

Ephesians 13-10-27a

This is Sunday, the 27th of October, 2013. We're in the book of Ephesians. We pick up the study this morning in verse 19, the exceeding greatness of His power toward us.

Let's prepare ourselves by taking just a moment to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, what a privilege and a blessing it is to gather with people who love You, who love the Lord Jesus Christ, who value the information that is found in Your Word, who desire to live in the light of it, who appreciate encouraging others and being encouraged by others who share that understanding. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ and the manifest, manifold blessings that we receive because we are in Him.

We pray that as we look at this passage from Your Word together this morning that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us, that He will energize us, that He will thoroughly equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Ephesians chapter 1, we've got this enormous sentence that Paul launches in verse 3 telling us what God has done and what His purpose in doing it is.

This is great information. So many people view God as an abstract. God is the Creator.

If He exists at all, He's above and beyond, He's separate. Paul says no, God is immediate, God is involved, God has a specific individual plan for you and for me. And in a larger sense, He has a plan and a purpose for us as a church.

But in the same way that the body has many members, the church has many individuals. And one of the things that amazes me when I look at a human body, you think about the process of conception and development in the womb and then the birth of a little baby. It starts out with a blastocyst and it starts out with a fertilized egg that then begins to divide.

Now here's my question, all of you biologists out there. You got this egg. It's got half the chromosomes.

Here comes the sperm and it's got the other half of the chromosomes. They combine and now you've got the entire individual unique map for this person. And so the cell says, all right, let's get with it.

And it begins to divide, 2, 4, 8, 16, and it exponentially grows from there. Now let's just say that it has divided into 64 cells. I just want to stop and look at the process when the developing embryo has gotten to the 64 cell point.

Okay. Are you with me? 64. I just, it's too complicated.

128, 256, 512, 1024. It's too much. I'm going to stop at 64.

All right. Cell number 63. If this developing thing was like the earth, cell 63 is sitting right where

Texas would be.

Okay. You got 63 others making this little spherical blob, but cell 63 is right there where Texas is. Okay.

And I'm looking at it. Now this thing is going to keep on dividing and pretty soon it's going to start being non-round. Pretty soon it's going to start, the head is going to sort of start to appear.

And the little buds that will become the appendages are going to start to appear and it's going to take shape. Well, cell 63 is going to be part of that division. It's going to divide just thousands more times.

Well, cell 63 right there, state of Texas. This is where the head is eventually going to form. Okay.

That's the rest of the body. You know, China is going to be the feet. You know, you got Europe and Asia are going to be the arms and like that.

So it's because remember it's in a fetal position, so they're real close together. But right there, right there at 63, this is going to be the head. These cells are going to divide.

Now here's my question. What's the difference in these 64 cells at this point? Do any of them have different chromosomes than the other? Have they got different DNA than the other? They're exactly the same, right? How, what's the difference that you tell me the difference in 63 from 17 or 9? What's the difference? How does this cell with the identical same map information, these things have been designed dividing precisely identically the same. They can't lose any information.

You can't say, well, I'm going to discard all of the foot information because I'm going to be the head. How does it know? How does cell 63 know that in that area, it's going to divide and it's a little companion cells, you know, it's there 62 and here's 64 and you know, previous row up here, here's 49 and down here's, you know, seven. How do they know to turn into the head? Answer me that question.

How does it know this is the head? How come 12, 13 and 14 over there, how come they're not turning into a head? On the China side. How come the ones on the Europe side don't say, well, I'm going to be the head. How does it know? They're all dividing identically, are they not? So as this thing progresses and you get the 1024 and the 2048 and the 4096 and it keeps on dividing, dividing, dividing, how do they know where they are? How does this one say, well, you know, we're in the arm part and not only that, but I'm in the elbow part, the guy next to me, he's going to shoot on out and be the wrist and the guy next to him is going to go on out and be the fingers and it's going to all divide.

How do they know where they are? How do they know? How does the right elbow? No, it's a right elbow. How does the cranium and the skull cap know that it's the cranium and the formation of

those plates and things? How do they know? They specialize, don't they? Some of them later on start turning into nerve tissue and muscle tissue and skin tissue and internal organs somewhere in there. And those 64 cells is one that's going to turn into the internal organs or some later great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandchildren of those cells are going to turn into livers and spleens and intestines that are long, you know, 24 foot long tube or whatever.

