

Prayer 06 eph.1:-Power and Glory

by Bob Clark

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in understanding God's plan and blessings, and the need for spiritual enlightenment and growth.

Duration: 38:50

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:3-17

Topics: "Glory Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Ephesians chapter 1 and the concept of God's power. He emphasizes the exceeding greatness of God's power to those who believe. The preacher explains that this power is manifested through various Greek words, highlighting its strength and beauty. The sermon also includes a prayer from the apostle Paul, expressing gratitude for the salvation and the threefold ministry of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

I'd like you to turn, if you would, to the book of Ephesians and chapter 1, please. Very familiar portion of scripture. Ephesians chapter 1. You might remember that we have placed a sentence or a statement concerning prayer before our minds regarding each phase of our thinking.

We have been developing the thought of the importance or the place of prayer in the life of our Lord Jesus. We have seen it expressed in many different ways, and we've used the woman Hannah on the Lord's Day morning and drew to our attention that prayer is the expression of the human heart in conversation with God. Then we looked at some Old Testament experiences to underline the thought that prayer is petitioning God to accomplish the thing that he has breathed into our spirit by the Holy Spirit, promises were given to us to incite or provoke prayer.

Then we discovered in our studies concerning the exhortations that our Lord gave concerning prayer and his illustrations, and these were on the early morning time together, that prayer is the required mode of addressing God to obtain help in the varying pressures of life. Whatever those pressures are, and there was quite a vast spectrum of problems that we encounter, and yet each of them were easily coped and handled with by our prayer. And in the life of our blessed Savior, we saw that prayer is an attitude of soul in relationship to God, which aids us in finding and yielding to the will of God.

Then our last thought that we discussed a little bit this morning in our study time is prayer is effective when we meet God's requirements. Now in this kind of a summary statement, that's the easiest way to kind of review and to capture our thoughts. Now we come to an expression of prayer, what appears to be a very spontaneous expression that comes from the Apostle as a result of having written the first 14 verses of this epistle in Ephesians chapter 1. In Ephesians chapter 1, the first two verses are a greeting, and then we have in verse 3 a doxology, an anthem of praise that introduces three-fold ministry of God the Father regarding our salvation, which was to issue to be the praise of His glory, and then a three-fold ministry on the part of the Son, and the Eternal Son, Jesus Christ, in establishing these great purposes of God, which were to issue to the praise of the glory of His grace.

And then a three-fold ministry given to us on the part of the Holy Spirit, and His relationship of effecting the purposes of God in our individual lives. And that sequence in those first 14 verses creates an occasion for prayer. And the occasion is specifically, we begin with verse 15, wherefore.

Now that wherefore links those first 14 verses. And so the occasion for the prayer that is written in the latter part of chapter 1 is the wonderful blessings of God. The flowing out of God's rich blessing toward man in His gracious enrichment for those that come into a relationship with Him.

And it all is found to be within the great purposes of God and His love and grace for us. Now from this, He says wherefore. On this account, the word wherefore could be equally translated on this account.

For because of this, now the apostle is moved to pray for these, his spiritual children. The occasion for prayer are these blessings. But there are five objectives in this prayer.

And we want to divide our thoughts this evening into that. Firstly, give some consideration to the occasion for prayer, which is verses 15 and 16. And then, in specific, then look at the very objectives that he has for these believers.

And we might gain some valuable insights. How we might be praying for some of our spiritual children. How we might learn to intercede on the behalf of those for whom we desire spiritual growth and development.

There might be a young man in your local assembly that has gotten a hold of truth and he's beginning to grow in the exercise of soul. And how delightful if we could take some of these expressions to our own heart and life and intercede on the behalf of that individual. It might be a young couple that show evidence or growth.

Or you might perceive that this is the pressing need of the local assembly where you meet. But to be able to pray in these terms of this kind of an exercise of heart and do it intelligently before God because it is His desire for us to enter into enlightenment. That's what this prayer is.

This prayer, written in verse 15 through the end of the chapter 23, is a prayer for enlightenment doctrinally. But it will have its practical effects. But a prayer for enlightenment doctrinally.

Now in chapter 3 there is a prayer. And that's for a prayer for enrichment spiritually. And it's a remarkable intercession on the behalf of these believers for a deep spiritual enrichment.

And at the very end there is a third prayer found in this epistle. And it's a very brief one. And that is a prayer for encouragement personally.

