

Ephesians 13-10-20b

We pick up our study in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 18 by way of Romans 8 23 and 24. We just saw that when Paul prays, I pray that you may come to know what is the hope of your calling. What is the hope of our calling? You've got those two words, hope, elpis and the associated verb elpizo.

We who are the first, those who are the pro elpisantes, we who have the firstfruits of the spirit in Romans 8 23, we ourselves grown within ourselves eagerly waiting for the adoption. Now, it's one thing to say, yeah, I'm waiting for the adoption. I think that would be great.

Resurrection body, fly, go to heaven, go to Mars, walk through walls, it's going to be great. I'm really waiting for that. Be wonderful, visit with the saints, see the Old Testament parties, sit in the crowd and listen to them recount, see my departed loved ones, catch up with my great-great-great-granddad, discuss with him the hard-shelled Baptist position on five-point Calvinism.

It's going to be great. You can hardly wait. But look at the level that Paul is talking about here.

This isn't just waiting. This isn't just sort of a, yeah, you know, dessert after Thanksgiving dinner is going to really be great. Love that pumpkin pie.

This is a little bit more, isn't it? We ourselves grown within ourselves. Grown within ourselves. Now, honestly, when's the last time you thought about the hope of your calling and groaned inside with longing for it? Now, I'm not saying this hasn't happened.

I think it has. I think from time to time we really experience this. But this is an ongoing condition Paul is talking about.

He says, we are so eagerly awaiting this that anytime it comes to mind we just passionately desire the fulfillment of these promises. It's not an abstract. It's not a theoretical.

It's not just conceptual. We groan. Now, you can think of things that you really wish for.

I really wish for an end to this sprained ankle. I really wish for an end to this affliction. I have come down with the worst flu I've had in ten years.

I've got some sort of a physical ailment or problem or tribulation or I've broken something that needs healing. We compassionately wish. If you've ever had a migraine, you know what I'm talking about.

It's like Shakespeare says, the resolution of it is devoutly to be wished. You just groan waiting for the resolution, the fulfillment, the end. The coming of relief.

That's the level that Paul is talking about here. We eagerly wait. The whole creation groans and

labors with birth pangs.

Not only that, but we who have the first fruits of the Spirit. Why is it we that have the first fruits of the Spirit that are having this expectation? Because we know more. This is the age of the revelation of the mystery.

This is the proleptic preview trial period time. Have you ever done this? You get something on a 30-day trial. They know that if you try something that's good for 30 days, you'll keep it.

We'll send it to you free. Try it for 30 days. If you don't like it, money back.

They know once you unbox it and set it up and use this StairMaster or whatever it is, that you're going to get used to it. You're going to find out if it really is a good product, that you like it. You're not going to want to send it back.

There's also a percentage of people who lose the packaging and forget. It's 31 days. They figure they're going to be money ahead no matter what.

Trial software. If you've got a piece of software. I've done this bajillions of times.

I'm looking for something to meet a need. I download the trial, 30-day trial. Maybe it's got a limitation.

Maybe you can only do a part of the work with it. Or maybe it puts a watermark on the finished product. But you try it and you say, wow, this really is a great thing.

I can't wait to get the full version. I can't wait to get the complete thing and really put this to use. Well, the Church Age, in some ways, is the trial version of the Millennial Kingdom.

Try before you buy. Check it out. We'll send you the mattress and you can sleep on it and try the different numbers and inflate, deflate.

Once you sleep on this thing, we know you're going to love it. Well, we who are the pro-El Pizzo people, we who are the first fruits, people are going to look at this and say, that's what I want. What is the promise to Israel that was never fulfilled until yet? I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

I will take out your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, and then I'm going to pour my spirit out on you. Your old men will see visions. Your young men will dream dreams.

What does that mean? Everybody will individually have access to revelation. And that's the Old Testament way of describing individual access to God's truth. It used to be only the prophets would dream a dream or have a vision.

