

Praying for Others

Written by By Bill Emmerling Pastor-Gallup Christian Church
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“...I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers...” Ephesian 1:16 (ESV)

As a church, we are reading through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, and it is amazing to read about the apostle’s awe of God and what God has done for us as a sinful, rebellious people. In verses 3-14, Paul simply marvels at the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and the spiritual blessings we have received from them. Paul then goes on to share his prayer to the Father about the Ephesians, and indirectly ourselves, modeling how we ought to pray for others.

Paul begins by giving thanks for the Ephesians, thanks for their faith in Jesus and their love of others who follow Jesus. Even as a pastor, I am humbled at Paul’s emphasis on their spiritual state. Too often, our prayers sound more like a grocery list, focused on our physical/financial needs or those of others. Paul is focused on the truly important, the eternal and spiritual.

Yet, Paul is not content with giving thanks for these things. He longs to see their understanding of what God has done grow. In the verses that follow Paul prays for the *“Spirit of wisdom and revelation”* to enlighten the eyes of our hearts. He prays that we might more clearly see three things: our hope, the Father’s inheritance, and the Father’s power.

“Hope” in the Bible is not used the same way we use the word. We might state, “I hope our

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sports team wins.” This is more of wish than true hope. In Hebrews 11:1 we find *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not see.”*

Hope in the Bible is the looking forward to something we have not seen, yet we have the assurance, the certainty, it is going to happen, because it has promised by God. Paul is praying that we might more fully understand the extent and nature of our hope in Jesus.

Paul speaks of the Father’s inheritance. This initially seems odd, as what would one give to a God who can make anything He wants. Yet, there was something He didn’t have. Before Jesus paid for our sins on the cross, we were lost sinners, condemned to suffer for eternity away from God. After the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, we are now reconciled with Jesus. We have become the Father’s inheritance. Paul seeks for us to understand the wonder of this more and more.

Lastly, Paul prays that the eyes of our heart might come to comprehend the power the Father uses to work in us. The power God gives us is not simply a force, but it is the life-giving force of HIS SPIRIT to live in an evil world, not to escape the difficulties we encounter. The Father demonstrates this power by resurrecting Jesus from the dead, and by exalting Jesus above ALL other authorities and rules.

Let us pray for others, as Paul prayed for us.

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