

## The Longest Sentence Part 2

After going through part one of this great subject, I realized that Paul continues this thought and gives more valuable information regarding the hope. Such lofty themes in the first part of this chapter deserve to have the following nine verses to round out the thought. Some interesting facets of God's power and wisdom are revealed in this chapter. The remainder of the chapter is profound and rich with promise and privilege for us. In chapter one of Ephesians, God reveals Himself, His intentions, His will and pleasure. We are the recipients of the greatest blessing ever! Take your time and drink deeply, for these verses are all about what God has done in us.

**<sup>15</sup>For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,**

The words "*For this reason*" could refer to the entire discourse in the previous verses. Because of what the Father has done, and because of their response, Paul is thankful. Paul was pleased to hear that there was a positive response to the message of the Gospel which opens the door to this understanding of all that the Father has bestowed on the Church. Two things of note there to be thankful for: 1. Their faith in Jesus. Paul is assured that they have believed in Christ and have salvation. If they are saved then they are sealed with the Spirit and guaranteed this unique destiny as Sons and heirs. 2. Their love for all the saints. This lets Paul know that they have been growing up in their spiritual lives. I believe Paul would be excited to see a growing believer, who is alert to God and interested in spiritual things.

<sup>28</sup>We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. <sup>29</sup>To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Col 1:28)

Paul's motivation was to get everyone to the place of maturity in Christ. To this end, he labored to the point of exhaustion. The greatest desire of a Pastor-Teacher is to see an eager student. Their love for the saints demonstrates that these believers have grown up some in their salvation. Their concern and care for others shows they know the importance of loving the other saints. For some reason, this one thing has grown cold among believers today. Believers in this day were a more close-knit group and they needed each other. Especially, when

there was so much persecution and danger from the world. Believers knew then that they could not find a friend anywhere else, except another believer in Christ. Love was demonstrated in care and concern for others suffering for Christ.

Today many believers have become more self sufficient. The attitude is they don't need anyone else. They go to church, but have their own lives outside of church in the world. They depend on the world more than they do the church. The church has grown tremendously and believers do not feel connected. We are not depending on each other as they had to do in the early church. I can understand why this happens to some degree, but we should know that this world is not our friend. You may think that you have a footing in this world, and that you can depend on it to some degree. However, this is wrong thinking. The ruler of this world hates believers just about as much as he hates God. If you want to know what the world is like and can do, just look at Christ. Here was the only perfect person. He was the only true and honest person; the only one who truly had no other agenda than to do good and honor the Father. The world hated our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The world was not neutral about Christ, it actively hated Him. This world has not changed,

<sup>18</sup>"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup>If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. <sup>21</sup>They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. (John 15:18-21)

To the extent that you are like the world, the world will welcome you. The more you grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the more the world will hate you. You cannot trust this world. You may not know it, but the world is against you and all that you stand for. As you grow up, you will begin to see this truth and separate yourself from this evil, godless system. Believers should be a breath of fresh air in the midst of this polluted world. They will be a source of friendship and fellowship as you struggle with the tribulations in the world. When the world lets you down, believers will be there to comfort you and lift your spirits. We must learn to value fellow believers who are going through the same pilgrimage. I'm not sure why this is true, but we do not appreciate those closest to us. We take them for granted and do not often

demonstrate our love for them. Strangers get more love and respect from us than our so called loved ones. These believers learned to value the other saints, and demonstrated their love for them.

**<sup>16</sup>I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.**

Paul is clearly impressed with these believers. Not only are they believers in Christ but they are progressing in their spiritual lives. The apostle prays for them earnestly. Every time they come to his mind, he lifts them in prayer to the Father. This is a prayer of thanksgiving and deep appreciation to the Father. Why is Paul continually thanking the Father with regard to these believers? It is because he knows that these believers are on their way to spiritual maturity. These believers are Sons and are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Paul is thanking the Father for these believers, who are a part of the body of Christ, His bride.

Paul has been focused on the Father from the beginning of this discourse, giving thanks and praise to Him. Now his vision is turned to fellow believers who are recipients of all that he spoke about in the previous verses. Paul remembers them in his prayers, just as we should remember those around us. It takes humility for us to look away from ourselves, our needs and wants, and focus on thankfulness to the Father and the welfare of fellow believers. We should see this verse as a lesson for us to take our eyes off of ourselves and to behold the Father and other believers.

Paul's prayers have another purpose. These believers are saved, that is for sure, but they do not know everything there is to their salvation. There is something more, far more to know about what God has done.

The apostle is going to reveal his desires in his prayer to the Father. By Paul writing this prayer, it serves two purposes. One purpose is to genuinely take the desires of his heart to the Father. The Father may be invisible to our physical eye, but He is alive in our spirit. If the reality of God is not in view for you, most likely your prayer life will suffer. You may have a very sketchy prayer life, praying only when you are in trouble or others ask you to pray. Some clearly do not pray at all because they do not have the reality of God in their hearts.

Paul's prayer of thanksgiving shows that he is in touch with God the Father. It shows that he appreciates the Father in such a way as to continually thank Him for His eternal goodness. God is good. I know many have heard this expression

which has even become common. It is true; He is good and the closer you get to Him the more you will be smitten by His love. God has infinite power. With all that power, He could be manipulative, maniacal, arrogant and arbitrary. But He is a *good* God, filled with righteousness, truth, mercy and love.

**<sup>17</sup>I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father,**

Paul continually is seeking God the Father in prayer for these believers. What Paul is seeking is something beyond salvation. I know that most cannot see past salvation. Whenever they look at a passage, they apply it to salvation. Here, Paul is clearly looking beyond salvation to something even more important. Well, certainly we must confess that unless a person is saved, they cannot experience anything beyond. Salvation is not a goal to be achieved. Salvation is a free gift and anyone who believes in Christ can have it. These believers do have salvation, but Paul is continually praying for them to receive something more. We will develop this in detail. However, we want to note that many Christians never realize there is anything more to these passages other than salvation. Hopefully after a closer examination we can see that there is more, and much more! Now that we paused to develop some expectation, we should see what Paul is continually asking the Father on behalf of these believers.

