we have an idea - but we are not sure if it is from God or just from us...
 - The way we find out is God reveal to us his will - so we know what He wants...
 - How does He give us a 'revelation' - notice what Paul says - by getting to know Jesus!
 - **Colossians 2:3** - "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge..."
 - The more time we spend in prayer / Word - the better we get to know Jesus
 - By knowing Jesus - His Word - we are able to discern between our ideas and Gods!
 - o 3rd - Pray for understanding / enlightenment... vs. 18
 - Paul prayed for God to open up their eyes - not physical eyes / but spiritual eyes...
 - For God to 'turn on the light' so they could 'see' where they were going...
 - So often it feels like we are walking through life blind - no idea where we are going...
 - The reason is because we are trusting in what we can see - but we cannot see far...
 - If only we could see tomorrow we might make very different decisions...
 - Making decisions by what we can see - is in truth walking around blind...
 - We know who can see tomorrow - Jesus sees it all...
 - **II Corinthians 5:7** - "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - If are willing to ask and trust Him - we will always know where to go...
 - Trusting in the Lord who sees all - that is walking by true sight!
 - o 4th - Pray to know the hope of our calling...
 - Paul prayed the church would realize the great hope God had called them too...
 - That they were not saved by their efforts - but simply by grace through faith!
 - If someone you do not know gives you a gift - you feel like you owe a debt to them...

- Yet if a close friend gives you a gift - you know see it as act of love...
- The father we are from Jesus - the more we feel the need to 'earn' our salvation...
- But as we spend time with Him in prayer - building up our friendship...
- We realize more and more what He did for us was simple a gift given out of Love!
- o 5th - Pray so we realize we are God's inheritance...
 - Paul prayed the church would realize how important they were to God...
 - Just as Christ was their inheritance - they were are also Jesus' inheritance!
 - An inheritance is the cherished possessions given to those you love when you die...
 - When Jesus died - He gave us His kingdom - **Luke 12:33**
 - When we die - we have nothing to give to the Lord - no possessions...
 - **I Timothy 6:7** - "We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."
 - But what we can give ourselves to Jesus - we are His inheritance!
 - And the Lord sees us as greater than all the 'riches' in the world...
- o 6th - Pray to receive the power of God... vs. 19-23
 - That through the power of God - nothing can stand against us - **Romans 8:31**
 - Not just any power - but exceedingly great mighty power of God...
 - o The same power that God used to raise Jesus from the grave...
 - o How 'great' is the power God has given - it brought Jesus back from the grave!
 - o We have been given victory through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ...
 - But we still need to be careful - satan is like a lion...
 - o **I Peter 5:8** - "Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour."
 - o Satan can make noise - but he is like a lion without teeth - bark worse than bite!
 - o Yet Satan is smart - he knows he cannot directly come against God's people...
 - o Instead he tries to get us to compromise our walk with the Lord...
 - o If satan can trip us with sin - can get us to walk away from the protection of God...
 - o Prayer keeps us close to God - far from sin - and safe from the attacks of satan!
 - Through the power of God - we are completed...
 - The same power that set Jesus on the right hand of the Father in heaven...
 - o So that Jesus is 'age' - and in the time to come - new heaven and new earth!
 - o Making Him the authority over everything - as well as the head of the church!
 - o And we are His body - made complete by Jesus Christ!
 - Jesus has all the power and authority - so He can finish what He started...
 - o It does not matter what other people say - they have no authority...
 - o It does not matter if satan does not like - he has no power...
 - o Only Jesus has ALL Authority and ALL Power - giving us the confidence...
 - o If Jesus tells us we are His church / body - and that He will redeem us...
 - o **Philippians 1:6** - "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."