

Ephesians 13-10-13b

We pick up our study now in the first chapter of Ephesians. We've been looking at verses 15 through 17. Paul, by communicating the content of his prayer, is letting these believers know what his objective is in communicating this information.

Now, what is your objective in coming to church? What is your objective in coming to class? What do we want to get out of this? Is it just a ticket to punch, a task to check off, I'm a Christian, I go to church, I've gone to church, I'm in good shape. Why do we attend? Why do we study the Word of God? Why do we come to this kind of a church where we focus very intently on trying to improve our understanding of God's Word? Paul says there are things that we need to know to successfully live this life. You are going to spend this day regardless.

Barring some stroke or aneurysm or physical accident of some sort, this day is going to get spent, as will tomorrow and the next and the next. The question is, is it going to be wasted or is it going to count? Is it going to sift into the timeless sands of the past with no result or will it be used to accomplish something, to make a difference, especially an eternal difference? This information that we are looking at and that we have been looking at over the past few weeks is designed to help us redeem the time because the days left to themselves are evil. They will go to no purpose.

Have you ever spent a day and you were just lazy? You had a bunch of stuff to do and you frittered it away. You got into a conversation on the phone or you got wrapped up in some small thing and you look at the clock and the day is gone and all of the things that you had planned to do, that you really should have done, that you could have done, didn't get done, and it just kind of gives you a sinking feeling. You think, how did that happen? I had the best of intentions and I'm on the road to Hades here.

I didn't get done what I needed to do and now the day is gone and I can't get it back. There is no worse place for that to happen than in our life before God, our responsibilities and our opportunities as believers. So when you think about Ephesians 1, when you think about this study, when in the days ahead a challenge comes up, it's time to make a decision, it's time to figure out how to spend time, stop and think about Ephesians 1. Where do you begin? Two words, in Him.

In Him. Just remember, let that phrase ring in our minds at odd times during the day. Just pull up, stop short, take a second and say, I am in Him.

What difference should that be making right now? Well, what do I know about being in Him? In Him I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. That's a good thing. Do I need cleansing? Do I need redemption? Do I need to be pulled out of an evil situation or an evil conversation or an evil circumstance, an evil companionship, an evil influence? Is something dragging me down into the cesspool of the world? I'm in Him.

I have resources in Him. I have options in Him that other people don't have. Other people historically did not have.

People that are not in Christ do not have. I've got resources, I've got opportunities in Him. It makes a difference.

What is my purpose in being in Him? To reflect God's glory. You remember the things we laboriously charted out here in the first half of this chapter. It is to be to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Is what I'm doing to the praise of the glory of His grace? Am I an emblem of His grace? Am I a reflection of His grace? Am I an example of His grace? Or am I acting just like any God-forsaken, non-Christian person would act in this situation, in this conversation, with this opportunity or this challenge, in this relationship, in this work function? Do I look and act just like an unredeemed, unregenerate, un-Christian person would think, act, and do? I ought to be different. I'm in Him. I reflect Him.

He's not here. I am. We are His body.

We are the Lord Jesus on earth. It ought to make a difference. We don't have to be a walking gospel tract.

We don't have to be a walking street evangelist. But in the pattern of our life, in the pattern of our function, in our ongoing characteristic ways, we ought to be in Him. And it ought to make a difference.

Wouldn't you think being in the second person of the Trinity would make a difference? Being a little charged particle full of divine energy, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the grace and gifts and love of God the Father expressed in and through us. Do you not think that we ought to be some sort of a little atomic particle of some kind, full of a special kind of energy, a special kind of potential, that would influence the things around us just like charged particles do in physics? It ought to make a difference. I am in Him.

That's the message of Ephesians. In Him, we have things. And in Him, there are so that's.

There are purposes. There are results. Paul says, I've heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus.

Notice, not just faith in God the Father. Why isn't it faith in God the Father? What's the difference? It's kind of an interesting question. Is there a difference in faith in God the Father and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Would there be a difference? It's God, God in general.

They're the Trinity, faith in one, faith in another. Why does Paul say faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? I've heard of your faith in Christ. This distinguishes us, as I have argued, from Old Testament saints.