How do they know? How do they know where they are? How do they know there? Why do you not end up with a big toe where your belly button goes or where you don't end up with a, with an elbow where your ears should be? How do they know? Well, I'll tell you how they know. God has a specific destiny, not just for the body, not just for the, the machine that will house the soul once that person is born, but God has got a specific role to play and a specific destiny for each individual part of the body. And that destiny defines and pervades the development of the body from its inception all the way through.

Now the physical mechanics of it, I don't know. And I don't think science knows. I've read, I've researched, this question has plagued me for years and I've read everything I can find.

Nobody can tell me that they, they imagine they theorize. You know what? One of the theories is that it's an electrical field, that the electrical field somehow there's a, there's like a radio, uh, cell 63, this is cell seven. I just want you to know you're going to be the head over that Roger out, you know, that, that there's some sort of an invisible aura that, that, uh, because they don't know, they can't figure it out.

But here's my point. As interesting as all that is to me, you are a part of the body. There is a movement afoot and it has been around for decades that see, Dan's not here.

Dan always gets those there. There is a, there is a belief, Andrew, Andrew catches it. Laurie through, through long experience, pick that up.

But, uh, there are people who believe that God's will is just general and you, you might have this persuasion floating around in your soul somewhere that, well, as long as I do what I'm supposed to do, in other words, as long as I stay in bounds on the football field, I can just run wherever I want and do whatever I want because it, there's God's will is general. God calls us to be holy. Don't sin, learn, grow, be fruitful, be kind to one another, you know, follow the commandments in scripture.

But within that, I can marry anybody. I can have any job. I can live anywhere.

God doesn't have a specific will. If you want a summary of this, and I've mentioned this book, it's, it will serve to represent all other books on the same subject. And there are a bunch of them, but the one I have on my shelf is called decision making and the will of God by Gary Friesen.

And it's, I don't know, it was published probably 20, 25 years ago, but it's all, none of the

arguments have changed. This is what people believe. And my response to this is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Do you take the 64 cells and say, eh, do what you want. You're, you know, you're in the womb. You're, you're part of the body here.

Just go nuts, you know, do what you like. You, I don't get, you know, you end up with just, you know, 17 heads and no feet or 17 feet and no heads, or it's, it's confusion and chaos. Listen to me.

If you don't remember anything else from this lesson this morning, in Ephesians chapter one, when it's talking about the body, verse 22, he put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body. The body is not chaotic. The body is not confused.

It's not random. You as a part of the body of Christ have just as specific a destiny and as specific a plan and purpose as any given part of a human physical body has. Teeth are teeth, bones are bones, connective tissue is connective tissue, and they don't swap roles.

Well, I think today, instead of being an elbow, I'll be a, an ear it's, it's nonsense from birth at inception, that destiny of that part of the body is known and it's, it's provision and it's sustenance and it's relations to surrounding parts of the body are known, are designated. It's a part of design, God's design. You as a member of the body of Christ have a specific destiny.

God has assigned you a place. You have family, you have friends, you have church. At this moment in time, you have a particular pastor.

You have access to other forms of communication of the word of God, whether it's internet, radio, tapes, books, whatever you choose, but these things are in your periphery. They are in contact and it is by design. It's not an accident.

Some of these things are for benefit. Some of them are for testing and challenge. You think about cells in the body.

Think about tissues in the body. Good things come, nutrients come, oxygenated blood comes and refreshes and restores and renews. And then sometimes bacteria and viruses come.

Some things are to be accepted, welcomed, taken advantage of. Other things are to be identified, rejected and pushed away, destroyed, gotten out of the area. You have a specific place and part.

The time in which you were born, the place in which you were born, the family into which you were born, good, bad or otherwise, current situation, good, bad, otherwise, circumstances, health, job, level of education, opportunities, all of these things are just as precise, just as sophisticated in their complexity as the interactive situations you find anywhere in the human

body, so don't let anyone tell you, don't worry about it. This is why God gives us his word. This is why God gives us his spirit.

