

# Ephesians

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[ 0 : 00 ] On the sheet that we have just concluded, we were dealing with the subject of having been sealed, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. This would be on page 865 that we have concluded.

We have treated that, certainly not exhaustively, but I trust sufficiently. And we spent some time dealing with the issue of the earnest of our inheritance, which is like the down payment, and that is literally to tide us over until God finishes the transaction He has begun in us.

That has to do with your body. We talked about that from Romans chapter 8, and we recognized at that time that even though the price for our redemption has been fully paid, so that when Christ said from the cross, it is finished, it really was.

There was nothing left for Him to do to secure our redemption. However, that fullness of redemption has not been fully applied.

It has been only partially applied, and that is to affect our human spirit. So, when we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, God gave us in the person of the Holy Spirit the down payment, or the earnest of the earnest of that transaction.

[ 1 : 24 ] That's the guarantee that what He has begun in us spiritually, He is also going to complete physically. That involves the changing, the glorification of these physical bodies, so that the immortal is realized in place of the mortal, and so that the incorruptible is realized in place of the corruption.

So, that means even though our redemption is secure, and it is guaranteed because of the work that Christ has done, all of the application has not been made, but it will be.

And then we will be a finished product. Now, we are still a study in progress. None of us has arrived. And this is partly what Paul was talking about in Philippians 3, when he says, Not as though I have already attained, but I press on for the mark of the high prize of the calling of God in Christ Jesus.

And he's talking there about the ultimate realization of what God means to Him to be. We are not there now, but we will be. And the down payment is the guarantee that that is going to happen.

And then on this new material, which begins on page 866, the continuation of the text from Ephesians 1, note at the top in the bold print, it deals with that this will be realized unto the praise of His glory.

[ 2 : 54 ] This is the ultimate objective, is the glory of God. Now, some, I'm sure, would look upon that with a dim view, and they would say, Well, if the only thing God is seeking is His own glory, isn't that a rather selfish goal for the deity of the universe, is His own glory?

Well, not when you recognize who and what He is in comparison to everything that He has made. God is entitled to His glory.

And His glory He will share with no one. His glory is that which is unapproachable and in many respects undefinable by us.

But it has to do with the utter, total worthiness of our God. And this involves the whole concept, guys, of worship.

When we worship God, we are ascribing value and worth to the deity. We worship Him because He is worthy of being worshipped.

[ 4 : 16 ] And He is the only one who is. There are a couple of places in the Bible where men were willing to ascribe worship to another man, as in the case of Peter.

And Peter said, Stand up, I myself also am a man. You don't worship me. And some would be tempted to worship angels. And an angel would correct them and say, Worship God only.

He is the only one who is worthy of receiving worship. And this, by the way, guys, is an excellent argument and point to be sustained as regards the deity of Jesus Christ.

He never refused the worship of any man. And yet, if He is not worthy of it, if He is not deity Himself, He is not deserving that worship.

But He is. And all honor and praise and worship is due Him. And nobody expresses that more thoroughly or more consistently than does the Apostle Paul in the epistles that he writes.

[ 5 : 29 ] And here we're talking about that very issue. In verse 15 then, Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you.

Now, what this is indicating is that Paul is recognizing that when someone becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, everything is changed.

nothing is the same. They enter into a new status. A new state of being. And so much so that this even caused the Apostle Paul to alter his prayer life on behalf of these people when he says, After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, then you became a different kind of object for my prayers.

And prior to someone coming to faith in Christ, the focus of our prayers ought to be for their salvation. Once they have received Christ, the focus changes.

We're no longer praying for their salvation. We are praying for their sanctification, for their growth, for their edification, for their appreciation, for what they have in Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 49 ] And everything changes with regeneration. We are a new creation in Christ. And since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love unto all the saints, I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

And here is what I pray for. By the way, the observation has been made before, but it is so important, it is worthy of being made again. And that is, the Apostle Paul brings the whole subject of prayer into a new venue that is different from what we find in the Gospels and in the Old Testament. In the Gospels, for instance, particularly in connection with the ministry of Christ, we find a great deal of prayer focused upon the material and the physical.

This is the basis for a lot of the healings. The emphasis is upon healing the man made blind, blind from birth, healing with the spittle on his eyes, and healing the blind by saying the word, and healing the blind by touching his eyes, telling him to go wash in the pool of Siloam, the healing of lepers, and all of these things.

These were all physical demonstrations of who Jesus Christ really was. Because, if he is going to present himself as the Messiah, the one who is going to be responsible for bringing in and establishing the kingdom of heaven on earth, he had better be able to back up his claim with something that nobody else can do.

