EPHESIANS 1:15-23

Review...

- THE BACKGROUND OF EPHESUS...
 - o 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...
 - o 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...
 - o 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!
 - o 2^{nd} 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 1^{ST} prayer of Paul ... (3 things)

- The prayers of Paul...
 - o 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...
 - o 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!
- 1^{ST} The reason for Paul's prayer... vs. 15-16
 - o 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!
 - o 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

- o 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!
- o 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..."
- o 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!
- 3^{RD} 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."