God's Holy Spirit is that invisible presence that takes the information from the word of God, just like circulation in the body and enables us to know exactly what our function is. There is something invisible in the development of a human body to help each part know what it should do, how it should continue its development and growth, what its function is, where its provision comes from. Do you ever wonder what would happen if the, whatever the mechanism is that does the plumbing in a human body, how many thousands of miles of veins, arteries, their branches, all the way down to the capillary level, if there's any leak, if there's any disconnect, those of us that do plumbing with PVC pipe, you know what happens if you don't get a good joint, if you don't get everything connected, you stick it together for fit, you forget to go back and pull it apart and glue it and you turn on the pressure and pow, you've got water everywhere.

Our circulation system, the infinite miles of connected tubing that carries blood out to the tissues and carries the vein system that carries it all back is engineered to reach every part of the body. No cells are left out. It's the perfect interstate highway system with smaller roads going all the way down to the driveways to each individual house.

If the cells are houses, you've got the entire United States with paved roads that you can take and get from any central supply place, you know, Walmart's great central warehouse, all the way to your driveway, into your house, it's a complete and connected system. God designed that. Well, how did it develop from identical cells? There is an invisible agency and an agency we know not what in science.

It's one of the many questions they'll never talk about because they can't answer it. There is something invisible that makes that happen in the same way. You as a member of the body of Christ are defined and guided and nourished and encouraged by an invisible presence that helps each of us know, what is my place? What is my role? What should I do today? How can I best serve? How can I remain connected and coordinated with the rest of the body today? That's what God's Holy Spirit does.

That's one of those things that are given to us in Christ. So even as we look at this chapter and all of the things that God has done for us so that wonderful structure we saw in the first part of the chapter, don't lose sight of what He's really talking about. So look at this.

Paul says, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has done these things for these specific purposes. We've been over in great detail. So Paul says, I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

This tells me that you are active. You are not dead epidermis that's about to flake off. You are not necrotic tissue that can't function.

You're not infected tissue that needs to heal. You're not in a place where you need some sort of redress, some sort of cure, some sort of palliative measures to bring you to function. You have faith and you have love.

You're healthy. Paul says, because you are healthy, this is what I pray for you. I do not cease to be thankful for you.

I mention you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation. I was reading some notes this past week and somebody, maybe it's the Net Bible, translates this, that He may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation. They say, well, spirit of wisdom and they swap it around and say, well, they take the noun, which is the spirit, and the adjectives, sort of these genitives that function as adjectives, a spirit characterized by wisdom and revelation, but the noun is the spirit, they swap it around and they say, well, no, the nouns are wisdom and revelation and spiritual becomes an adjective.

And it loses the emphasis, in my opinion. This is not, I pray that God will give you spiritual wisdom and revelation. He says, I pray that you will be given a spirit characterized by these things.

The focus is the spirit, because you know what the spirit is? The spirit is your connection point to God and to the rest of the body. It's not just this abstract spiritual wisdom and revelation. Oh, I pray that you'll know what happens at the seventh bowl judgment.

You'll be able to cite the five salvation ministries of the Holy Spirit or the seven biblical concepts of death or any other thing. You can quote all of the attributes of God in the essence box or something. Spiritual wisdom and revelation, that's not what He's talking about.

I pray that God may give to you a spirit characterized by wisdom and revelation, because your spirit, your human spirit is your connection point. God, the Holy Spirit communicates in and through our spirit. Using my analogy, and I don't want to beat it to death, but if you think about this developing human body and this functional human body and whatever the invisible agency is that helps each part know where it is and what it's supposed to do and how it's supposed to divide and develop, there needs to be some sort of communication terminal.

There needs to be some point at which it connects to this invisible guidance system. Otherwise, it's going to be hitting the receiver. Hello? Hello? I'm not hearing anything.

I don't hear you. I don't hear you. There have been situations where there's an airplane trying to land and the pilot's in the cockpit and he's calling the terminal saying, you know, call sign, call sign.

Give me clearance to land. We're running out of fuel. But his receiver is broken.

And so the people on the ground are saying, you know, pull up, pull up. You're about to intersect with another, another plane. And you need to go to, you know, circle around and come to runway six and come the other way.

And they're talking and talking and talking, but the receiver is broken in the aircraft and the guy's literally flying blind without any guidance, without any knowledge. And he's, disaster is imminent. The human spirit is the connection point.

This is where the communication happens. This is the old gospel song, turn your radio on. Uh, this is where the radio gets turned on.

It's your human spirit. This is where God, the Holy spirit communicates. And the spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

We're told in another place. This is where we cry out Abba father. We hear his voice.