[ 8 : 41 ] And that became the whole basis for his healing miracles. Jesus did not heal people of their sicknesses simply because he had compassion on them.

Although he did. But the thing we need to keep in mind is Jesus' miracles constituted his calling card for his Messiahship.

They backed up what he claimed to be and who he claimed to be. And the people were quite taken by this because they said, you know, this is amazing.

And his own apostle says, what manner of man is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him. This is this is this is incredible. Well, it was incredible because he is incredible.

And everywhere he went, he took kingdom conditions with him. And one of the verses in Luke, I think it's 17 or 19, been terribly, I think, misinterpreted when Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is one translation and the king King James, I think, renders that the kingdom of heaven is in you.

[ 9 : 57 ] And this is what causes a lot of people to adopt the idea that the kingdom of heaven is inside of you and Christ is there ruling and reigning.

And and there's there's an element of truth in that and I'm not denying it. But when Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is in you, better translation of that preposition is the kingdom of heaven is among you.

How so? In his person. He was there in their midst. That is the physical manifestation of the kingdom of heaven because the thing that's going to characterize the kingdom is that things are going to be made right.

They're going to be what they're supposed to be. When this time comes, there will not be any lame people. One of the characteristics of the kingdom when it is established, Isaiah says, the lame man will leap like a deer.

But Jesus healed all kinds of people with physical affirmatives and Peter and John did, the man at the gate beautiful in Acts chapter 3. These are all physical manifestations.

[ 11 : 14 ] And when we get into the Pauline epistles and the missionary journeys of Paul, the emphasis changes. Yes, there are still some physical healing miracles, but here's what you will find. You will find them becoming less and less and less because the emphasis is shifting from the material and the physical to the spiritual.

And Paul is praying for different things than what we find prayers for in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. Fellas, that's significant. That's not just coincidental.

And even though Paul did pray regarding the removal of this thorn in the flesh, and we don't know what it was, but scholars are of the opinion, many of them at least had something to do with his eyes or his vision, and he asked the Lord three times to take that away because it was an impediment to him.

And he was using the kind of reasoning that we all use. Boy, if I didn't have this problem, I could do thus and so or thus and so. And the Lord said, after Paul prayed three times, God said, I'm not going to remove it.

[ 12 : 28 ] I'm going to do something that is even better. What could that possibly be? I'm going to give you the grace that will be sufficient for you to continue on with that thing.

Now, we probably would not consider that a good solution. We would probably consider the good solution, just fix whatever it is that's wrong so that he can be normal, quote unquote.

But God has a wisdom that is not to be challenged, and when we defer to that wisdom, that's where we find peace.

Again, Paul said in Philippians 3, be anxious for nothing, but don't be uptight about anything. But in everything, with prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God, and the God of peace shall garrison your hearts and minds about with his peace.

He will give you peace in that thing. Does it say, ask what you will and he'll grant it? That's the gospel prayer. But things have changed, guys.

[ 13 : 46 ] The emphasis has shifted from the physical to the spiritual. And now it is, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God shall guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

So that means you take your prayer request, you pour out your heart, your concerns to God, you ask him for what you will, then you relax in the knowledge that he is going to do for you by answering that prayer, what is really in your best interest, whether you think so or not.

So, relax and enjoy the peace of God. That becomes the basis for inner peace. And let me tell you, as someone who has drunk from that well deeply, more than once, peace of peace.

It works. It works. So, when Paul is going to pray for these new believers, new Christians, what do you pray for?

What do you ask for a new Christian? Well, verse 17 says, I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

[ 15 : 09 ] That should be the chief end of our study, is the knowledge of him. I'd like to recommend a book along this line, if anybody is inclined to pick it up or see it in a bookstore anywhere.

J.I. Packer has written a book called Knowing God. It is classic, tremendous book. I read it years ago, I probably ought to read it again.

It is an outstanding book. Knowing God, in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.

Fellas, when someone comes to faith in Christ, they become a new creation in him. And that newness involves a whole lot of different things.

New attitude, new desires, new life, new ambitions, new everything. And one of the things it provides you with is a new perspective.

[ 16 : 10 ] You begin seeing things differently than you did on the other side of your salvation. Your eyes are really open to what true reality is.

This is the unveiling of the eyes. And again, 2 Corinthians 4, Paul said, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this age have blinded, so that, or lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So, people have a veil over their eyes. They cannot see reality for what it truly is on the other side of their salvation.