But even your young men, even your old men will have visions and dreams. This is individual participation in, entering into, having access to the revelation of God. Well, we've got that now.

You have that now. Paul says, my prayer when I give thanks for you and make mention of you before God is that you will come to know the hope of your calling, what you have now and what you are going to have. He has spent 12 verses already describing what we have in Christ.

And all of that builds potential. All of that creates opportunity for us. And he says, now, if you'll just grasp why you have been given all of this horsepower, all of these privileges, all of this knowledge and ability, you have the Holy Spirit.

You have standing and identity in Christ. You have a destiny in Him. You have provision in Him.

You have protection in Him. You have blessing in Him. You have inheritance in Him.

You've got all of these things. I pray that you will come to know. Well, that's what Paul talks about in Romans 8 as well.

And remember, this is Romans 8, 23 and 24. We were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope. What does one still hope? Why does one still hope for what he sees? We're waiting.

It isn't just this life. And Paul says in another place, if Christ is not raised from the dead, then we're not raised. And if it is in this life only that we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.

It's not, well, I hope my life turns out okay. And God's a great problem solver. And He's a wonderful Excedrin pill when I get a headache in my circumstances.

And He's a great Band-Aid when I get a scuff and a scrape. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. So often today you see the Christian life pitched as a solution to today's problems.

Well, want to meet the person of your dreams? Come to Christ. He'll help you find them. You want a good job? You want to enjoy your education? You want potential and capacity and this, that, and the other? Well, come to Christ.

You'll have a better life. That is true, but so limited, so shallow, so inconsequential compared to the hope of His calling that Paul is talking about. If all you want is a little circumstantial happiness, what is that? That just stimulates your pleasure receptors.

Wow, I really like this possession. I really like this person. I really like this situation.

I'm really enjoying this vacation. I'm really having a good time on this roller coaster. What is that good for? It's temporary and shallow and superficial.

If that's all you're after, this is why people get addicted to drugs. I feel good right now. If in this life only you have hope, it's misery.

It is the reach into the future, above, up, out, beyond. If you go a few verses down, we know

verse 28, all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose, the calling. What is the hope of His calling? If you begin to enter into this hope, if you begin to have the knowledge of it, look at the things that take place.

Whom He foreknew, He pre-purposed. He knew that there would be people who would respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He said, everybody that responds, come one, come all. And as many as come, look and live.

Moses raised the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man has lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish. We look, we live, and in this age we are set apart. You know how they say, we're having a big open house, grand opening, our new furniture store, whatever, and the first 50 people who show up are going to get a door prize.

Do they designate ahead of time, go through the phone book and say, all right, John Smith, Jane Doe, Fred Mertz, when these people show up, we're going to give them a door prize. First 50 people are going to get the door prize. First 50 people get a free electric razor.

First 50 people get a suction cup with a genuine imitation stained glass doily thing to hang in their window. First 50 people, whatever it is. Any first 50 people.

Now, does God know in eternity past who those people are? Yes, but He's not determining it. Does God know who is going to come to faith in the church age? Yes, He does, but did He foreordain that I would come? He knew I would come, but His knowledge doesn't make it come to pass. We're so limited.

People think that if God knows a thing, then His knowledge graves it in stone. Well, if God knows it, now nothing else but that can happen, so He's causing it. Foreknowledge is forecausation, and it's just, it's a logical fallacy.

People are convinced in their own mind, because that's how it would be for me. The only way I could know for certain that something would happen is if I made it happen. I know when somebody opens this window, there's going to be a shotgun blast, because I wired a string to the trigger and put a couple of shells in it, and when they open the window, bang! I made that happen.

That's not the way God's knowledge works, but people think otherwise. We know that all things work together. We know, oida, we have the information.

What do we do with it? All things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are the called, according to His purpose, because those whom He foreknew, and this is those, plural, this is the category, this group between Pentecost and the Rapture, those He foreknew. He knew we were coming, and He has given us a purpose. He has pre-purposed us.