We get his, his plan and purpose understood. And this is also where our fellowship in the horizontal direction takes place. We resonate, we affirm, we connect with one another.

Spiritually, and this transcends, you know, human ideas of, of what makes a friendship or what makes a relationship. There is a spiritual connection. This is the network that holds us together, that defines us, that enables us.

So you want a spirit that is characterized by that, that you see the information flow of wisdom and revelation, but it's the spirit that you need. It's not the information by itself. It's the fact that you've got that connection in the epinosis, the experiential active, make a difference knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding, having been enlightened, the eyes of your heart.

This is actually the heart, uh, having been enlightened for this purpose. And then we saw there are three great purposes that you may know the hope of his calling covered it last time. Going over to Romans chapter eight.

Remember that? What is the hope of your calling? Go to Romans eight. What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints covered that last time. Remember what that is? This is not what we inherit.

This is us as the inheritance that God, the father is giving his son, his victory on the cross. This is the bride. This is the marriage supper.

This is the wedding feast. This is the kingdom. This is the king taking his, uh, rightful kingdom, sitting down on the throne with his bride.

And that's us. We are the glorious inheritance that God, the father is giving to Jesus Christ. How important is it to be functional? Uh, new brides always have a horror that there's going to be

something go wrong with their face on their wedding day.

You know, what if I get a cold sore? What if I have a horrible boil on my end of my nose or something that's impossible to camouflage? I don't want to be, uh, blemished on the day, this great day, when we are wed, when we, when we are joined, when the marriage begins, it's a day of celebration, it's a day of happiness. And, and both then and afterward, I don't want to be dysfunctional. I don't want to, you know, have, uh, gotten a whole bunch of, uh, you know, you don't want the measles or something all over your face and trying to go in there and be the, be the bride.

Well, think about the bride of Christ and the day when Jesus comes to collect his bride and his inheritance, God is not going to put into that inheritance. Every single church age believer. Do we lose our salvation? No, but those who accompany the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not the entire church.

This is why Paul says, I am writing to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, because it is the faithful who are going to have this privilege. Now, nominally, everyone is church. Nominally, everyone is saved.

Nominally, everyone is body and bride of Christ. But I am here to tell you that there are many who are going to be standing in the back as, as background material, not in the forefront, not riding the white horse, not accompanying the Lord Jesus Christ, not being that glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Why? Because they disqualified themselves.

They did not purge out the old leaven. They did not pursue righteousness by faith. And you cannot be in the forefront of reflecting God's glory when you have not been in the forefront of those who are pressing to do so in this life.

You just can't. And we're going to see that here, uh, because Paul is going to mention for a third time, he mentioned it at the beginning. He is writing to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus in verse one.

He says, when I heard of your faith and your love in verse 15, look at verse 19. Now our third prayer objective, Paul says, I pray that you will come to know the hope of your calling. Pray that you will come to know the riches of Christ's inheritance in the saints, that glory.

And thirdly, what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us? Does it have a comma after us? Who's the us? Who's the we? Us who believe you say, Oh, well, see, that's all believers. Interesting thing about this is this is a present participle. Pistou is your verb, but this is a, this is not an heiress.

This isn't a past perfect. Those who have believed, this is those who are trusting the exceeding greatness of his power toward us, who are trusters. A participle takes a verbal idea and makes a

noun out of it.

Those who are the trusting ones in the present, present active participle, ongoing action in present time that is so consistent that it defines you. I am a truster. We tend to say, Oh, is he a believer? Meaning at some point in the past, did he accept Christ as his savior? But believer, if you think about it, would be one who is currently in a ongoing state of believing, right? A believing one, a currently today in the active process of believing one.

That's what a believer really ought to represent. Not just, well, at some point, at some time, don't know what's going on now, but they're a believer in the sense that they're not going to the lake of fire when they die. So third, what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who are the trusting ones, present active participle? This power is not active and not effective for everyone.

It is effective and active for those who are, as we saw in verse one, as we saw in verse 15, those who are actively prosecuting their Christian life by faith and obedience, manifesting love for God and love for one another. And this excludes vast realms of people who nominally claim Christ as their savior, but are not living that life. This is power toward those of us who are trusting.

Now it says there is exceeding greatness of his power. And this is where you start seeing the limits of the Greek language begin to really get stretched. In Greek, this is the huperbalon, huperbalon.

