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Paul's Prayer for Us
Eph 1:16
Pastor C.E. Bowden

Text: Eph. 1:16 “I...do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.”

Intro: It's one thing to read the list of “spiritual blessings” and be encouraged, but another to understand and apply these truths to our lives. This is the area most struggle in, “how do I apply this Biblical truth to my life”. For this reason Paul prays for us; we need to bring these “spiritual blessings” into functional reality. So Paul prays this powerful prayer for us.

—Paul's Prayer

—Paul writes that God “the Father of glory”, has given us gifts that enable us to activate each of the spiritual blessings; what are these gifts?

—There is first the spiritual component of understanding—**Eph. 1:17** “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

—The “spirit of wisdom” is an attribute of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah prophesied would rest upon Messiah—**Isaiah 11:1–2** “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.”

—The “Rod” and “Branch” refer directly to Jesus.

—Paul prays that we would have the same “Spirit of Wisdom” to enable us to grasp the truth of each of the “spiritual blessings”

—Paul writes—**1Cor. 1:30** “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God...”

—The starting point of this wisdom is belief in Jesus; in belief you have received the wisdom of God.

—Not only wisdom but “revelation in the knowledge of Him”; revelation is the unveiling of spiritual mysteries.

—The basis of *all revelation is Scripture*, revelation does not mean things outside of Biblical truth—*revelation is understanding of the Bible as written text*.

—*1Cor. 2:14* “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because *they are spiritually discerned*. And then *1Cor. 2:16* “*But we have the mind of Christ*.”

—Spiritual blessings can only be spiritually discerned; when you believe on Jesus *you are also given the Holy Spirit*—*Rom. 8:14–17* “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but *you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

—The second of these gifts is *understanding the spiritual blessings in the physical mind*—*Eph. 1:18* “the *eyes of your understanding* being enlightened; that you may *know what is the hope of His calling*, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” (NKJV).

—The word “*understanding*” (KJV) or “*heart*” (NIV, ESV, RSV, NASB, NLT) means the area of “*thought, intellect, the center of reasoning, thinking, and deciding*”.

—These spiritual blessings are not just theoretical, but are to be accepted in the physical realm of the mind—*you must be convinced each spiritual blessing is for YOU!*

—Paul’s prayer is that *in your mind you can see or grasp the full application of these blessings*.

—He prays “*the eyes of your heart may be enlightened*” (NIV).

—This means the hard heart of flesh is broken down and begins to melt in the supernatural Glory of God—the witness of this glory to the authenticity of the Scriptures is overwhelming.

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—Where we saw only foolishness before, we now see the all-satisfying beauty of God—God has done this — supernaturally.

—God's Spirit opens the eyes of our heart, and what was once boring, or absurd, or foolish, or mythical is now self-evidently real.

—Without the spiritual and cognitive understanding of each blessing we will experience frustration in living out the Christian life.

—Our hope is built on the promises which are ours in Christ.

—There is more power in God to *enable you to believe* than you will ever need—***Eph. 1:19–20*** “and what is *the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.*”

—Never understanding the spiritual blessings are for you is like having a 700 horsepower Ferrari, but never driving over 30 mph—there is unused potential.

—The power of God at work in you, is the very same power that “...*raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...*” (v. 20)

—Paul continues in ***Eph. 1:21*** “*far above all* principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”

—No power of this present realm can interfere with your relationship and blessing from God in Christ—again citing Paul—***Rom. 8:31–34*** “What then shall we say to these things? *If God is for us, who can be against us?* He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns?* It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

—Again from Paul—***Rom. 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.”

—*Not even the doctrines of men can separate you from all of these promises!*

—*What is our assurance of these promises?*

—*Eph. 1:22–23* “And He put all things under His feet, and *gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”

—Paul quotes and applies *Psalms 8:6* to Jesus—“You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”

—It is the thought of *Psalms 110:1* “The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

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