What is the purpose? To be conformed to the image of His Son. Does everybody fulfill that

purpose? No. So what happened to God's purpose? If God's foreordaining everything, how come everybody's not pegging the meter of faithfulness, obedience, productivity, fruitfulness, hundred-fold fields? Everybody in this age, He foreknew, predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

If predestination ensures your salvation, why does predestination not ensure your conformity to the image of His Son? They say, we are, but it's sort of in the abstract. No, we're not. That's our purpose.

That's God's purpose for this group. Do we achieve the purpose? It depends. How much do you know? How much are you motivated by that knowledge? Why will there be least and greatest? Why will there be some that walk with Christ in white, have the new name, have the hidden manna, sit with Him on His throne, and others do not? The letters to the seven churches, to Him that overcomes, this is overcomer purpose.

Everybody is purposed to be an overcomer, but not everybody overcomes. Why? How much do you know? And how much does that knowledge make a difference to you? Because you have free will. It is your choice.

If you wind up being a hod carrier in a ewer of wood and a carrier of water in the kingdom, if you're out there chopping cotton on somebody's estate, it's on you. It's on me. It's on us.

We choose. We decide. Because God has given us the information.

The Apostle Paul is stretching the limits of the Greek language to give us this information. Predestined, pre-purposed to be conformed to the image of His Son. That's the purpose, so that He, the Lord Jesus Christ, might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The firstborn among many brethren. And whom He pre-purposed, these He also called. What is the hope of His calling? To be in that group of brethren, accompanying the Lord Jesus Christ, sharing in inheritance, sharing in privilege, sharing in service, sharing in opportunity, sharing in eternal life, reflecting the glory of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the hope of our calling. So Romans 8 really informs Ephesians 1. Back to our passage in Ephesians 1, that you may know, have the information, what is the hope of His calling? Secondly, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? We've seen this word riches before, right? Remember back in verse 7? In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Paul uses this word riches six times in this letter.

It's in verse 7. It's here in verse 18. He's going to use it again in chapter 2, verse 4, God who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us. He's going to use it again in verse 7 of chapter 2, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace.

He's going to use it again in chapter 3, verse 8, to me who am less than the least of all saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The unsearchable riches, isn't that what we're talking about? What is the hope of His calling? The tremendous potential, the unlimited blessing and opportunity that God gives us in Christ. Paul says, I want you to begin to grasp that, to get a handle on it so that it makes a difference.

The unsearchable riches of Christ in Him, in Him, in Him. So that, so that, so that, seven times. He uses it again in verse 16 of this chapter, 3.16, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He's recapping the prayer beginning in verse 14 of chapter 3. We'll get there. For this reason Paul says, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who do you pray to? A little review.

We pray to the Father in the name of the Son, in the power of the Spirit. Don't pray to Jesus and don't pray to the Holy Spirit. I bow my knees to the Father, to the Father.

Don't mess that up. I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. The family in heaven and on earth, angelic and human, is named in God the Father.

That He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, grant to you in keeping with, proportional to, in a ratio commensurate with. Now how big is that? How great is God's glory? That's how much blessing, how much insight, how much benefit Paul is praying for. I pray that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.

Strengthened in the inner man. That's where our eyes have been enlightened, right? In the heart, in the understanding. The eyes of your understanding have already been enlightened and when you get this information what is it going to do? Strengthen the inner man.

Now I don't know about you, actually I do, but I need strength in the inner man that I don't come with out of the factory. We are conceived in iniquity, we are born in sin and we are not strong when it comes to spiritual things. We need to be strengthened with might.

We need to be strengthened with power, with ability. We need that. And notice Paul prays for this.

He says, I pray that you will be granted according to the riches of His grace, which means in limitless measure to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man so that, look at verse 17, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. You being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend. Doesn't this make sense? Isn't this what we are seeing in chapter 1? That you will come to know, that you will comprehend.