So we want to develop these in our minds. And we trust that something will be ministered to our spirit by the word of God and by the eternal spirit that would be refreshing, strengthening, and an encouragement for you and me to undertake with more spiritual vigor the privilege of intercession for others. Pooling all these things that we have had before us now we look at the occasion for prayer.

Verse 15 we read, Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mentioning of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him, that filleth all in all." Paul's gratitude for his spiritual children is called forth primarily by the first 14 verses and the blessings that are theirs and this wonderful concept of God's grace having dealt with them. But then it's supplemented by two more things that appear in verse 15.

I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints. Now notice to whom Paul addresses this prayer. Paul is speaking to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory. There's a little article in the original language before the word glory which singles it out, not just as an eminence, but as specifics. He is the Father of the glory.

He is the paternal creator of all of this magnitude. He is the originator and the essential source of all glory. And he addresses his prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Immediately we have in our mind placed the thought that he is speaking concerning our Savior as a man. You see, a man has a God, a son has a Father. We were blessed with spiritual blessings in chapter 1 and verse 3 and this is the aorist tense that we have been blessed.

Everybody, every believer in Jesus Christ has been blessed. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Now you notice this doxology addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That means that our blessed Savior had a perfect man-God relationship and a son-Father relationship. And in both of these accesses of person, both of these attributes of his person as God and man, he was the source of spiritual blessing. And so Paul announces his praise in doxology.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. But for this petition he says that it's the God of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom I am addressing in prayer. That is because the blessings that have come to us and the things that he wants to intercede are coming to us through a perfect man through whom every blessing is ours.

It was my wife's grandfather who many long years ago pounded something into my mind in a very short encounter. I never had the very joy or privilege of being around him very often. And yet it was rather

interesting that he insisted that I had certain things in my mind and that I should primarily always believe exactly what was written in the Word of God.

No matter how unbelievable it appeared to my intellect, I must learn to believe just exactly what has been written. And he used this particular portion, that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings. And he underlined the thought that the only thing that is missing is my faith to believe it, my faith to act upon it, my faith to embrace everything that God has portioned out to me.

Because every blessing is mine. And I'm sure God has no particular affection for me more than yourself. Every blessing that is available to us is already ours.

But it's required my exercise of heart. Now the apostle, concerned for the welfare of his spiritual children, he had labored among them for a period of time, and now, four years later, he is in prison. And he addresses a letter to them, and after he announced this great threefold masterpiece of God, the masterpiece of God's grace for his glory in having saved them and set them apart for himself, now he turns to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and is intercessed for them.

Firstly, because of their spiritual blessings. Secondly, because of their faith. Now the structure of the language in verse 15, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, Mr. Darby has translated a little bit more accurately that you cannot say it literally, because it doesn't make sense in English.

But an exact translation would be, after I heard of your down-in-among-them faith in our Lord Jesus. Now that's grammatically impossible, but that's what the word says, down-in-among-them faith. Meaning, not that conversion faith, but the kind of faith that perpetuates life.

A kind of faith that's existing down-in-amongst-the-believers in Ephesus. It was an ongoing trust. It was a kind of walk in life that characterized them.

He had left them years ago, and now in the prison, he thinks of God's wonderful blessings for them, and their ongoing, continuing, experiential faith in the Lord Jesus. And it warmed his heart. And he said, when I heard of your ongoing down-in-amongst-them kind of faith, the faith that has the nitty-gritty of reality in life, when I heard about that kind of faith over there in Ephesus, and your love to all the saints, your agape love, not merely fondness, not social respect, but genuine, self-sacrificial love to all the saints.

For that reason, I was moved to bow my knees in prayer. When he heard of the rich work, the ongoing faith, and the self-sacrificial love. Now, we are apt to love specific people amongst the saints.

And that's not love at all, is it? Or else, we are apt to have a love that's demonstrated the same to all people. And in the purest sense, that is not love. Let me illustrate.

We know that there are some times when we have very special self-sacrificial care for certain amongst God's people. Because they subscribe to my thinking, or they live in a similar community, or they're the same age as I, or I feel and dress and think and go to the same places as they. And that's not agape love.

That's the flesh. That's showing respect of persons. But on the other hand, to have the same kind of love demonstrated to brother and sister A, B, C, and D, is not only lacking in discernment, but it's impossible.

Because we're all at different stages, and sometimes love requires rebuke. And sometimes practical ministrations. And sometimes prayer.

We can minister to some in a physical sense, in love. But others need a corrective, intercessory work. We learned that with our children, haven't we? Some time in our experience.