**may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.**

Paul prays that the Father may give them something they do not have, the *"Spirit of wisdom and revelation."* We can look at the words wisdom and revelation and understand that this is something we need to see, or perceive that we may not now see. We know that it is God the Holy Spirit who reveals things to us as believers. It is the Spirit who will guide us into all truth. There is information about us or God of which we may not be aware. I see this verse and its use of *"Spirit"* as not the Holy Spirit, but more so a lifestyle of allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal wisdom and revelation. The spirit of wisdom and revelation is where the believer begins to see their true purpose in life. This sight cannot be seen with the human eye or the human mind. This is revealed by God the Spirit. The information is available for us who desire it. The Spirit's job is to lead us into all truth. He can only do this if we desire to be led.

An analogy here may help us understand. When a child is born, there is much rejoicing and celebration. There are no expectations of this child at the moment,

even though the parents may have planned much for the child. Right now, the joy that the child is born into the world is the thought of the parents. Later, there are expectations placed on this child. The parents expect the child to grow, physically and mentally. There is much for the child to learn and if the child does not fulfill their expectations, the parents begin to focus on why. They may have read books that speak of the child's maturation, and may even take the child to a doctor to insure they are developing naturally. The parents have so much to show this child and they cannot wait to begin to impart their knowledge and wisdom in order that the child will not repeat the same mistakes they made. At some point, the parents are looking for that child to grow up and take their place in the world. Much of this depends on the child. Teenagers are especially challenging in this area. They have so much to learn, and they think they already know it all. Now that they have grown up some, the parents are ready to impart their wisdom. The teenager is thinking that they already know more than their parents. So, there is a struggle.

This is how it is in the Christian life. These believers Paul knew were saved and had grown some in the spiritual life. They have progressed well up to this point. They were to be commended and Paul was aware of their growth, "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love..." (Eph 3:17b). He knew that they were rooted and established in love. But, they needed to move on in their spiritual life. There was so much more God planned for these believers.

#### *Wisdom and Revelation*

Wisdom is not just knowledge; it is an accurate application of that knowledge to life. Revelation is knowledge revealed to us by the Spirit. Our lifestyle is just this, wisdom and revelation. As we grow up in Christ, we can begin to develop a lifestyle of learning doctrine and walking in the truth we have learned. As we do this, God will give us more light. Revelation from God is the carrot in front of us. God is revealing Himself to us more and more. For some of us, we have caught on to this principle and have come to love revelation. God just continues to blow our minds with just WHO He is. The more He reveals to us, the more we desire Him. After awhile, nothing in life can compete with Him. We can become consumed with Him, always seeking, always allowing Him to show more and more of Himself. The more we learn, the more we realize that we cannot depend on our own understanding. Everything we thought we knew, we have to throw out and simply allow Him to reveal Himself.

#### *God's Desire*

We need to get the correct understanding here. Paul is not praying to God to ask Him to reveal Himself as if God were not readily willing to show Himself. God is ready and willing to reveal Himself, the problem is with us. We are not ready to receive God's revelation. Even though we may be saved, we may still not have the correct attitude. An extreme example is the Corinthians.

<sup>1</sup>Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup>You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? 1Cor 3:1-3

These believers needed the spirit of wisdom and revelation. God will provide everything necessary for us to *know* Him. He will not reveal Himself to just anyone, especially those who are willfully ignorant. These Corinthians were not infants because they were new believers; they were in this state because they did not have the spirit of wisdom and revelation. They have been saved for a while, but still had not caught on to their inheritance. Even though they were saved and had a wealthy inheritance, greater than God has ever given any creature, they were content with behaving like unbelievers.

<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders <sup>10</sup>nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1Cor 6:9-11

This spirit of wisdom and revelation is something we learn as we get to a point in our spiritual life. That point is where we finally understand why we are in this world. It is when we begin to see our destiny. We begin to see that there is more to the Christian life. It was just like before you were saved. The Holy Spirit was working with you to get you to see the true issues of the Gospel. You were stirred to learning everything you could about God. Your ears were burning with the mention of God from anyone. Anything you read it was as if the words were leaping from the page into your heart. Then, when you finally went through a time of struggle within, you put the matter to rest, you trusted in Christ for your eternal salvation. You are saved.

Your interest did not stop there. It motivated you to go on and learn more about the Christian way of life. You diligently searched for more information about your new found treasure. It was like a hunger that could only be quenched by God and His word. As you continued to learn, you began to see what being a Christian is all about. You are happy to enter into a conversation with other believers. Your life changes as you pursue those things which inspire you and leave behind the things of the world which have lost their power. The more you desire to know, the more God reveals. God is giving you the sincere milk of the word (1 Pet 2:2).

### *Something happens*

After salvation, we have another hope to pursue. We are told that we should grow in grace. We are told that we should grow up in Christ, but we are not given any measurable criterion with which to judge ourselves. Christians feel that time in grade counts for spiritual maturity. "Certainly after 20 years of being a Christian, I must be mature" is the thinking. Or, some are given leadership positions in the church and because they are called Deacon or Elder so and so, then they must be mature. Even having the title of Pastor does not mean maturity is attained. This is not to say that they do not know how to perform their roles, they may perform admirably from the standpoint of what the congregation thinks a church leader should function. Many are comfortable living the Christian life and have tailored their behavior to conform to what tradition says are the demands of this life. Jesus warns:

<sup>17</sup>You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. <sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Rev 3:17, 18

It is time we see our true purpose for which God elected us from eternity past. We should not be lulled to sleep like the Laodacians, thinking we are rich, but are "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." Worse than being in this condition is their not knowing they were in this state. They needed "*salve*" for their eyes to see. And this is the whole point of Paul praying to the Father, that they might get the spirit of wisdom and revelation. The spirit of wisdom and revelation leads us to some real results. One result is that we will "*know him better.*" This knowledge is necessary for you to know all that He has done for us

in Christ. Do you live to know him better? Are you pursuing this goal? Are you taking steps in your everyday life to get you to that goal? Do you live for God to reveal himself to you? Do you have a burning desire to understand more and more of Him? Are you walking in the light you have? These are the attitudes of the one who has the spirit of wisdom and revelation. For this one, no one needs to remind them they need to study daily. They don't need to be reminded that "man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4).