Old Testament saints did not specifically express faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. They expressed faith in the promise of it. They expressed faith in the future reality of it.

Job says, my Redeemer lives, I will see Him someday. The worms can eat my flesh, but I will stand on my feet and I will see Him. I will see, I will know, I will come to understand.

In the future, that's His faith. The Lord Jesus has come. The Lord Jesus is present at the right hand of the Father, and our faith is in Him.

This is a distinctive of our privileged place in this dispensation of the fullness of the times. So, Paul has a reason for saying, I've heard of your faith in Him, your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your love for all the sanctified ones, all the set-apart ones, all the ones who share that faith. They're set-apart.

We are sanctified from Old Testament saints. We're separate from them. We're distinct.

We're unique. People always want to be unique. And yet, they want to be unique with a group of other people who are unique in the same way.

You've got a ring through your eyebrow. I want a ring through my eyebrow, so that we can both be unique. You've got a colorful tattoo on your arm.

I want the exact same kind of colorful tattoo, but I'm unique. Well, we have that kind of group uniqueness in Christ. So, Paul has heard of it, and he says, I make mention of you in my prayers that... And this is a huge hinge point.

I was looking at a refrigerator made by... I can't remember who made it. I think it might have been Frigidaire, back in the 1950s. Coolest refrigerator.

If I was ever going to get another refrigerator besides the time-honored Gibson in here, our 1951 Gibson still cranking away, making stuff cold. If I was going to get another refrigerator, this is the one I would like to get. It's got a handle on it shaped like a V. Looks like the front of a, what is it, an old Chevy had that V on it? The refrigerator? Yeah, the refrigerator with the V? The cool thing about this refrigerator is that if you pull the handle down on this side, it opens this way.

If you pull the handle down on this side, it opens this way. It hinges on either side, depending on which side of the V you pull down. The door will swing either direction.

Either direction. It's cool. What a great thought.

Why did this not catch on? I mean, how many times do you wish, oh, you know, excuse me, pardon me, let me close the refrigerator so you can get by. This one will open in either direction. Well, the hinge is essential.

You usually have to choose when you put a refrigerator in. You've got to pick. And you can move the hinges.

Nearly all refrigerators, you can change them. Now, your double door and your drawer, you're out of luck. But the ones that have got a full one door, you can move the hinges.

I've done it half a dozen times. This is a hinge point in the passage. This is where you open the door to see things that have been described and identified and supported in the first part of the chapter.

This is where the door swings open. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit. Really, the only change I would make to the new King James here is to change the to a. It is a spirit.

It's not the spirit. It's not an abstract spirit. And it's not the Holy Spirit.

It is your spirit. That your spirit be characterized by wisdom and revelation by means of full knowledge of Him. I love the passages that give us the by means of.

This is how you do it. Paul says, I pray that your spirit will be characterized by wisdom and revelation. Well, great.

I'd like that too. Lord, I'd love that wisdom, revelation, spirit. How do I get it? He tells you right here by means of.

Epinosis. This is the knowledge of God. Understood, accrued, built up by not only listening in Bible class, but by thinking about it, concentrating on it, chewing on it, digesting it, reflecting on it, meditating on it.

Like Psalm 1, 1 and 2. Meditate on it day and night. So that it is usable. It is applicable.

It is pertinent. And when we operate in its light, it is epinosis. It is usable, experiential, make a difference knowledge.

Not just knowledge. It's knowledge that makes a difference. So, epinosis.

This is the means. This is how it happens. This is how it takes place.

We're given the means. Now he says some conditions. This is how it happens.

This is another part of making it true. Making it happen. Verse 18.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. And you'll notice you've got a text note there on understanding. It says N-U text and M text read hearts.

It is hearts. The eyes of your hearts. And then we have a participle here.

The eyes of your hearts. It says being enlightened. This is having been enlightened.

This is pei photis manas. And the repetition of the first consonant there. The pi being repeated.

Pei photis manas. They have to repeat the pi because you don't want to say fei photis manas. That's too many f's.

So it's pei photis manas. This is a perfect passive participle. We've already seen a perfect participle in the past.