That there's a time, although we love them, it required discipline. Now, I'm not talking about church discipline, but I mean that there's a time when we really love our partner in life, where we have to correct them. Because of some attitude, or speech, or misconception.

And love would not be just to squander affection and put approbation upon them at that time. Real love is to say, No, my dear. Now, I don't get many opportunities to say that.

But, there's somebody in our relationship that does have an awful lot of opportunity to say to me, Now, Bob. And sometimes it doesn't require more than that. But it's a little reminder.

No, that's not the right attitude, or that wasn't the right thing. Now, that was love. Now, when I was 25, it was difficult to accept.

Now that I am 35, which is a little older than that. But sometimes that kind of love is still a little difficult, isn't it? And it's just as hard for the person who loves us. But, these people had a genuine, agape love for all the saints.

Because they had a realistic, down-and-amongst-them faith in the Lord Jesus. And so they were prepared. Prepared of soul to be told about their spiritual blessings.

To have their minds lifted and elevated and drawn out of themselves and occupied with the greatness of God's grace on their behalf. And this is where his prayer goes on. In verse 16, he says, I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

The New International Version states it exactly and literally. Never stop giving thanks for you. It's in the present continuous tense.

I never stop giving thanks for you. I keep asking God in prayers. He is just always in prayer before God on their behalf.

What a joy for him to reach out of the prison and over to Ephesus after he's heard this report and be constantly interceding for them. How heartwarming for them. You know, there's nothing quite so enjoyable and so pleasurable and encouraging as to realize that there are men and women praying for you.

Isn't it a nice thing to know that you have loved ones and friends thinking about you? Our prayers may be flawed. We may not have a full comprehension of all things. But to be part of a company of people that pray and talk to God and ask God for blessing and are thoughtful about the little details one of the most choice and delightful times for me in the fellowship that I am now in in Houston is Saturday morning at 8 o'clock.

There's not many men that gather there. There used to be quite a few. But because of business demands and itinerant schedules and a variety of things there is not an ongoing large company of men.

But from time to time we'll almost inevitably have 6 to 10 men. And those men gather on Saturday morning and how they pray and the things that they think of and the awareness of that widow or that aged one or that young couple or this young child and the embrace and to hear some of those men and their detailed concern reaching out and touching the lives of those in that assembly fellowship it's just a blessing for my

own soul. Because we're well aware of their care and what it must have meant for them.

Although he was in prison before he'll say anything corrective he commends and encourages and blesses them and reminds them of his continual prayer on their behalf. But he has some specific things in his mind. The first objective and it's strikingly unselfish this prayer today much literature is filled with despair tragic hopelessness art is almost always in black gloomy portrayals or confusion of lines and fabrics and things and I think it was Francis Schaeffer that's drawn to our attention that despair is written across the mode of art in the 20th century gloom and darkness and grey but not in the apostle because he has a vital living relationship with the Lord and he has exercises of heart and he wants so to bring the good blessings of God into the life of his own spiritual children and it must be done by prayer.

Paul believed in a living God and he asked that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the one who went through humanity and in the light of that one and whose name he was praying because of him and his perfect life and all that he meant to God's people that that God of our Lord Jesus Christ would give unto you believers at Ephesus and indirectly to each of us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. That's the first objective in verse 17 it's the giving of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Myself, I would favor the concept that revelation could only come from God and so the spirit that is spoken to here should really be a capital S at least in our mind.

In the Greek language there is no such thing as a capital or a small letter they're all the same size letters and so it's just a matter of spiritual discernment whether you're going to think that the word spirit of wisdom is either the Holy Spirit or the human spirit with a small S and it would seem best that our thinking would start out that the Holy Spirit in a very special way would be given freedom in the mind of the believers to accommodate their human spirit with adequate wisdom for this full knowledge epignosis divine enlightenment.

Now 1 Corinthians chapter 2 tells us that the natural man and our human spirit cannot perceive the things of God they must be divinely revealed to us so it would appear to me that what he is saying here is that the spirit of God would be given in a special way not a second blessing. We have already had affirmed to us in verse 13 and 14 that he came within our body he sealed us until the day of redemption there is no question about that but just as he prays in chapter 3 for a special enabling of the spirit even so according to Isaiah 11 that was one of the gifts given to our blessed Lord the spirit of wisdom and here it is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him Weymouth says the intimate knowledge the closeness all that you should pray for young believers to be specially enabled by the indwelling spirit to get to know God oh how important it is possibly one of the most influential books written along this topic that any young man can take up and read and comprehend is A.