This is what's translated exceeding. You know what huper is? It's actually hyper. The rule says that when you have an epsilon in this position, you transliterate it as a Y. So this is hyper.

Hyper means an overabundance of something, right? Hyperactive, you get too much activity. Hyperbalon, balon, balo is a verb that means to throw. And this is why we call round things that you play games with a ball, a football, a baseball, balon.

So a hyperbalon, what would that be? This is a ball you throw over the fence. This is a ball you hit out of the park. This is a ball that's gone beyond, right? If you've been watching the World Series, saw a home run the other day, hit over the monster there in Boston, the big tall wall, the toughest one to get a ball over, ball went over.

That was hyperbalon, way up there. That's the description of this power that Paul wants us to understand. Now, in your day to day life, when you're just motating around, you're going to the refrigerator and getting something to drink and sleeping around, turn on some music, open up a book, grab a mop, do whatever you do, not necessarily at the same time.

It's like texting and driving. You don't read and mop at the same time. Passed somebody on the way over here, a lady texting away, phone in her right hand, steering wheel in her left.

And my advice is, you know, get away from somebody doing that as quick as possible because it is, you're more impaired than if you're drunk. But as we're going around just doing our routine

things, do we stop and think about the power of God that surpasses, that goes over the wall, over the house, beyond what we can imagine? I think it's difficult for us to sustain that. We live in a material, mundane world and we don't see the revealed power of God.

We don't see the seraphim and the cherubim and we don't see the creative acts of God. We can't view the big bang on YouTube. So how do we get a grip on this? Paul says, I pray that you will come to know this surpassing greatness of his power.

Well, I'm game. I want to know the surpassing greatness of his power. How do I, how do I get a grip on that? Well, it's important because this is what hits our human spirit.

This is what connects us to God. That understanding, that power is going to come through that connection in the spirit through the Holy Spirit and the information that is in God's word, that revelation and wisdom hits that connecting point where God's Holy Spirit energizes us. It's invisible.

It's powerful. It defines us. It tells us where we are and what we're supposed to do.

I am the hundred and eighty seventh nerve cell in the connection right after the cerebellum, whatever your, whatever your function is. What if it doesn't work? There, there is a rare disorder where people can't feel pain. The pain system just doesn't work.

And these people, you think, wow, wouldn't that be cool? No more sore back. These people are miserable. They constantly injure themselves because they have no feedback for pain.

There as children, their parents have to practically encase them in inflated plastic to keep them from hurting themselves. They don't know that they're hitting something too hard. They don't know that they're bruising themselves or breaking a bone or twisting a joint in the wrong direction or stepping on something sharp or leaning against something hot.

They have no pain mechanism sending signals to the brain saying you're hurting yourself. Stop doing what you're doing or get out of that situation or position. They don't have it.

Well, what if you are part of the pain signal delivery system and you don't do your job? These are pastors who stand in the pulpit and deliver platitudes and do not deliver the rebuking and correcting and instructing parts of the word of God. Well, people are bored. I want to I want to give them something stimulated, want to give them something.

I want to give them a worship experience where they can come away floating on a cloud of emotion and you don't deliver pain. Pain is necessary for correction. I am doing something that is harmful.

I must stop. I'm banging my teeth against a rock. I begin to feel pain.

I should stop that. I am opening bottle caps with my teeth and they are cracking. I should stop that.

If there's no pain delivery mechanism, you'll destroy yourself. It's a misery. There's nobody more miserable on this earth than people who literally feel no pain.

I saw a documentary on it's awful, horrible affliction. And how do you fix that? What do you do? That there is no as with so many things. So we want to be sure that where we have been assigned the function that we fulfill in the body of Christ, that we are functional, that we are effective, that we are healthy, that we bless those that are around us.

You want this, don't you? I want this. We all want this. Well, this scripture is going to tell us how to do it.

The eyes of our hearts have been enlightened so that we can know this. Paul is praying that we will come to know it. All we have to do is figure out, okay, I'm willing.

Tell me, let me know it so I can do this function and reflect the glory of God, fulfill the purposes that he has in Jesus Christ and us in him, and go through the whole glorious end of this chapter. We just want to know how, don't we? I think we do. Well, we'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, Paul is going to tell us. We'll be right back.