Strengthened with might in the inner man through His Spirit, what does the Spirit do? Make the information perspicacious, make it real, make it understandable, digestible, powerful. That's where the strength comes from. So what is Paul praying? In chapter 1 he says, I pray that you will have this knowledge of God's truth.

In chapter 3 he prays that the Holy Spirit will take that information and make it flame and make it live, as Dr. Quiswell says, in our hearts and in our souls. Energize it, make it powerful, make it meaningful. And that is the way that Christ dwells in our hearts, through faith.

Faith is recognizing the truth of God in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, supernaturally making it meaningful and motivational for us. And this combination of the Spirit and the Word is Christ formed in you the hope of glory. The hope of glory.

Christ formed in you the hope of glory. So that's where we're going. That's all the way in chapter 3, but back here in chapter 1 we continue, the eyes of your hearts, of your understanding, having been enlightened already.

You don't have to go up to heaven to get this enlightenment. You don't have to find a guru on a mountaintop. You don't have to dig down into a cave and find the hidden gems deep in the bowels of the earth.

You have it already. As you sit listening to the sound of my voice right now, you have already got open eyes spiritually. It's a gift that comes at salvation.

It is a gift. Now we can shut our eyes. Seeing they see and do not perceive, hearing they hear and do not understand, the hearts of this people have become calloused.

But we do that to ourselves. God gives us open eyes. And you don't want to be Tom Cruise with your eyes wide shut.

You want them open. They have been opened for us. So that you may know what is the hope of His calling.

Notice it doesn't say what will be the hope of His calling. What is? It is a present truth. It makes a difference now.

What is the hope of His calling? Secondly, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? And the capital H there in your New King James is appropriate. I mentioned last time there is debate. Is He talking about His inheritance that He is giving to the saints? The saints are inheriting this.

And the best grammatical and theological interpretation of this is that the saints comprise, make up, consist, compose the inheritance of God. The saints are God, not just God the Son, God the Father. Because the He here, the personal pronouns with the capitals are God the Father.

Notice the next verse. What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ? So this is not Christ's inheritance in the saints. We are His inheritance.

We are His body. We are His bride. But we are an inheritance that belongs to God the Father.

What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? We belong to God the Father. And it is that ownership, it is that possession that God the Father is giving to the Lord Jesus Christ. Have we been given to Him yet? Has the marriage been fulfilled? Have we gone to the wedding feast? Have we enjoyed the marriage supper of the Lamb? Has the bride without spot and without blemish been presented to the Son yet? No.

We are a work in progress. We are being cleansed. We are being organized.

The overcomers are being sorted out. We will be transformed. We will be sanctified.

We will be glorified. We will be sorted into least and greatest. And God will present us to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But right now that gift has not yet been given. So who does it belong to? Who's got the inheritance right now? You may be the firstborn son, but while your Father lives, the stuff is His, right? And it's His inheritance to give. What are the riches of the glory of God the Father's inheritance in the saints? What does that mean? Well, how glorious is the inheritance going to be? It depends on what it's made of, right? And that's you and me.

We're in that group and the riches of the glory of His inheritance makes a difference. What are we doing to be sure that we are a part of the riches of His glory? How happy is the Lord Jesus Christ going to be to get you and me? God the Father is going to give us to Him. Are we going to be the rotten spot in the apple? Are we going to be the black bruise on the banana? Are we going to be the little black nasty place on a strawberry? We're shopping now.

I'm shopping for myself. If you ever go in there and you look and you say, well, which one have they got? We have such an overabundance and plenitude. You go through a place like Costco or these just warehouses, you think it's just a almost sinful superabundance.

Who in the world, if you've been to poor countries, this really strikes you. People must come to this country and look around a place like Costco and just go, what kind of cornucopia of absolute sinful indulgence and superabundance have I walked into? Look at all of the groceries. And this is just one store.

This is repeated all over the place. So you go in there and as you go to the vegetable, even just at your Kroger, you go there and look around in the fruit and vegetable department. You didn't have to grow the tree.

You didn't have to cultivate. You didn't have to protect it from rabbits and stuff. You go in there and there's every shape, size and description.