**<sup>18</sup>I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened**

Here we see further evidence that Paul is praying for these believers to have something that they do not have. Eyes here refer to perception and the word is obviously used metaphorically. The heart here is also a metaphor representing who we truly are, the seat of the soul. We may put on a mask for the world, but our heart is who we really are. What we are in our hearts is the true us. No one can truly see what is in my heart unless I reveal it to them, but nothing is hidden from God.

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1Sam 16:7

<sup>27</sup>"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. <sup>28</sup>In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Mat 23:27

We are naked before God. He sees everything there is to see. Man's sin nature rules his heart. We may appear righteous in our interactions with each other, but to God, we are unrighteous. "*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*" (Jer 17:9). The believer's heart can still maintain evil, but God is working to change his heart. As we take in the word of God, our hearts are transformed. The mind refers to the thoughts of the heart. The mind may explore many thoughts, but that which is believed is maintained in the heart. As



we take in doctrine, that which is in our hearts is challenged. We must embrace the truth and discard false thinking. When we believe the truth, we accept that truth into our hearts and it changes our perception of reality. God is creating a reality in our hearts based on His thinking. Truth is reality. The sin nature dominates the thinking of all who are in Adam. When we are rescued by means of salvation, the process of giving us a reality which is according to truth begins.

Our heart is who we truly are and what we maintain there is our perception of ourselves and our world. Little did we know that when we are living according to the sin nature in Adam, the true reality was hidden from us. If we are living according to what is false, then we are in bondage to error and unreality. No matter how natural this false reality is to us, it is counterfeit, artificial and fading away. This world and the sin nature will one day be destroyed. We have escaped the world through salvation. God offers us while we are still living in these bodies where the sin nature has always had its expression, to be delivered in our hearts. Jesus says, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* (John 8:31, 32).

### **in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you**

The eyes of our hearts need enlightening to see what is called here, “the hope.” The next phrase begins to describe the hope in terms of value. However, Paul already did a great job detailing the hope for us in verses 3 through 14 of this chapter. Just to be sure, we should know by now that salvation is not the hope. It may have been the hope for an unbeliever, but if you have believed in Christ, you are saved. That hope has been realized. So, Paul prays for these believers to see, know, comprehend something beyond salvation, here and now, not when we get to the eternal state. So let’s see if we can identify this hope.

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Rom 8:24b, 25

<sup>18</sup>God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. <sup>19</sup>We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup>where Jesus, who went before us,

has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. Heb 6:18-20

<sup>1</sup>How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1John 3:1-3

These verses are offered to help us understand the bible usage of hope. Hope is a future, confident expectation. God wants us to know and have hope regarding things which He promised us, but we do not yet have. Hope is an abiding trust in the promises and provisions of God, even in the face of contradicting circumstances. God wants us to arrange our lives by the promises He gives us. Hope should guide our lives, shape our direction, give us confidence not only in God, but also in what God has made of us in Christ.

The hope here is said to be something to which *“he has called you.”* The word *“called”* takes us back to verse 4. The reason we were called is because we were chosen in Christ. This word *“called”* refers to our position in Christ, not our salvation. It refers to our position as Sons, called and adopted to a position of great inheritance and power. Please note a few ways this word is used:

<sup>1</sup>As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Eph 4:1

<sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called. Eph 4:4

<sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:14

We are called to great privilege and purpose. This hope is greater than any other hope ever bestowed on any creature. God blessed us in a marvelous way in eternity past, and then He reveals it to us in order that we may *“take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.”* (Heb 6:18b). This encouragement will help you through difficult circumstances while here in the devil’s world. It will help us through persecution, rejection and hardships which we are called upon

to share with Christ in His sufferings. This hope is our “anchor of the soul.” It is something we can trust our lives to and know that it is sure. When will this hope be fully realized?

<sup>23</sup>Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently Rom 8:23-25

This verse is intriguing. It tells us that we are awaiting the redemption of our bodies. We have already had the redemption of our souls. We have already been adopted but there is still an adoption referred to here, which is related to our bodies. Our salvation is not complete until God finishes all that He planned for us. Just as Paul says in verse 30, “*those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*” We find there is great purpose in these verses. We have been predestined, called, and justified; we still have been glorified to look forward to in the future. This is our hope, the hope to which Paul prays that we would see.

Notice in Rom 8:24, “*For in this hope we were saved.*” This one phrase is important to establish that our salvation is not an end in itself, but there stands a reason why we were saved. That reason is that God would fulfill a purpose in us. The reason God saved us is that this all important purpose referred to here as a “*hope*” would be realized. Those who do not see the hope will look at this verse and say it means our hope is the resurrection body. It is so much more than that-

<sup>18</sup>I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup>The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. Rom 8:18, 19

I like what Paul says when he identifies exactly what the mystery is all about. “*To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Col 1:27). It is Christ in us, the “*hope*” of glory which is said to be the mystery hidden from everyone, but is now revealed. If it was hidden, it cannot be salvation. Just reading Hebrews chapter eleven we see that there were those who were saved in previous ages, but they did not know the purpose for us which God kept hidden. Paul did not simply

pray that these saints would know the hope; he was motivated by God to take action.

<sup>28</sup>We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. <sup>29</sup>To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. Col 1:28, 29

Paul is allowing God to use him in proclaiming this mystery. As a minister, Paul is driven to the point of exhaustion by God to present everyone perfect, that is, mature in Christ. Paul knows that in order to see the hope, which is meat, they would need to grow up in the Christian life. We were saved for a purpose. God specifically picked us out from eternity past; He did not specifically pick everyone. Salvation is offered to all, and it is their choice in the matter. Election is by grace, and God exerts His sovereignty here, letting us know that our choice does not matter here.

Now the question is, do you know the hope to which you were called? Do you realize the extraordinary purpose God has for us? Paul goes on now to describe the hope to which we are called. As you read the next section, know that this is your destiny. This is our calling, and for this reason, we exist. You may have thought you are many things which the world applies to you, but know now that you are a Son. You were designated as a Son before the creation of the world. The quality of your Sonship is that you are married, united, permanently bound to Our Lord Jesus Christ. *“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers”* (Rom 8:29). Now let us continue as Paul unfolds the value of this calling.

