

• *All spiritual blessings' explained more fully*

Paul has given his survey of 'all spiritual blessings' that come to us in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Now from 1:15 to 3:1 he will be seeking to explain more fully what he means. He will be speaking more of the power of God, the inheritance that comes to Christians, Jewish and gentile, and their equality in the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1:15 he turns from praising ^{☞1} to praying.

^{☞1} see 1:3

• *God's massive and vast plan*

Paul's great desire for the Ephesians is that they may see the greatness of what has happened to them in Christ. They are part of a massive and vast plan of God to unite everything in the universe under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's, Prayer

• *Faith and love*

Paul turns to prayer for these Ephesians. It is not enough for a Christian teacher or apostle to teach people. He must pray for them as well. *'For this reason, I for my part, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and the love which you have towards all the saints' ^{☞1}, do not cease to give thanks for you, when I make mention of you in my prayers' ^{☞2}.* The two outstanding marks of the Christian are faith and love. The Christian life begins with faith and it expresses itself in love. Paul has heard that the people in and around Ephesus have become strong Christians. (Paul's words here confirm that 'Ephesians' is some kind of circular letter. Paul is obviously writing to a wider circle than to his old friends of Acts 20:17–38.) They have firm faith; they are expressing their faith in love towards each other. But to faith and love must be added hope – expectation of what God is going to do for them in their future. Paul is praying that they may go on to the next stage of Christian maturity.

^{☞1} 1:15

^{☞2} 1:16

• *Growing in maturity*

Further enlightenment needed

People who have already come to salvation still need further enlightenment. Although Paul knows his friends in Ephesus are Christian people, he wants God to do much more for them. *'I am asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Christ' ^{☞1}. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints' ^{☞2}, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe' ^{☞3}.*

^{☞1} 1:17

^{☞2} 1:18

^{☞3} 1:19a

• *Three requests*

We tend not to see the greatness of God's salvation. We need teaching, and Paul is about to give them great teaching in this matter. But teaching is not enough; he is also praying for them. His prayer for them is also a suggestion of what they ought to be praying for themselves. There are three things he is asking for them.

1. The hope of his calling

1. He wants them to see the **hope of His calling**. 'Calling' is God's work of bringing us to Christ. Paul knows that these Ephesian Christians have been called into fellowship with Jesus. Now he wants them to be people of 'hope' as well. The word 'hope' does not refer to any kind of **doubtful** desire that maybe something will happen. We sometimes use the word that way. 'I hope to visit my parents', we say. We mean it might be possible, it might not. But that is not the way the word is used in the Bible. It does not mean 'hope' in that sense. It means expectation, anticipation, looking forward to something we know will come. Every Christian needs to be gripped with the

• **Christian hope looking forward to something we know will come**

2. The riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints

• **Begins in this life**

3. The greatness of his power towards believers

• **Eyes opened by the Holy Spirit**

• **Comes through a lifetime of prayer and meditation**

conviction that God is putting everything under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we ourselves have a share in this plan of God. In general we all have the same expectation – the hope of sharing in the glory of Christ. But in detail we shall all have a different route to follow, different things in detail to achieve for God

2. He wants them to see **what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints**. God has an inheritance for us. People who are already Christians need to have their eyes enlightened to see more! What they need especially to see is the greatness of their inheritance. What is our inheritance? May the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see the answer! It begins in this life. It is heavenly reward being given to us even now. It is the presence of God. It is reaping eternal life back from the Spirit. It is being ‘filled’ with God’s joyful energy ^{☞1}.

3. He wants them to see **what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe** ^{☞1}. This is the matter about which he will say the most. It will be the theme of the rest of the chapter and of Ephesians chapter 2. It will be the theme of his prayer in Ephesians 3:20–21.

This is what we ought to pray for ourselves. We need to ponder and meditate on Paul’s teaching, verse by verse, line by line, word by word. Then we need the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our heart that we may see God’s great power working on our behalf.

This is not the kind of thing that is given in a few minutes’ prayer at the end of a meeting. This requires not a few minutes of prayer and meditation but a whole lifetime of prayer and meditation. Every day of our lives we need to be asking God to show us these things by His Holy Spirit. The grace of God is much greater than we realise. Our future expectation is staggeringly great. The exceeding greatness of God’s power is at work in our lives. The Christian life is not just a matter of our ‘making a decision’. It is a powerful change in our entire nature and character. It is the mighty power of God bringing about a change in our lives. And that exceedingly great power continues to work in us. Our eyes need to be opened to see it.

^{☞1} Matt. 5:6

^{☞1} 1:19a

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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