W. Tozer's book The Knowledge of the Holy it's simple, concise, devout and profound and the man is centering our thoughts upon the Lord himself a similar kind of book though an altogether different book available for only \$1.50 in paperback is The Moral Glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ written by Mr. Bellet maybe 200 years ago and that book soaks our soul in imagery in pictures in analogies of our Lord and it occupies our mind with the majesty and the beauty of our God and this is what Paul wants for those that really trust in the Lord and love all the believers how he is constantly in prayer for them but first that they have a special enabling an unveiling a removal of all the clouds that they could really get to know their God that he might give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him the second objective is to have the eyes of your understanding being enlightened I think some of the translators say the eyes of your heart being enlightened now the heart there is a figure of speech not talking about the

organ that pumps in our body but the biblical concept is that all the major issues of life come out of the heart and the heart, that kind of an expression shows that the center of feeling and faith is found our emotions and our intellect is found in that expression our essential person our heart our inner being the inner spring remember that's exactly what Paul said concerning faith it comes out of the heart man believes well you know it's a mental activity but he's using a term that says our entire person is embracing this now he desires that the eyes of our inner person would be enlightened it's the past participle in the Greek language which means it's something that has been done and the effect of it goes on a complete act with present results literally would read having been enlightened with present results that you are in the state of illumination now all that's conveyed just in the verb remarkable language the Greek language but having once been enlightened Paul says all that you could get to know him and the eyes of your inner person once and for all in a constant state of illumination what aspiration he had what a rich grasp of the privilege of prayer and its ultimate effect and I think oh my do I pray this way?

I have to stop and think first what are the needs and yet there seems to be an effusion of words that pours out of this godly servant of the Lord and his concern for his spiritual children get to know him the eyes of your inner person once and for all being illuminated as to him and his power and his glory what a blessed objective what a holy desire for spiritual enrichment and a nice pattern for me to see the needs of others Paul is praying for a permanent work of the spirit of God that, the third objective they would know the hope of his calling now I just instinctively read this in my mind what is the hope of our calling but that's not true you see Paul wants to lift me and every reader and all of those at Ephesus out of the preoccupation of our calling our salvation and involve our

spirit and our inner person in the knowledge of him and enlightenment by the spirit of him and what is the hope of his calling what are the purposes of God what is the intensification now of course it's the same thing his calling is the same as our calling he has effectively wrought a call in our life and brought us into a relationship with himself and the hope and the anticipation of that is given to us earlier in verses 3 and 4 and 5 he has blessed us with spiritual blessings he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and unblameable before him in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he made us accepted in the

beloved that great threefold work of God was an effective call a wonderful way of bringing me and I was just a boy of eleven never comprehended it but brought now into such a place of blessing and enrichment what a joy it is for my soul and I pray that others would perceive it what is the hope of his calling this wonderful thing what is the object for which he has called you ah, this is it the object for which God has called you and set you apart for himself what is it? to know the riches of his glory in the saints the riches of his glory in the saints the apostle Paul had a concept enabled by the spirit of God, no doubt but his heart was so full and broad and rich and he really had a grasp by divine enabling of the greatness of our God and the work of salvation and he longed for the

saints at Ephesus to appropriate it I fear that oftentimes our human instinct is to think only of my sins having been forgiven and my soul saved and my eternal future secure and that's not in this concept at all it's the knowledge of him a divine enlightenment that would permanently illuminate me that I'd see the great purposes of his call for me and the whole body of Christ and see the riches, the wealth of glory that is going to be God's in his inheritance in the saints and the best way to understand it is certainly not that we are an inheritance that's a misconception it's not we who are the inheritance because the Greek language says it's located the verb in the structure of the sentence is that the inheritance is located in the

saints and yet we are co-heirs, we are told so what is

the inheritance? we can illustrate it this way the Lord said that the land that is the holy land Leviticus chapter 25 I believe it is where the Lord says the land is mine and I shall inherit it in my people you see, when Israel went in and obtained the land God had an inheritance in Israel and it wasn't Israel but it was his inheritance the whole promised land all the blessings that were his all of his purposes and he received the inheritance located in the saints in his people on earth and God has now unveiled a delightful program where he is going to reclaim the universe and we are going to be part of that and we will be reigning and ruling with him and we are urged to see the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in that future day when we with Christ enter into the great blessing and