### **the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,**

The hope is here said to be defined as *“riches.”* The inheritance is *“glorious.”* Can you see the wealth, the absolute value of what God has done in the saints? God has given us something of eternal value here and it goes unnoticed if we do not grasp it. Many have read right past this wealth and it does not move them at all. I have not been one to fall in line with the emotional crowd. If I express emotion, it will be on my terms, it will be according to what moves me. Just because a song leader is very emotional, it does not follow for me that I should be. But, here is where I am deeply moved emotionally. Here is something for which I can identify and my emotions are expressed toward God. Now, maybe this does not move you, and I am not saying what response you should have to these things, but, note that this is the greatest thing that has ever happened to any human

being or angel without exception! Let's not focus on the emotion, for that is in human terms how we show appreciation. Let us focus on seeing that for which we should be appreciative.

This inheritance is "*in the saints.*" That is, conferred upon the saints. Our inheritance is not something of value someone who died left for us who survive. It is related to a position to which we were chosen before the world began. Our inheritance is that we were chosen to be "*in Christ*" from eternity past. This inheritance belongs to Our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the one to which "*all things*" were given, handed over by the Father. The inheritance rightfully belongs to Christ, not us.

But, wonder of wonders, God has chosen us in Him before the creation of the universe. We were chosen before all the human beings who lived before or after us. We were chosen before sin entered into this world. We were chosen before the first man was created. We were chosen before any angel was created, including Satan. We were chosen before God created the universe by the word of His power. Now, because of this, we have such "*an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you*" (1Pet 1:4).

We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, means that we share whatever He owns. He owns all things. Note the following passages:

<sup>35</sup>The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.  
John 3:35

<sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.  
John 5:20

<sup>3</sup>Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; John 13:3

<sup>15</sup>All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. John 16:13

<sup>10</sup>All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. John 17:10

<sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—  
how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?  
Rom 8:32

<sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he  
appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the  
universe. Heb 1:2

<sup>8</sup>and put everything under his feet? In putting everything under  
him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we  
do not see everything subject to him. Heb 2:8

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the  
name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every  
knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of  
God the Father. Phil 2:9-11

Our Lord is the celebrity of the universe. No one is greater, no one has more authority, and no one is wealthier, for He owns all things. The riches He has and everything else, we as those chosen in Him from eternity past, united to Him, identified with Him by the baptism of the Spirit in time, we share everything with Him. There is no greater blessing than this! God did not hold back anything from His Son, and therefore, nothing is withheld from us. The extent of our bond with Him in turn identifies the extent of our sharing all that He is and has. Will the Father withhold anything from us? Are we really Sons? I will let Paul answer this question with a question. *“<sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* (Rom 8:32).

Our inheritance cannot be compared to earthly riches. This world and everything in it will pass away. It will all come to nothing, and those who trust in earthly wealth will be sorely disappointed.

<sup>1</sup>Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. <sup>2</sup>Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. <sup>3</sup>Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Jam 5:1-3

You are not rich if all you have is earthly wealth. One day, you will die, that is the reality. The old saying is true, "you can't take it with you." Imagine that, spending all your time on earth laboring, striving and concentrating on earthly riches. Then, one day, your life is required of you and no amount of money can save you. If I had the power to add 25 years to anyone's life, and I was willing to sell this time to anyone, I'm sure I would be the wealthiest man in this world. You see, if you have no hope beyond this life, then you are absorbed with this life. Time is more valuable than money. If I could sell time, I bet a person would give just about anything to get more time. This is why wealth here and now is really nothing. So you lived in luxury for 100 years, you had the best of everything. But then, you die without having eternal life. How terrible it will be for you then! Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Most in that story would want to be the rich man, not the poor beggar. However, in the end, I bet the rich man wished he could be Lazarus. Jesus tells us to "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, not on earth..."

The lust for earthly riches is a temptation to most. Everyone wants more money for some reason or another. It is not wrong to want to have a better life, to be comfortable, or to be secure in this life. God knows that we have needs in this world. However, earthly riches have consumed the thinking of most, even in the Christian world. If I was writing about some formula to get wealth, or some proven plan where anyone could follow and it would make them wealthy, I bet it would be a best seller. They have books and tapes out to teach people how to get rich. Recently I saw a book on someone's bookshelf, How to think like a Millionaire. The thought here is, if you think like a millionaire you will be able to follow the same path they did to get wealth. This is most damaging to me, since they are asking you to think a certain way. God wants us love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds bodies and strength. That is, everything we are. Trying to think like an unbeliever who has not hope cannot be useful to us.

To take it to another level, if I told you that God wants you to be wealthy, and here is His plan for you to get earthly wealth, I would still draw in many. In fact, many leaders of huge denominations are saying such things and of course, people are flocking to their churches. There is no evidence that their parishioners are better-off than others, but it's the thought of it that is alluring.

Our wealth is related to who we are in Christ. Ours is an eternal wealth that can never be taxed, diminished, depreciated and is not subject to inflation. Our wealth is not based on time, for we will enjoy it forever and ever... The extent of

our wealth is “*all things.*” We are married to the creator of all things. We are married to the one who owns all things; therefore, we share all things with Him.

<sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—  
how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?  
Rom 8:32

<sup>21</sup>So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours,  
<sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or  
the present or the future—all are yours, <sup>23</sup>and you are of Christ, and  
Christ is of God. 1Cor 3:21-23

Therefore, we have an important point to make regarding our motivation. We are not to strive for wealth in this world. This does not mean that we should be careless when it comes to money, but that our emphasis in life is related to our eternal realities. We may have bills to pay, families to support, and we do have to live somewhere. We must be willing to work hard in this world as unto the Lord. However, we are not to depend on the money we make, we should know that our dependence should be on God. Maybe you have lots of money, do not let that distract you from fixing your eyes on the eternal, on the hope that is set before you.