What does a perfect participle do? Completed action in past time. Having been done. The eyes of your hearts having been.

Already having been. Enlightened. When did this take place? This makes a difference.

Listen to me now. You don't come to the scripture and say, Oh God, open my eyes that I may see pictures of truth thou hast for me. Is it pictures? Open my eyes that I may see visions of truth thou hast for me.

Open my eyes that I may see. What Paul says is, your eyes have already been opened. The eyes of your hearts, which is your understanding.

It doesn't make a huge difference here. But this is cardia. In some of these it says deanoia.

The eyes of your understanding. There's no meaningful difference here. Take whichever text you want.

The eyes of your inmost self having been enlightened. Our eyes open at the point of salvation. Now, you can shut them.

But the scales fall from them at the point of our salvation. God's indwelling spirit gives us divine insight from then on. Even when you're reprobate.

Even when you're backslidden. Even when you are fallen. Your sense of sin.

Your conviction of guilt as a believer is still there. This whole idea that if you sin the Holy Spirit leaves. And when you confess He comes back is not biblical.

The biblical truth is that we are sealed. We are indwelt. We are accompanied by God's Holy Spirit from the point of our salvation.

All the way until we are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to take over that job Himself. And He ministers to us.

He leads us to the truth. He is the reason we can repent. That we recognize that we have sinned.

That in itself is a Holy Spirit enabled and empowered function. So if He left, we would get saved. We would sin once and we would be forever off the track.

But He stays. He sticks. He maintains.

He perseveres. He works with us. He communicates with us.

And that is the opening of our eyes. Our spiritual eyes having been opened. So Paul says, I pray that your spirit will be characterized by wisdom and revelation.

Learning new things on the basis of what you already know. The eyes of your heart, of your understanding already having been opened. Having been enlightened.

And this isn't just opened. This is illuminated. You've got light on the subject.

This is from Photizo. This is where you get photosynthesis and all your other photograph and photo words. This is light.

Now, it's a little bit of a figure of speech. If you want to see in the dark, you don't shine the light in your eye, do you? Oh, it's dark out here. You shine the flashlight into your eye.

You don't enlighten your eye. Your eyes can see because the subject is illuminated, right? It's the light shining off of that. But your eyes don't work in pitch darkness.

Your eyes function based on reflected light. And light coming into your eyes is the idea here. You can see what is in front of you because light enlightens your eyes.

Light enters your eyes. You can see the light. It's not blocked.

It's not obscured. It's not non-illuminated. So, we know two things now.

If we're going to have this spirit that Paul prays for that's got wisdom in it and is characterized by revelation, it's going to come by means of knowledge of him. This is not only Bible class, but also reflection and meditation on the truth of God. What difference does it make to me? I need to process it for myself.

A good chef serves the food. The good chef does not chew it for you and insert it into your digestive tract, right? It's crude, but pay attention now. Bible class sets the table and serves the food.

You do the intake and the processing yourself. That is not done by the communicator. It is not done by attendants.

You can attend every time the doors are open. You can attend here, there, everywhere, listen to

the radio, read books. It does you no good if you do not do your part, which is to process it, to make it real, make it flame, make it live inside you.

That's meditating in his law day and night. That's the one that is the tree that brings forth its fruit in its season. Paul refers to that here.

I pray that he will give you that your spirit will be characterized by wisdom and revelation by means of that epinosis of him. Gnosis turns into epinosis when you make it so for yourself. Why is this possible? Because the landscape has been illuminated for you in the past.

The eyes of your understanding, your mechanisms for understanding divine truth have already been provided. The light has already been shined by the Lord Jesus Christ. And God the Holy Spirit is the means by which that illumination can be meaningful to us.

Now we have another that. He prays that our spirits will take on these characteristics by these means and that itself has a purpose. It's not enough to just have a spirit characterized by wisdom and revelation.

Hey, my name is Sam Hull and I'm wise and illuminated. I'm wise and revelatory. I'm Sam the Revelator.

I've got a wonderful spirit of wisdom and revelation. Well, so what? What good does that do? Here's another pivotal hinge. This is the other hinge on the other side of the refrigerator door.