And when you come to faith in Christ, it's just like your eyes for the first time are opened. I mean, if you had 20-20 vision before, you've got it now physically, and that hasn't changed.

But it isn't talking about physical eyesight. It's talking about your ability to see issues in life and yourself differently from what you ever did before.

[ 17 : 23 ] There's an old song that they wrote years and years ago about praise the Lord, I saw the light. And it's not talking about the light of day or from an incandescent light bulb.

It's talking about spiritual light. And it's just as if when you come to faith in Christ, it's just like God reaches up like you've got a little pull chain in your brain. And He just pulled that little chain down. And the light comes on. And everything is seen through different eyes than before. And one thing you will get a new perspective about, among others, is yourself.

I mean, prior to coming to Christ, most of us thought ourselves to be, you know, pretty good guy, better than average. You know, we've got this going for us and that.

At least I've never done this and I've never done that. And we just have all kinds of ways of elevating ourselves. But when you come to faith in Christ, then for the first time in your life, you see yourself, really, you see yourself as God sees you before you came to faith.

[ 18 : 32 ] And it is not a pretty picture. But when you come to faith in Christ, then God sees you with different eyes and you see yourself with different eyes and you see God with different eyes.

And it's incredible. It's just absolute. So this is part and parcel of what Paul was praying about. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling.

We've talked about that word in the past. Remember? Hope means absolute confidence. It doesn't mean maybe. It doesn't mean the way we use the word hope today.

I hope, I hope, I hope it doesn't rain. Which means I don't want it to rain, but it may rain. And I don't know if it's going to or not, but no, no, no. The Bible never uses hope like that.

When Paul says that you may know what is the hope of his calling, he's saying that you may know what is the absolute bedrock, solid confidence of his coming.

[ 19 : 36 ] God has started and has begun a new thing in you that he is going to complete it and it is amazing. And that's what I want you to get a handle on and begin appreciating.

That you may know not suspect, but know what is the confidence wrapped up in his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Look at how others have translated this. And how gloriously rich his inheritance is among God's people. This is his inheritance and we are that inheritance.

The magnificent Philip renders it. The magnificence and splendor of the inheritance promise to Christians. New English Bible. What the wealth and glory of the share he offers you among his people in their heritage.

Years ago, I remember one of my favorite songs. used to play on WEC when I was spinning records back there in the 60s.

[ 20 : 49 ] And a gal by the name of Gloria Rowe, R-O-E, had an album that we played and one of the songs on it, one of the cuts on it, was just beautiful. And it was called How Rich I Am.

And in the song, the lyrics described the richness and the vastness of our joy of being in Christ. And this is a reality that all too many Christians never really do come to appreciate.

And you know something, guys? If you get a handle on this, the glory of his inheritance, if you get a handle on how rich you are in Christ, what you really possess in Christ, do you know what one of the immediate effects that will have in your life?

it puts an end to bellyaching. It puts an end to griping, complaining, moaning and groaning. I don't understand why God allows this or why God doesn't do this or why something else or why this goes on.

Once you get a handle on how deeply and greatly you are loved and how much God has already done for you in Christ, it will drive the griping, the complaining, all of that stuff away.

[ 22 : 15 ] And you just have to embrace this new appreciation, this new status that you have in Christ. And what is, verse 19, and what is the exceeding greatness greatness of his power to usward who believe.

And fellas, that power is never extended toward unbelievers. This is reserved only for those in the body of Christ.

This power is resident, available, working, active, in those who are believers. And it is limited to those who are believers.

According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. Now, let me ask you, what kind of power was that?

Resurrection power. Just think of it, guys. The power, the energy that resided in God, that enabled him to raise Jesus Christ from the dead and bring him back to life with this glorified body.

[ 23 : 42 ] That is the very same power that is operative and working in you. Now, that might be a stretch for you to believe that.

But I don't ask you to believe it because you can say, oh yeah, Marv, I feel it right now. You probably don't. But it is not based on your feeling. It is based on the fact that God has revealed. This is the power that is unleashed in us. And it is unlimited. This power that raised Christ from the dead is the power that is operative.

And by the way, guys, this is the power that brought all of us into Christ. This is the power that baptized you by the Spirit of God into the spiritual body of Christ.

This is the power that regenerated you, that changed your status forever from being outside of Christ to being in Christ, giving you eternal life.

[ 24 : 47 ] this is that power. It is resurrection power, and it is glorious beyond words. It is that power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

It's just almost like Paul was looking for an example here. What can I do to illustrate the kind of power, the regenerative power that is in the life of every man?

And by the way, this is not a power that is available just for good Christians. Because good Christians are not always good Christians.