There's fruits and vegetables from all over the world there. And you just walk in and take your pick. You pick them up and drop them in the basket and go to the front and give them a few bucks.

And you have it. No strain, no getting up in the middle of the night to cover it because a hailstorm is coming. It's just there for the taking.

It's there for the picking. And so you've got a whole stack of peaches or a whole stack of some kind of a thing that you're going to try to eat. And you sort among them.

Well, I just want the best. This one's got a little spot. That one's mal-shaped.

And this one, the color is not quite right. And these bananas are too green. And no, this one's a little soft.

And we just take it for granted. I just want the best. And I sift around until I find the one that I want.

Well, look, we are part of something larger than ourselves. It's the body and bride of Christ. What part are we going to be? Well, I'm going to set that one aside and pick this one because this one is of higher quality.

This one is going to serve my needs better. It's going to be more presentable. What are the riches of the glory of God the Father's inheritance? Who's inheriting the saints? The Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you want to be the part that you've got to set aside, leave behind, take out of the basket? Have you ever made a little fruit basket for somebody? You want to give them a little treat. So you make a fruit basket or a flower arrangement or something. Well, if you've got a flower that's got a bent stem and it's hanging there drooping in the... I believe I'll take that one out.

I want a nice fresh one. I want one that's presentable, that is going to be enjoyable, that is going to bring gratification and pleasure. So if we come to know this is not an abstract, it ought to make a difference.

We ought to be groaning within ourselves, waiting for our adoption. We ought to be anxious and pressing forward to be a part of the riches of the glory of the inheritance that God the Father is going to give his own beloved son. I would love to be the beauty of the clear eyes.

Have you ever seen somebody that's just got beautiful, beautiful eyes? Matthew's taken some pictures of eyes up close. And when you look at it, the clarity and the beauty of it, you think what a beautiful thing God has done, even in designing our mortal flesh, creating us out of the dust of

the ground, the beauty that He can put into the human form. And you look at somebody and you say, oh boy, you know those eyes.

I just can't get over those eyes. And you think, if I'm in the body of Christ, I would love to be some beautiful feature, some wonderful addition, some great part of that inheritance that God is giving to His son, that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to look at and appreciate and recognize that the work He did on the cross had value, not just to His Father, but that we appreciate it, that we care enough about it to be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. I don't want to be the blemish that has to be covered up.

You know, they've got man makeup now. You can get man makeup and you can cover your blemishes. Well, fess up now.

Guys have gotten some inglorious blemish that you reach over in the wife's drawer and get a little bit of flesh-colored paint. I've got to tone this thing down. This is going to scare people.

You know, that's the advantage of being married. You can tone down some of these things. I don't want to be a blemish that the Lord has to cover up, that He's got to shuffle to the back.

Here are the glorious white-robed saints on horses accompanying the Lord Jesus in the clouds of His glory, but I'm not there. I didn't care enough. I didn't take that knowledge and do enough with it.

Despite the gift of the information, despite the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, I didn't care. It's my fault. Paul says, I pray that you will know these things, and in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, they will make a difference, and you will recognize this purpose and this calling, and it will change you.

People always want to change. I want to change the way I look. I want to change the way I act.

I want to be a better person. I want to be a blessing to those around me. Do you really want to be changed? Get a grip on this information.

It will change us. It will transform us by the renewing of our minds, because our minds are going to be looking at and processing a fresh set of facts. That's what Paul prays.

I pray that you will come to know. Well, we've seen just a sampling of the hope of His calling. We've seen the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

The third one is going to occupy all the rest of the chapter, and that's where we'll pick up next time, the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. Paul can't get this into a single phrase. It's going to take three more verses to cover this, or four, and that's where we'll pick up next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the incredible, almost incomprehensibly great privilege of living in this age, of being a part of the inheritance that You are going to give to the Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, on that day when He is glorified in and among His saints. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts in a way that will be meaningful and motivating to us in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.