Job lost all his wealth in one day, and he was VERY wealthy in earthly standards. Everything Job considered valuable was lost in one day. Perhaps, Job had spent many years building his wealth, working his business and had it fine-tuned to produce the wealth and the position in life he wanted for his family. Satan figured that if Job lost all this wealth, his servants and even his children, that he would self destruct. He did not.

<sup>21</sup> and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." Job 1:21

Job was well aware that everything he had in this world was because God had provided. He loved God when he had nothing, and the riches did not distract him from the giver. Job did not view those possessions as belonging to him. Job knew the truth of this passage, “*But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth...*” (Deut 8:18a). Job understood this, but how many believers do not understand this truth? Many hoard wealth and feel that they have made themselves wealthy by their intelligence, their discipline or



their choices. But the reality is that God owns all things and can withdraw them if He chooses. The Apostle Paul understood this principle, “for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Phil 4:11b). Paul is not saying this from the standpoint of having wealth. Anticipating that some would say, “That’s easy for you to say, you have lots of money.” But Paul understood this principle.

<sup>12</sup>I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup>I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Phil 4:12, 13

The first step in understanding the value of true wealth is to begin to devalue in our minds the pseudo wealth. We need a broader perspective of wealth, and it is found in the hope to which we are called. If God says these riches are glorious, they are indeed glorious! God is not telling us this from earthly standards, but heavenly standards. God is not talking about temporal wealth, but eternal wealth. I think Paul’s admonition to Timothy sums up the entire matter.

<sup>17</sup>Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup>Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup>In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. 1Tim 6:17-19

**<sup>19</sup>and his incomparably great power for us who believe.**

There are two sides to the hope set before us. First, it is the riches associated with the position. Second, it is that position itself which is associated with “*great power*.” The word “*power*” here is DUNAMIS in Greek, take a moment to look at Strong and Thayer’s definitions:

**Strong:** force (literally or figuratively); specifically miraculous power (usually by implication a miracle itself): - ability, abundance, meaning, might

**Thayer:** strength power, ability

- 1a) inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth
- 1b) power for performing miracles
- 1c) moral power and excellence of soul
- 1d) the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth
- 1e) power and resources arising from numbers
- 1f) power consisting in or resting upon armies, forces, hosts

This word means raw power. When applied to God it refers to his omnipotence. There are two other words used with power, "incomparably" and "great".

Incomparably - *huperballo*

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to surpass in throwing, to throw over or beyond any thing
- 2) to transcend, surpass, exceed, excel
- 3) excelling, exceeding

Great- *megethos*

Thayer Definition:

- 1) greatness

Putting it all together, we have a phrase in which God is expressing His over and above omnipotent power on us, the saints, the church, those in Christ. If God did something so great in us, it is no wonder that Paul prays that we would see it. If we do not see it, or ignore it, God certainly cannot be pleased. This great exceeding power was expended on our behalf. This must be something very special God has accomplished in us and Paul is reaching for words to describe it. He has to reach because there is really nothing to compare with it in human terms, so Paul just doubles and triples the adjectives in an attempt to have us grasp the magnitude of God's works towards us. Surpassing, incomparable, exceeding, transcending, and mighty power is the idea he is trying to get across. This power as we shall see is related to a position of authority which God has given us. What did it take for God to put us in this position? All of this divine favor and power is freely bestowed on "*us who believe.*" It is not for believers of all time, but for us, the church, His body, those chosen in Him before time began.

To generalize this statement is to undermine something that our creator planned

before creating all things. It was a plan in the mind of God which finally comes to fruition. God must be pleased, "*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ*" (Eph 1:9). This is something so very special that it is the dearest thing in the heart of God. He is now is pleased to reveal His greatest work ever, and what is our attitude?

Only the mature mind in Christ can appreciate the fine nuances of what God hath wrought. It is like an artist creating a fine work of art, a beautiful painting. Finally after years of work, it is unveiled. The reactions are varied depending on the eye of the beholder. Some may look with appreciation and the thought that it is a very nice picture. Another with a trained eye may look and gasp, loosing their breath in awe of such a fine detailed work of art, exquisite to the eye. One person may look and remark how nice it is and move on. Another may look and be overwhelmed and intoxicated with its beauty because they know what it took to create such a masterpiece. God is to be praised for what He has accomplished in us. More than what He has done; we have to marvel at *why* God did this marvelous thing? The only reason we can find to account for this is divine love.

Children cannot see it and do not regard it with the proper care and thought. Once it is seen, there is nothing more profound, nothing more interesting, no subject more compelling than this. It is grasping "*how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ*". Once this subject dawns on your horizon, how could it ever be eclipsed by anything? For this, Paul prays that we might see. God expects that we see this hope; it is the natural progression of maturity. In fact, the distinction between a child and an adult is really that of knowledge. You may look at a teenager as a good example. They may begin to look like adults, but simply talking to them gives away what they cannot hide, their ignorance.

### **That power is like the working of his mighty strength,**

Now we turn to an analogy given to us to help us understand the kind of power the Father has expended towards us who believe. We need to setup a comparison to see clearly the extent of this power. God is not leaving this point to our imagination. He wants us to know what it took for Him to accomplish His objectives in us. This is a master plan, and it is deliberate. We happen to be the recipients of this plan, but certainly we are not talking about anything we have done. The only thing we can do is *see* it; none of the accomplishments are ours. God is expressing two of His attributes here very prominently- Sovereignty and Omnipotence. God performed a miraculous feat in us and for the most part, it

has gone unnoticed. It is no surprise to me that God is powerful; after all He created the entire universe. Anyone with that kind of power is certainly far more powerful than we can imagine. His Sovereignty says He can do what He wants with His power. God is not an impersonal force. God is personal and can determine His own choices and acts deliberately. He did not have to create the universe; this act is an expression of His sovereign will.

God's power is unlimited. God has the power to create something without existing material. That, we cannot understand. We cannot approach a being like God and truly understand Him when He is so far beyond us. Therefore, we must be willing to listen to Him and allow Him to reveal all that He is and thinks. We cannot second guess God. Truly His thoughts are not our thoughts. This is why when it comes to the spiritual life; we must bring an attitude of humility. Without humility, we cannot learn who and what God is. By submitting to God and His word we can grow up in Christ. There is no other way.