Sometimes good Christians are a lousy representative for Christ. Sometimes good Christians walk in the flesh and do stupid things that we shouldn't do. We're all capable of that.

But this power is not limited to those who deserve it. None of us deserve it. It's not limited to those who have some special kind of in with God.

[ 25 : 48 ] Because nobody has some special kind of in with God. Those who are in Christ, everybody has that in with God. This is something that is available for every single person who is in Christ just because you are in Christ.

And it's true. Many of God's people don't even recognize this, don't understand it, don't appreciate it, aren't grateful for it. And fellas, this is what the learning process is all about.

It's to bring us up to speed as to what we are and how rich we are in Christ. It's glorious. It's glorious. So Paul is saying, I want you people there at Ephesus to understand the source of this power.

It's the same source that God used when he brought Jesus Christ forth from the dead. Now, let me ask you, do you think that that kind of power is adequate for you?

Is that sufficient for whatever comes into your life, whether by life or by death? That's just amazing. Far above all principality, power, and might, and dominion, Phillips, the bottom of the page, renders it infinitely superior to any conceivable command and every name that is named.

[ 27 : 15 ] Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. What this amounts to is that through the miracle of regeneration and the new birth, God has made you spiritually an ultimate individual.

ultimate in potential, ultimate in resources, ultimate in realization, it's just amazing. Do you have a question?

Anybody? Question? Don? Yeah, I understand everything you're saying, but if I'm confronted with this and there are two men walking down side by side by the street, one a Christian, one an atheist, how would I explain the difference between the two people if I was asked that question?

How would you explain the difference between those two people, the two individuals, two men walking down the street, actually one is a Christian, how do I explain the difference between those two men?

Well, the differences are incredible. I would say one has the life of God in him, the other is devoid of the life of God.

[ 28 : 31 ] He has physical life, that's all he's got. But the believer has spiritual life. And that means he's been made alive under God. And the man who is not in Christ is dead under God.

He's alive enough physically to walk down the street, but as far as God is concerned, in his connection with the deity, nonexistent. Okay. Any other questions?

Yeah. Roger? Is the power of the resurrection any difference in the power that it took to break Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathe into him? Well, I'm sure it's the same power. It's God's unlimited power. When we talk about God as being infinite and we are finite, infinite simply means without limitations.

God has no limitations. We are confronted with limitations every day in all kinds of areas, but this power, this resource, let me put it this way fellows, when the scriptures refer to God as possessing all power, that's exactly what it means.

[ 29 : 45 ] He possesses all power. That means the power that you have to do anything. The power you have to tie your shoes comes from Him.

There is no power that is independent of God's power. God possesses all power and all power and energy that is used in any source by anyone is a power that is derived from Him.

We have no inherent power at all. All power that we use. I don't care if it's electrical power, physical energy, gasoline power, atomic power, it all originates from Him.

He is the source of all and He is the source of all wisdom. He possesses all wisdom. All human wisdom that is true wisdom comes from Him.

He's the source of it. So the power of the atheist really comes from God who just doesn't know it.

The power that an atheist uses to walk down the street is a power that is granted to humanity by God the giver of that power and even though he doesn't recognize it, doesn't know it, and wouldn't even believe it, it's still God who empowers everybody to do everything.

[ 31 : 16 ] Joe? A lot of this may tie in and may not, but I have to ask it. Everybody here has this, quote, question or problem. How do we know that we are doing God's will?

When you have decisions to make, important decisions, little decisions, is this what God would want me to do or not? How do we find out and know that, that we are following God's will and wisdom in this, using His, He wants to do this?

How do we know that? How do we find out? Well, it's a good question. My answer is that God has already revealed His will in His Word.

Insofar as doing and accomplishing the things that He wants done, He's made that quite clear. And let me make a distinction. First of all, there are areas of our life that I don't think God is terribly concerned about.

Now, I don't want to give the impression that God isn't concerned about everything in our life He is, but there are certain areas of discretion that He gives to us. And when I'm getting dressed for church on Sunday morning, I look at a tie, well, actually, I don't do that.

[ 32 : 41 ] Marie picks out all my ties. And the reason that Marie picks out my ties is because I'm not very good at that. I'm not sure what goes with what, you know, and it doesn't matter to me.

I just think, well, a tie is a tie, you know, just put it on. But let me put it this way. You better put on a tie. This tie or this tie. You know what? I really don't think God cares.

Wear any tie you want. I don't think God cares. I don't think you have to pray and say, now, Lord, should I wear this tie or should I wear it? Maybe I ought to get on my knees and really agonize about it. Now, God has left certain things to our discretion.