You open it one way, you see one thing. You open it another way and you see another thing. So that.

We've got two hinge points here. The first so that was at the beginning of verse 17. The next one is in the middle of verse 18.

So that. Here's the purpose. Here's the purpose.

This is really the bigger hinge. Paul prays that these things will come to be true and will evermore be true in greater and greater degree. So that.

There's a purpose in you having a wise spirit characterized by full knowledge, revelation with open eyes. So that you may know three things. It's going to be three things that Paul prays that we will know, that we will fully appreciate.

This is not just any old word for no. This is Oida. Oida.

This, if you look it up in the lexicon, says learn to know. That you will learn to know. That you will have experienced.

You get knowledge by experience so that you will come to experience, come to know, learn to

know, learn to appreciate. And if I was going to boil this down in translation, I would use the word appreciate. So that you will appreciate.

Not appreciate in the sense of, hey, I appreciate that. Thanks. Appreciate in the sense of really understand and be impressed by and be thankful for.

Do you appreciate the losses we are going to suffer if we make this amphibious landing on Tarawa? Do they appreciate what the cost was going to be ahead of time? We're not talking about thankfulness. We're talking about fully understand. Do you appreciate the sacrifice that's going to have to be made to attack mainland Japan in World War II? Do you fully understand what this is going to entail? It's that kind of appreciate.

Paul says, I pray with all of this equipment and all of this provision that you will appreciate, that you will come to know. Now there's going to be three things. What are the three things Paul prays that we should know? I figure Paul is an apostle.

If there's something I'm supposed to know, he knows what it is. And if I look at this prayer, I will know what I should know. He's going to tell me that you may know, number one, what is the hope of his calling? What is the hope of his calling? What is hope? That's the potential.

That's the door that it opens, right? That's the opportunity that can be exploited. The hope of his calling. You are presented with an opportunity, and if you lay hold of it, you can serve.

I was talking to somebody who could volunteer to serve on a grand jury for an extended period of time and review cases that would come before the court, decide which ones the court should hear. Totally voluntary. But it's a calling.

Got called up and said, look, here's this opportunity. Who would like to serve? Someone sticks their hand up and says, well, you know what? I think that's an important function. I will serve.

There was a calling, but there's also an option in that calling. And you say, you know what? There's a potential here to really do some good. There's a potential to make a difference.

There's a potential to offer meaningful support to my community, and I will do that. It's the hope of a calling. It's the potential that you see and recognize, and you say, yes, I'll go for that.

So Paul prays that given these equipages, these provisions, that this is what we will come to understand. That we will begin to appreciate just how wonderful this opportunity is that he's given us by calling us in this age, calling us to be the body and bride of Christ. We could have been an Old Testament saint.

Could have been an antediluvian saint. Could have been a millennial saint. Could have been an angel.

Could have not ever been here. But God created us and appointed us in this age, and there is a hope of this calling. And if you appreciate it, wow.

Paul says, that's what I pray for you. That God will be able to pull back that curtain, and you'll look through and see the tremendous, overwhelming potential that is a part of this calling. He says, I pray that you will come to know what is the hope of his calling.

That's number one. Number two, what are actually the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints? Now we'll go back and look at each of these in more detail. I just want to get the three covered this morning.

What is the hope of his calling? What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints? The riches of the glory of his inheritance. We need to figure out what the inheritance is. We know who the saints are, the sanctified ones.

We're talking about church age believers here, right? So is this their inheritance? Is this our inheritance? Or when it says his inheritance, who's the he? That's one of the things you say in Hebrew. Who is he? H-U, the suffix is he, the pronoun. Who is he? He is she, and he is it.

That's how you remember it in Hebrew. Who is he? He is she, and he is it. Anyway, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints? This is either, it's capital H, it's either God or it's the Lord Jesus.

One or the other of them has an inheritance. Is this an inheritance he is giving to the saints, or an inheritance that he possesses as the saints? What exactly is that? We'll look at it. But this is something Paul wants us to understand.

He prays that we will understand. And thirdly, Paul prays that we will know what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who trust. The exceeding greatness of his power expressed toward us who trust, which is according to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named.