Paul gives us an analogy here in this phrase, *"That power is like the working of his mighty strength."* By using this analogy, we can have something to compare the level of power bestowed upon us. If I was trying to show you the intensity of a light, I could make analogies. The light is like a flash light. Or, the light is like a flood light. Or, I could say, the light is like the shining of the sun. In each analogy, your mind can relate to just how bright the light shines. Now Paul goes on to make the analogy in the next phrase.

## **<sup>20</sup>which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead**

The power which God bestowed on us is likened to the power exerted when Christ was raised from the dead. First, we will look at the power needed to raise Christ from the dead. Then we will look at where or how high this power has raised the risen Christ. The Father raised Christ from the dead, and what kind of power did it take? Raising Christ from the dead involves not simply waking up the humanity of Christ. Everyone will be raised to life at some point in the future, *"some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt"* (Dan 12:2b). Certainly this requires omnipotence, but it is not the level of power we are seeking to understand. Paul is using this analogy to show a surpassing great feat of God on our behalf. God is the one telling us that this is a great demonstration of His power so we must look further. I think the power demonstrated in this analogy is not simply the raising of Christ from the dead,

but to what position He was raised. The next verses describe the heights to which Christ ascended.

**and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realm**

Christ was not simply raised from the dead, but He was raised to a position. He is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. The right hand of God is a position of authority and power. Who is raised? The humanity of Christ! The deity of Christ cannot be raised anywhere; it is already in the highest position. Jesus Christ as God has always existed, but this person who always occupied the divine nature also took on the human nature. *“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!”* (Phil 2:8). Now, this person, Christ has a human nature forever. This person in His human nature is who experienced death and was raised.

Jesus Christ is in heaven right now, seated at the right hand of God. He is true humanity, and yet, He is in the place of highest honor. This person took a human nature and lived on earth for approximately 33 years. He submitted to the Father in every respect of His life, even to the point of death in a horrible way. He allowed the Father to impute and judge the sins of the entire world in Him.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil 2:9-11

This exaltation to the highest place is our next focus. What does it mean to be exalted to *“the highest place”*? In Philippians, he means that every knee would bow. Now, hold on, every knee will bow to Jesus Christ, in His humanity? YES. Worship directed toward this man? YES. He is not just any man, but the person Christ Jesus. This person bears two natures. We are worshipping a person and not a nature here. It doesn't matter where this person is found, in divinity or humanity, He is worthy of praise. We do not worship a nature, we worship a person. That person we worship is the person of God. God wants us to worship Him, not necessarily His nature. This person, in His human nature was raised to the highest place. The exaltation is here given us as an analogy that is true of Christ and true of us. Christ was raised to the right hand of the Father. Remember, the analogy is to show the power that was expressed toward us.

**<sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority, power and dominion,**

The text doesn't say that Christ is raised "*above*" all rule and authority, it is said that He is raised "*far above*" all rule and authority. This is significant in that He, Christ, is not on the level of those rulers and authorities, He is *FAR* above them. When the text mentions "*rule and authority, power and dominion,*" it is referring to any such authority a creature may have. There is not creature, angel or man which can compare with the level of authority Christ possesses. In fact, we may say that the level of authority to which Christ is raised is not on the level of any creature at all. He is *far above* "all rule and authority..." Only God is far above all rule and authority. It is fitting that Christ would have this position.

<sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup>For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col 1:16-20.

Christ is the rightful ruler of "*all things*" because He is the creator. However, He created everything in His divine nature, not His human nature. It is the same person who is the "*image of the invisible God.*" This person is the Son and is destined to inherit all things from the Father and rule all creation. The height to which Christ, in His humanity is raised is none other than the state of divine rule and authority. He is "*far above*" any human or angelic authority. God commands all angels to "worship" Him. Before Him, *every* knee will bow. Christ is at the right hand of the Father, this is also the place of highest approval and honor. But there is more.

This is the person to whom we are married. We are joined to this person by the baptism of the Spirit. This person fully possesses us, and we fully possess Him. We one with this person of Christ forever. It may not appear now that all of this is true of us, but "*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory*" (Col 3:4). Get used to this kind of language, Christ "is your life."

Can you imagine what it will be like for you then? The very creator, the one who is from everlasting is the one with whom we will share His life.

<sup>1</sup>"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.  
<sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going." John 14:1-4

I believe that our Lord will come for us on day. My heart is comforted by these words just as the early disciples must have been. Once we unite, it will be as the scripture says, "*And so we will be with the Lord forever.*" (1Thes 4:17b).

**and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.**

Remember, the power that has been conferred upon us who believe is like the power of raising Christ from the dead and seating Him in the heavenly realm. Is this a good analogy? Absolutely! In fact, later Paul writes these words, "*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*" (Eph 2:6). It is fitting that the ones the Father choose to be "*in Christ*" before the creation of the universe, that we would read these words. So then, the analogy is perfect. It is perfect in this way, the same power it took for God to raise Jesus Christ from the dead and seat Him in the heavenly realm, at the right hand of God, is the same power in which God exerted when He raised us up and seated us with Christ. If you read past this too fast, you may miss the greatest thing God ever did!

"Every title that can be given" says that this position is never to be eclipsed. This is the greatest plan ever formulated by God. There will be nothing in the future that will be greater than our position here. Many are fascinated by the book of Revelation. However, nothing that will happen in the future will be greater than what God has done for us in the Church. God is the one who delegates His authority and there is none higher, not now or ever! And remember, this title is not above, all titles, but "*far above.*" We are in Christ and raised to a position in which we share all that our Lord Jesus Christ has. There is something so special about our resurrection and the "power" that accompanies it.

<sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Phil 3:10, 11.

I believe this is what Paul is referring to when he writes about the “*power of his resurrection.*” This can only mean what we saw in our text in Ephesians. It is not simply that Christ was raised, but that His resurrection raised Him to the level of the Father’s right hand. This is the title of the Son, “*whom he appointed heir of all things...*” (Heb 1:2b). Now, what is Paul talking about here of wanting to know Christ and the “power of his resurrection”? It is that we share in that same resurrection with Christ, “*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*” (Eph 2:6). Paul understood the hope of his calling. This is the same hope he prayed for the Ephesians to see. It is the same hope I am writing about and pray that you see. Again, Paul speaks about the power of our resurrection.