And when you're in the menu, I really don't think God cares whether you order the fish or the steak. I don't think He matters that much, you know, unless, of course, you're on some kind of a strict diet, then it can be a problem.

But in areas, let me tell you this, guys, in areas that really matter, God has made His will known. Nobody needs to go out of here, none of you guys who are married, needs to go out of here and say, I wonder if it's God's will, if I really love my wife sacrificially as Christ loved the church.

[ 33 : 56 ] I need to pray about that. No, you don't. You don't need to pray about that. And if you stop to pray about that, that's sin.

Because God's already told you what He wanted. He wants you to love your wife as Christ loved the church. And that means you put your wife and her needs ahead of yours.

That's what love does. Love is concerned about the welfare of the object of your love more than it is about yourself. And God has already revealed the fact that He wants you to be honest and trustworthy and open and transparent and not duplicitous and scheming and conniving.

And all of these things are made quite clear. So, God has already expressed His will regarding the weightier issues of life. Don't sweat the details. I get that and it speaks to that in the Bible, specifically on that.

But what about, I'm offered a job in another town. Good job. But I got a good job here. But that one maybe pays a little more or something.

[ 35 : 09 ] Should I go to the job there that pays more or should I stay here? What do I do? How? Okay. First thing you should do is talk to your wife. Okay.

Okay. Okay. Right. Talk to your wife and she'll say, well, our family's here. I want to stay here. I don't want to go to anymore because our family's here. That's the type of thing you might get from your wife, you know.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, there are a lot. These are really tough questions. And what you bring up, Joe, is very legitimate because these are issues that are going to impact you and your family for a long time to come.

And what I would suggest you do, and I think I've covered this on Marriage on the Rock, what I would suggest you do when you've got a decision like that, I'm talking about if you're married, if you're married, your wife is automatically 50% of that thing.

Not 49, she's 50%. And you are responsible for headship. You've got to take the lead, but you do so out of consideration for her and her concerns as well.

[ 36 : 16 ] And I would recommend when you're faced with situations like that, you and your wife sit down at the table, take a pad of paper, and write down everything you can think of as to why you should do A.

And then write down everything that you can think of as to why you should not do A. And pray about it, the two of you together. And if there are other people, like maybe parents, grandparents, relatives, who may have some expertise in that area, be able to offer a little suggestion or something.

Because in the counsel of many, there is wisdom, Proverbs says. And sometimes you can get counsel from others who may know more about a situation than what you do, and that can help give you direction.

So, it's a very good question. I wish I had a better answer for you. But these are things that do need to be made a matter of prayer. And let me put it this way.

God is far more concerned about your attitude of heart and about your submission to Him and His will than He is anything else. And the biggest obstacle that many people have in wanting to know God's will is that they need to make sure they are ready to implement it when once they learn it.

[ 37 : 39 ] Even if it is something they would rather not do. So, God wants the commitment of our heart so that we are willing and available to do whatever He leads.

and He doesn't want to reveal His will to us so we can decide whether or not we want to do it. That's the wrong approach. We need to be open to His will and His direction because our eagerness is to be responsive to that.

Whatever that may be. And I'll close with this illustration. I remember hearing a missionary talk about this years ago in chapel. down Cedarville.

I don't even recall the name or anything. But this missionary attended a Bible conference and people were dedicating their lives and everything to the mission field and whatnot. And he said, I told God, God, send me anywhere.

But I don't want to go to China. Send me any place to China. I don't want to go to China. Well, you know, God's got a sense of humor. So, everything he picked up and read, guess what it was about?

[ 38 : 52 ] China. Every time a missionary speaker came through, where was he from? China.

Finally, China became embedded in this guy's mind and he broke and he said, okay, okay, Lord, you win.

I'll go to China. I'll start the paperwork. And you know what? He made the application and everything and it came back and he was turned down.

He was not accepted. Now he's really puzzled. What is going on? I fought against this thing, said I wouldn't go to China. When I finally gave in, said, okay, God, that's what you want.

I'll go to China already. All right. And now I get turned down. What's going on here? And he was just about beside himself. And he went and talked to a godly pastor and he listened to him tentatively and he said, well, it seems rather apparent to me as to what's going on here.

And the guy said, well, please tell me what is going on here? He said, my son, it has nothing to do with God wanting you to go to China.

[ 40 : 03 ] It has everything to do with your being willing to go wherever God wants you. And God got that accomplished.

so just rejoice and thank you for it. So, guys, enjoy your breakfast.