

#327 Kingdom: Prayers of the Next Dimension

In other studies we have examined some of Paul's concerns for the church in Ephesians 1 and how he was praying for the next dimension of spiritual revelation and for their ability to "see" into those things that are unseen by natural light. He isolates the function of one of the Seven Spirits of God and applies that function to giving spiritual insight to the church at Ephesus. He prays that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may give to them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. It seems obvious that the only way the church can ascend out of the natural light and life of the Outer Court is through Spiritual Revelation and the Wisdom from above. Since too much of the church is still functioning in natural understanding and the wisdom from below, it appears this transition is more than valid today.

Paul is making it clear that to see into these unseen realms will require experientially enlightened eyes in the new spiritual man. Until the new inner man is able to see, most all spiritual progress will cease and much of what God has provided for us in Christ will be in darkness. This inner revelation is the motivating factor that propels the church into God's eternal purpose and inspires the church to forsake all to live for God and bring joy to His heart. This seems to be the solution to the selfish and self-centered way the visible church now functions. Just to experience the Headship of Jesus Christ over His body, the perfect church, requires Revelation and Wisdom.

In Ephesians 3 Paul defines the ministry that was assigned to him by the stewardship of God's grace. This ministry seems to be unique to Paul because none of the other writers mention this aspect of ministry. My understanding is that this ministry will be restored very soon to lead the next restoration into the glorious Light of the Seven Spirits of God. The Spirit of Wisdom and the Spirit of Revelation appears to be the "Spirit of Transition" from the natural to the spiritual.

Paul indicates that by revelation, the mystery of Christ was made known to him. His ministry revolves around this revelation of the mystery of Christ and his calling to unveil this mystery to the Gentiles. He is bold enough to say that this mystery has been revealed to His Apostles and Prophets in the spirit. Part of this revelation is that the Gentiles are accepted as fellow heirs and fellow members of the body of Christ. The Gentiles become fellow-partakers of the promises assigned to Christ Jesus.

Therefore, Paul was made a minister of this gospel according to grace that God gave him and by the power of God working in him. This grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unknowable, the unfathomable and incalculable riches of Christ.

His ministry was to bring out into the light what is the church's participation [koinonia] is in this mystery which has been hidden in God from all past generations. God's purpose and Paul's ministry is to make this mystery known through the church. [to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms will be addressed later].

Paul is very clear that all this ministry and revelation was preordained in God's Eternal Purpose which was activated through Christ Jesus our Lord. Our boldness and our confidence to access this dimension of God's grace is through Faith in Christ. This lifts our "faith" out of the basics to

another dimension of God's purpose and eternal design. Now that Paul has defined His calling and ministry he continues to reveal how he is praying for them to move over into this higher realm.

Now, since it was God, the Father, who called Paul into this ministry, to reveal mysteries to the church, he appeals directly to the Father on behalf of the church, that He would grant them that which is essential to make his ministry effective. That is the development of an inner life.

Eph 3:16] that **He would grant** you, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;** [17] so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, [18] may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, [19] and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, **that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.**

Paul is praying for areas of spiritual life that seem strange to us now. This is another dimension of subjective Power that works in the inner man and gives power and strength SO THAT Christ [the Word of God] may abide within. This obviously goes beyond the "receiving of Christ as our sacrifice for sin." This realm of Christ in us is to reveal the magnitude of the Love of Christ by inner revelation directly to our empowered inner man. This obviously is not another doctrine about Agape but a subjective and inner knowing that goes far beyond outward knowledge. This IS the solution to the "flat love" that is so popular because this revelation of His Agape Love has dimensions of breadth and length, along with height and depth.

To know THIS LOVE experientially goes far beyond the {gnosis} knowledge of His Love, intellectually. The "doctrine of love" is darkness in comparison to this inner light, which is the inner Life of Christ abiding in us. The doctrine of love is flat while the experience of His Abiding Love has many dimensions. The conclusion to the revelation of this mystery is that through this Abiding Love of Christ we might be filled up to all the fulness of God.

As great and profound as this prayer is, Paul is assured that God is able to do much more through the power of God working in us than he can ever ask or think. Paul realizes that his prayer is very weak in comparison to what God is able to do. All this glory has been assigned to the church for all generations and forever. In other words it, is OK if we want to pray for this revelation personally because this IS God's will for our generation. We can also pray for those in the churches that God would grant them the same power through His Spirit in the inner man.

The next prison prayer of Paul is for the Philippians and that God would continue to perfect them until day of Christ Jesus. Paul was obviously not embarrassed about the doctrine of perfection but took it out of the possibility of man perfecting himself.

Phil 1: 9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge [epignosis] and all discernment, [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

It appears that Paul, through the revelation that God gave him, relates our growing and abounding in love to our increasing in spiritual knowledge [epignosis] and a more comprehensive discernment of spiritual and eternal things. In other words our “growth” is in more than one area and our growth in Agape enforces and enhances our growth in spiritual knowledge and comprehensive discernment which enables us to recognize and approve the highest and the best. This results in our being sincere and blameless in the day of Christ. In this way we can be filled with experiential righteousness to the praise of His glory.