<sup>20</sup>But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil 3:20, 21

Our citizenship refers to our rights and privileges which we have in heaven. What privileges? We are married to the Son! Our eagerly waiting for a savior from there is a reference to the Lord Jesus coming for us, the Bride. He promised to come and receive us to Himself in John 14:1-3. Our attitude is therefore one of expectation. Notice the “power that enables him to bring everything under his control,” is that power which is His because of the position He has over all things. The transforming of our “*lowly bodies*” refers to our resurrection, our being changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1Cor 15:52). This transformation refers to the time when Christ will “*present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless*” (Eph 5:27). Finally, this transformation will be “*like his glorious body.*” We are so identified with Christ that we will have bodies “*like him*” in every respect. Our lives are merged with His life, and later our bodies will be like His glorious body. Note the following passages:

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Col 3:4



Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1John 3:2

## **<sup>22</sup>And God placed all things under his feet**

God the Father has put everything under the feet of the Son. This was the plan, even in the Old Testament. *"The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."* (Psalm 110:1; Heb 1:13). We are looking into the authority of Christ because it is this level of power and position that has been conferred upon us who believe says Paul. To what extent does the text mean "all things under his feet"?

<sup>7</sup>You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor <sup>8</sup>and put everything under his feet? In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Heb 2:7, 8.

From the text, it appears that there is *nothing* that is not under His authority. Notice we are referring to the humanity of Christ being raised to such a lofty place from such a lowly place. I like the way Paul refers to this when he says, *"but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."* (Phil 2:7). Human nature compared to the divine nature is said to be *"nothing"*! All things are under the feet of the Son of God. He is the heir appointed, and the rightful ruler of the creation of God. Now, I must say this again, if all things are under Christ because He has been raised to such a position, then all things are under our feet also since we are joined to that person forever. God planned to have His Son rule all things from eternity past, but He kept it a secret that *we* would be joined to him and share all that He is and has.

<sup>21</sup>So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours,  
<sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, <sup>23</sup>and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God. 1Cor 3:21-23

<sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Rom 8:32

There is not much that can be said of these verses from those who cannot believe what God has done in us. Attempts are made to humanize these verses to fit into our understanding. How can God have done this? Why would He do this? Before you answer those questions, you still have to wrap your mind around the thought that it is true! God did it and all we can do is receive it. We are Sons. We did not choose this for ourselves, we were chosen by God. It has nothing to do with our merit or intent; it is the sovereignty of God. I have to say with our Lord, *"He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"* (Luke 24:25). We are foolish when we doubt God. After all, He is God! Truly we are slow to believe, but we don't have to be, we can trust in His word. God really means what He says, and says what He means.

**and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body**

This next phrase helps us to put in perspective some of the things Paul said about our identity and our position. Christ is the *"head over everything for the church"* is declaring that He is Lord. When we think of all the relationships given us in life, there must be authority, the husband over the wife, and the parents over their children. Paul goes into great detail to demonstrate that Christ is the head and we are the body in Corinthians (1Cor 12). When we think of Christ and the Church and the authority possessed by each, we could say that Jesus Christ is in authority, and then comes the Church. This is not completely accurate. Christ is first, and we, the Church, are joined to this person forever in that first position as well. However, within that relationship, there is authority, and Jesus Christ is Lord. Just as a head is joined to the body, we are united to Christ.

In this, I see an analogy which God Himself created in human nature. In the Garden of Eden, God put Adam to Sleep and built the Woman out of his rib. He separated that rib from Adam, and created the Woman. Then, He brought the Woman to Adam and then joined them together. When Adam realized this, he said, *"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man."* (Gen 2:23). Truly the woman was bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. Here we have a literal analogy of what God did in the Church, not physically, but spiritually.

Here is the record, *"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world..."* (Eph 1:4a). God choose us, selected us from the human race, to be *"in Christ"* before creation. We were born into this world, separated from God, spiritually dead

and without Christ. God called us at salvation, not simply for salvation, but to be in His Son. We were chosen in Christ before creation, separated from Him in time, and then after salvation, we are joined to Him forever. Just as it happened with Adam, for this was quoted in Genesis, before there ever was father or mother. *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”* (Gen 2:24).

We find the same quote in Ephesians chapter five, when Paul is giving instructions to husbands and wives. He drives home the point that marriage is to be like the relationship of Christ and the Church, His bride.

<sup>31</sup>“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup>This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.  
Eph 5:31, 32

This mystery is profound says Paul. Even though he is talking about husbands and wives, what he is really referring to is Christ and the Church! Many read this passage thinking its primary meaning is husbands and wives. Paul is telling us that he is really referring to Christ and the church. Husbands and wives is a secondary application. We are married to Christ. We have the role of the bride, submitting to Christ. *“Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”* (Eph 5:24). The Church is under the authority of Christ, just as the woman is to her husband. It is interesting how some men will look at the submission passages and decide that this part is not for them. They look only at the passages where it says *“husbands”*. We as men not only need the understanding of the role of the man, but also the role of the woman.

All believers in Christ submit to him, just as the woman does to her husband. In fact, we had better make sure we study the woman’s role because this is the role that is most important in teaching us how to be submissive and responsive to our Lord. Men may want to learn how to be good leaders, but they also must learn how to be submissive. In fact, we know that Christ is our Lord, the head of the Church in every respect. However, we watched Him, our Lord, submit completely and unreservedly to the Father. *“But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.”* (John 14:31). Men must learn that there is strength in weakness. Submission is really not weakness, even though the world perceives it as such.

**23 the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

Christ's body is the fullness of Him? Well that makes complete sense physically. Spiritually speaking, we tend to think that Christ does not need anything or anyone to complete Him. But, this verse says something different. The Church completes Christ, just as the woman completes the man. When we look at the exaltation of our Lord, far above every power and authority, we do not think in terms of Him needing anyone or anything. However, Christ depends on the Church just as the Church depends on Christ. Paul mentions in First Corinthians twelve, that *"the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you."* Christ needs His bride and will come for us just as He promised (John 14:1-3).

