Ephesians – “God’s Plan For Every Believer”

Chapter 1:15-18

True belief in Christ naturally leads to love for other Christians

You can’t have one without the other

The New Testament emphasizes loving one another 18 times

This love is to be impartial, i.e. unbiased, without prejudice

There’s no “class system” within Christianity

There’s differentiation in roles but not in importance or value

Paul is clearly commending the Ephesians believers for their genuine faith and their comprehensive love

We should be looking for these characteristics in others and then be communicating what we see

He did this with the believers at Thessalonica

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3: “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, **3**remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.”

Back in our text, Paul is so encouraged by their evident faith and love that he can’t stop praying and thanking God for them

2

How often does this same kind of response characterize our lives?

He’s longing for these Ephesians to grow much stronger spiritually and become increasingly more effective in their witness and service for Christ

Another example of someone with this same earnestness was Epaphras

Listen to what Paul wrote about him in Colossians 4:12-13 “Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.”

Notice next how Paul prayed for these Ephesian believers

His prayer was centred around the spiritual realm of their Christian practice

There's nothing wrong with praying for one another’s physical needs but have you noticed how this seems to commonly take precedence over spiritual needs?

We pray for healing, for employment, for material blessing

3

But how frequently do we prioritize praying for someone else’s spiritual life?

How often do we pray for another believer to be godly, not just healthy?

1 Timothy 4:8: “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”

Paul prays for spiritual wisdom, revelation, enlightenment, insight, and power

We rarely pray for just these things for other Christians

Paul was incessant in asking God for these realities to have a vital part in the Ephesian believer’s life experiences

The NIV and the ESV translate “spirit” to be the “Holy Spirit”

As such, this verse has an inherent, trinitarian foundation

Our triune God can grant all of these significant things to believers on a daily basis

One of the end results will be continual growth in one’s knowledge of God

What can be more amazing than to have a greater knowledge of God?

3

Gaining greater earthly knowledge is truly one of humanity’s highest pursuits

Education is prioritized from an early age

Beyond scholastic studies, people have many interests in which they seek more knowledge

What are some hobbies you may have an interest in?

The most popular hobbies worldwide are the following: reading, traveling, fishing, crafting, television, bird watching, collecting, music, gardening, video games

People can go to great extents when learning a new hobby

Many of us most likely spend a good amount of time pursuing and participating in some of these various activities

But what about increasing in the wisdom, revelation, and our knowledge of who God is – His divine attributes, His eternal plan, His unmatched creativity, His unparalleled promises?

Does God fascinate us?

This was Paul’s insatiable quest from his own pen in Philippians 3:7-14

How foreign does this seem to our everyday life as to what captures our attention, consumes our thoughts and becomes our main priorities?

5

I know we can become so spiritually minded we are no earthly good

However, let’s not forget how we need our eyes to be opened on a daily basis to see future, eternal realities, not only our current circumstances

This has most certainly been one of the greatest challenges with the Covid-19 crisis

There’s too many Christians focusing primarily on our present rights rather than on our everlasting inheritance

I have seen people who claim to be Christians on various social media platforms becoming belligerent, blatantly disrespectful of government leaders, using castigating and caustic rhetoric to communicate their points of view

I have not seen many post a prayer like this one we’re examining in Ephesians chapter one

Eternal realities always carry more spiritual importance than temporal ones

How can we, in any way, compare our brief earthly life with eternity?

Furthermore, we can have confidence we’re God’s precious inheritance now and through eternity

Let’s make a commitment to model Paul’s prayers