This last one is big. This exceeding greatness of his power is described for us in the next couple of verses. How great a power is it? Well, he's got the power to make that person leave me alone.

He's got the power to meet this need I have. He's got the power to smooth out this difficulty. He's got the power to heal this injury or guide me in the selection of the right option before me related to people or job or education or whatever it might be.

God has the power to nudge me in the right direction. No, no, no. This is not the power to influence or direct or solve a small little problem for us.

This is the power which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead. Christ raised from

the dead. This isn't even a resuscitation type of thing.

This is not Elijah with the child. This is not Lazarus coming out of the tomb. Raising Christ from the dead is an order of magnitude, of order of magnitudes greater because the Lord Jesus Christ suffered the death of the cross which was a spiritual penalty.

He bore our sins in his body on the tree, but he was also separated from his Father. How did God heal that breach? How did God bring Christ back from that death? The Passover lamb that was sacrificed, the Day of Atonement offerings that were sacrificed every year in Israel, those animals didn't come back. The Lord Jesus was sacrificed and fully and completely paid the penalty for all human sin and he was brought back.

That's the magnitude of the power. Paul says, I pray that you will come to appreciate just how big that power is and it is expressed toward us. It's not just, Wow, isn't that something? Mount Vesuvius blew and that was a big explosion.

This is, God has expressed that power in me, for me, on my behalf. It's stunning. This is one of the biggest things that is described in all of Scripture.

This is bigger than Mount Sinai. This is bigger than the flood. This is bigger than Armageddon.

This is bigger than the seven vials and trumpets and bowls. This is one of the biggest things God has ever done, is raising Christ from the dead. Paul says, This power has been expressed toward us and you need to know it.

I pray that you will come to appreciate the availability of this power, the application of this power to you. The power that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. We are going to see, and you may remember from past descriptions, all five Greek words for power are used in this passage.

There are five different Greek words. They're all in this passage. Paul is reaching, he is stretching the limits of the Greek language to describe this power of God here.

We'll look at each one of them. We'll see what it means. We'll see why it's applied.

But just get the big picture here. Paul says, Look, God has done this incredible thing in Christ. It began before the foundation of the world.

It began in eternity past when he destined Christ and destined people to be in Christ and in and through Christ to possess and have all of these privileges. I pray that you will come to know it, that you'll come to appreciate it because it will transform your life. It will transform your outlook.

It will transform your perspective. You cannot help but be a different person if you really realize what God has done, is doing, and will do. It's the hope of his calling.

It is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And it is the surpassing, exceeding greatness of his power expressed toward us. And Paul takes the whole rest of the chapter describing it.

He has raised Christ, not only from the dead, not only through the intermediate realms of the earth, but seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. And because we are in him, don't forget the whole first half of the chapter was in him, right? If Christ is seated in the heavenlies at God's right hand, where does that put you and me? In the heavenlies at God's right hand, far above the angels. He has made him a little lower than the angels.

He has crowned him with glory and honor. In Christ we are raised. Do you not know that you will judge angels? So why don't you learn to resolve disputes among yourselves in a gracious and God-glorifying manner now? You're supposed to be in Christ.

You're supposed to be functioning at the right hand of the Father, offering intercession, not judgment, offering redemption and salvation, not condemnation. You're in him. Paul says, I pray that you will appreciate it and act in that light.

He has put all things under his feet, given him to be head over all things, to the church, verse 22, wrapping it up in verse 23, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. What completes the Lord Jesus Christ? You and me. The church is the completion of Christ.

He is not complete without us. He is not complete until he receives that gift from his Father, which is his bride, us. We are integral.

We are an inextricable part of everything that the Lord Jesus Christ is and does from now on. What a privilege. What an opportunity.

What a set of concepts to think about in the days ahead. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the wonderful descriptions we have here, the laying out of what you have done, what you are doing and what you will do in Christ and therefore in and with us.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts, illuminate them for us. We know that the eyes of our understanding are open, that we can receive these things, and by faith they can be not only meaningful but an enablement and an empowerment to fulfill all of your perfect will for us. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.