If Christ fills everything in every way, then the Church which is His fullness also fills everything in every way. This filling everything in every way is related to the role of the Son in all creation. Christ is the rightful ruler of all things. Creation is being sustained by His power. *"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together"* (Col 1:17). Christ completes all creation, and by His power, all creation is held together. Just as the earth depends on the sun for everything, the universe depends on Christ. Without Christ, there would be no universe, no life, and no order in creation. Christ is the captain who sits at the helm of a massive ship. The ship demands a captain; it is not designed to operate on its own. Creation *needs* the Son; it cannot exist or operate without His power and ruler-ship.

Christ is the ruler of the creation of God (Rev 3:14). Can you imagine that this is true of the man, Christ Jesus? Can you imagine that you are united to this person forever? Joined to Him in such a way that you share all He is and has? You are united to this special person who shares two natures, divine and human. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he said these words, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"* (Matt 28:18). Since the Church is His body, we share that authority. In fact, we have the same resurrection. We see this authority in Christ's resurrection when He was raised *"far above"* all human and angelic authority. The Church was raised to that same height and authority (Eph 2:6, 7). We must begin to see ourselves in this light if we are to walk worthy of the calling we have been given (Eph 4:1).

- We share His sufferings (Rom 8:17: Phil 1:29)

- We share His life (Col 3:4)
- We share His resurrection (Rom 6:5)
- We share His glorious likeness (1Joh 3:2; Phil 3:21)
- We share His destiny (Rom 8:29, 30)
- We share His Son-ship (Galatians 3:26-29)
- We share His Ruler-ship (Rom 8:19)
- We share the fullness of deity (Col 2:9, 10; Eph 3:19)
- We share His mind (1Cor 2:16)
- We share the Father's love (John 16:27)

There is more, in fact, we share all that Christ is and has. We are the "*fullness of Him.*" I hope these words mean something special to you. They are meant especially for you, here and now. I would expect that you realize that Christ not only desires us, but that He *needs* us. We were chosen *in* Him before time by the Father. The Father created us in Christ; we are designed especially for Him. God has done something in the Church He has never done before in all creation and never will do again. We are unique, special and highly honored by God. Do not walk away from these passages until you have what Paul prays for, and the Father is waiting to reveal to you.

## **In Conclusion**

Sometimes when we read the word of God, we have to take a step back to be sure we are getting the message God is conveying. As human beings, we may listen to the direct statements from God and still not believe it. Why? Because, we try to humanize these statements which seem to transcend our human existence. God is not a human being and everything He says does not fit into a neat human understanding. Were it not for the Spirit of God, these things would be incomprehensible to us. But, with the Spirit, we can understand the deep things of God. We do not need to be afraid of where God will take us, we can trust Him implicitly. We must allow the Spirit to do His job in leading us to all truth. How are we lead? We submit to the Father and the Son. We have to be willing to drop our thoughts, which come from Adam, and welcome divine thought which comes from Christ.

We have to begin to see what God has made of us. God took the dust of the ground and made a man. God then took from this man, Jews and Gentiles, and made us the church, His body. Sometimes we need to see things from God's perspective. What does He think?

<sup>10</sup>For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:10

God saved us to something special. Our salvation is a means to an end. The end is what God saved us to- Sonship. We are God's workmanship. That word "*workmanship*" is translated from the Greek word "*poiema*". We get our English word "poem" from this word. God, in His great wisdom, has carefully designed us to be what He wanted us to be. Salvation was simply the door we walked through to get to the hope He has set before us. We are not necessarily His "*workmanship*" now because we are still a work in progress; "*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*" (Phil 2:13)." The purpose here is the same purpose He had for us when He choose us in Christ before the universe was created. "*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known*" (1John 3:3). John confesses that he doesn't know what we will look like when God finishes his work in us.

We are like a magnificent work of art. God has planned this in His mind before the beginning of time. He is now working on the masterpiece, and just as most artists, He does not want anyone looking over His shoulder until He is ready. Soon He will be ready to unveil us to all creation. "*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed*" (Rom 8:19). It is interesting that all creation is eagerly waiting, but as for us, the actual creation, we sometimes doubt God is even working on something special. Some just do not see it at all. There are theologies in place to play down this uniqueness. They don't see any mystery doctrine at all. There is nothing significant in us being chosen, predestined and adopted as Sons. This is why Paul recorded this prayer to the Father. It was on our behalf that we might have the vision to see the hope to which we have been called.

We have been "*created in Christ Jesus to do good works*". These works have not begun. They will begin when God presents us as a sight to behold, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle. We will stand blameless before Him in glory. We will step into our destined roles as the Son. The works we do are the very works of the Son, who has been given all authority, all power and all things. These works were "*prepared in advance for us to do*". From eternity past, God choose us to be in His Son. We would function as the Son's body, performing whatever the Head, our Lord desires. Soon, God will be finished with His masterpiece.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Eph 2:6, 7.

One day, everyone will see what God has been up to. They will see the crowning act of His creative mind. They will see His power and wisdom, His generosity and kindness in a way they have never seen before. The work of the artist is great, but the work really demonstrates the character and wisdom of the artist. We can only look at the work so long before we realize that the Father is the one who has accomplished all these marvelous things.

Here are some closing comments regarding this hope. Keep looking until you see clearly the hope of your calling. Only then can you *“live a life worthy of the calling you have received”* (Eph 4:1b). You cannot live the life you don't know you have. Hold your head up like our Lord did when He was on Earth. Accept the honor and privilege bestowed upon you. While we are here in the world, on the battlefield, we should know that *“our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all”* (2Cor 4:17). While we may have suffering in this world, we are not to focus on it at all. We are to keep our focus on that which is unseen and eternal (2Cor 4:18).

And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. Rom 5:2b-5

Hope can transform us. Hope will define our purpose and order our steps in this world. *“Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure”* (1John 3:3). Imagine waking up one morning and realizing you are married to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We need to cultivate this hope in our minds *“while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”* (Tit 2:13).

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an

inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 1Pet 1:2, 3

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen (Rev 22:20, 21).

In Christ, Doug...

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