are brought into all the promises that he has made for us I know how my soul soars with that thought I just can't imagine the wealth and the glory and the honor that belongs to God after the wretched one has sought to usurp authority and assert himself and how Lucifer was thrown out and the chaos the world has gone through and then in this great mediatorial kingdom when our blessed Lord Jesus controls and reigns and rules over all things and he turns in the language of 1 Corinthians 15 to give everything back that God shall be all in all the dignity, the glory, the wealth of honor in his inheriting the universe back and we are participants in it the simple believers in Ephesus and the likes of you and me why doesn't that lift your heart away from just thinking about my sins are forgiven

doesn't it just take your mind away from the fact that you're going to be missed out of the terrible judgment certainly you are but those are the little waves at the side of the river and the deeper we go and the farther out we go we become absorbed with his knowledge and his permanent enlightenment of our soul and the riches of his grace and goodness to us and our hearts are lifted entirely outside of ourselves and the poor young believer over at Ephesus he could say, my goodness how could God possibly accomplish such a thing and I'm glad you asked that because he tells us right now in the next statement because he says and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe according to the working of his mighty power ah now, the fifth objective is to know the exceeding

greatness of his power and in order to convey it verse 19 has four words four Greek words that would be translated normally power and yet it's translated in a different way and there's four different words trying to convey to us a superlative thought a splendid thing beyond our grammar to comprehend he says I want you to know the exceeding greatness of God's power to us believing ones all you have ever done was believe all we have ever done was believe and by believing there's revelation there's knowledge there's blessing there's the appropriating of the wealth of God put at our disposal by reading and believing the divine revelation is it any wonder we would convene conferences to pour over his words and contemplate thoughts and have the fellowship with one another and there's nothing

here in this world that could possibly be comparable to the divine truths that are left for us in a portion of scripture and how rich this is the apostle says he gave four words now and they're four different words and we'll read them this way what is the exceeding greatness of his power that is natural ability a general and inherent capacity what is the exceeding greatness of his natural ability general and inherent force to usward who believe according to the power operative the energizing of his mighty manifested strength and this strength is a power as an endowment a capacity in other words he's gone through the whole vocabulary in the Greek language to take out and cream out four different words to show us the strength and the beauty and the glory of what is being operating on our

behalf he said how can that be he said the same power that raised Jesus out from among the dead he did it for that man he's the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and he raised that God man out from among the dead and as such he is the one that precedes us he's the first fruit and then the rest of us come along at the harvest time and when the trumpet sounds and the dead are raised and you and I are changed it'll be a triumphant demonstration of this glorious power that is his that he operated effectively from his own inherent person on the behalf of his beloved son and what does he do with him he elevates him highest above all principality that is all first beings angelic and demonic all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is being named in this age anything

that's being added that's in the present tense anything that's added now being named as it's going along any new innovations any new concepts anything else that's receiving a name that hasn't already been named he's above it all my what a glorious savior and the power that operated on his behalf beloved of God it's to usward who are believing ones and there's not one of us in the room that cannot exercise faith in his word and what do we do with that faith will we act upon it will it humble our spirits will it help us to intercede for the young believers that know nothing of this will it move our spirits to pray for our children to be enlightened to grasp the glory and the beauty of his inheritance in the faith to be occupied with the greatness of our God and then the most staggering

thing he puts all things under his feet and gave him to be the head and over all things to the church which is his body the intimate organism that fills him out who in himself is the fullness of everything how close we are to the head to our blessed savior part and parcel of the same bond of life itself and he is not ashamed to call us brethren how gracious to embrace us to include us what a remarkable prayer the occasion all the blessings of the past the spiritual exercise that existed their love to the Christian it is all for you I continually pray that you'll enter into the richness of the grace of our God and his power operating on our behalf you see it's the word of God which effectually worketh in us who believe it's the power of God that works on the behalf of usward who believe

Lord help us to be genuine believers in truth to embrace his word and enjoy it to the fullest and then to stir our affections to pray for others to possess and enjoy the same thing Lord teach us to pray shall we pray? our loving God and father our hearts are just delighted to contemplate the greatness of thy goodness and love toward us it warms our spirits to realize once again these familiar thoughts that how we can be so engaged and occupied with thee thy power thyself thy glory thy beloved son thy eternal plans and purposes that we can be union to thyself father we thank thee we praise thee in Jesus name now we would ask thee that some of these thoughts might linger in our own spirits warming our affections determining our will that we live in the light of these truths and then seek to

pray others into the similar kind of spiritual blessing and enlightenment and we ask it in the name and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ Amen

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9861.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-clark/prayer-06-eph1-power-and-glory/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net