Paul is still attempting to fulfill his calling and his ministry to the Gentiles but he is still focusing upon their perfection.

Phil 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; [13] for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. [14] Do all things without grumbling or disputing; [15] **that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, [16] holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.** [17] But even if **I am being poured out as a drink offering** upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

Paul surely understood that He must have something acceptable to God to offer to Him in the day of Christ. If the churches just remain carnal and unchanged he would have run in vain and ministered in vain and all his sacrifice for the gospel would have been wasted.

1 Thes 2:19] For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? [20] For you are our glory and joy.

Most ministers are not aware that their reward, their hope, their joy and their crown depends upon the saints assigned to them standing in the Presence of the Lord at His coming. The perfected saints are his glory and his joy. It would be discouraging to have your life poured out as a libation for the church if the church was unconcerned about their own spiritual life and growth and perfection. Paul is careful to pray for the churches assigned to him that they would receive the revelation to go on with God and be ready for the secret coming of the Lord and to stand in His Presence.

Paul's fourth prayer that is recorded in scripture was to the church at Colossae. [there was most likely many, many that were not recorded] When Paul heard of their faith AND their love for all the saints he knew it was time to pray for the next phase of their growth. He acknowledged that the gospel, the Word of Truth, was increasing and bearing fruit among them and for that reason he began to pray for them so they would continue to develop so they could share in the full inheritance of saints who walk in the Light.

COL 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, **we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and**

understanding, [10] so that you may **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please Him in all respects, **bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; [11] strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might**, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously [12] giving thanks to the Father, **who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light**.

The remainder of the chapter is a combination of prayer and proclamation of the glory of Christ. Much of it can be assigned to the revelation that God gave him to define his ministry and calling. Paul is careful to minister and pray with a definite end in mind. That is the perfection of the saints that they may stand in full assurance before the Presence of Christ. Therefore, whether we study Paul's prayers OR his ministry the goal is exactly the same and coincides with the revelation that God gave him. Sometimes more can be gained from the revelation of his ministry than from the revelation of his prayers. Both are essential for the completion of God's purpose in His people. Both gives us insight into the revelation that God gave him for the perfection of the saints to do the work of ministry.

Paul is concerned that the church at Colossae would experientially attain to the exact spiritual knowledge [epignosis] of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Without this spiritual insight they may not walk in a manner worthy of the Lord or to live their life to please Him in all things. For them to bear eternal fruit it is essential that they increase in their full and precise knowledge [epignosis] of God.

He recognized that they must be strengthened with ALL power in direct accordance to His glorious might [dunamis- power] in order to stand in all endurance, patience and perseverance while joyously giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us and made us fit to share in the our portion of the inheritance along with the saints who are in light.

It is probably abundantly clear to most of us that Paul's calling and ministry was for the perfecting of the saints. He knew that the saints assigned to him must be found standing in the very Presence of Christ on that day at His coming. Otherwise he may have run in vain and ministered in vain and have nothing to show for all his work and suffering for the gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 3: 12-15 Paul knew it was possible for all our work to be burned up if we were not careful. He warned about building with wood, hay and straw because the fire of God MUST test each work to see what kind it is. The Test is not by outward appearance or how big the work is but by whether it is able to stand the fire. If the work is inflammable [easily set on fire] we suffer eternal loss but we may not lose our salvation. Still we, ourselves, must also be tested by the same fire. Our "glory" is not in our ministry OR our calling but if our work survives the fire and the saints are standing in the Presence of Christ on that day. All other "work" is laboring in vain with nothing to show for it in eternity.

Therefore, Paul is very careful how he works. Col 1: 25] Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the **preaching of the word of God**, [26] that is, **the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints**, [27] to whom God

willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [28] And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. [29] And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Paul's ultimate goal was to present every man perfect, complete, mature and fully developed in Christ. To accomplish that he must work in direct cooperation with the Power of God that worked in him. This takes ministry out of the man centered preparation with titles, degrees, accolades, and position of leadership and authority and places ministry directly into this realm of ministering in direct relationship to the power of God that is working in us. If no power is working there, in the inner man, we may wonder what we are really doing for eternity.

If the saints are not going on to perfection or growing in their knowledge of God or growing up in all things into Christ we should reconsider the purpose of our ministry. Were we just called to preach and run a church OR were we selected out to reveal these mysteries to the Gentiles to which we are called. If the saints don't make their calling an election sure have we just run in vain and labored in vain? Have we built a big structure of inflammable material that looks good but represents nothing at all in eternity? We should pray for the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of God OR maybe Pray for the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding in the knowledge of His will.

Or maybe we should just pray for all Seven manifestations of the Spirit of God and the illumination of the Holy Place Life and Ministry. However, IF the Spirit of Transition IS the Spirit of Wisdom and the Spirit of Revelation that may be a good place to begin.