PRAYERS OF LONGING: PRAYING WITH PAUL Water from Rock, July 11, 2017, Tim Smith

LONGING AND THE LIFE OF FAITH

1. “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people together to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.” (Antoine de Saint- Exupéry, author of *The Little Prince*)
2. Psalm 42:1-2: *“As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”*
3. A. W. Tozer, in *That Incredible Christian* writes about the importance of longing in the Christian life.

 “Those spiritual blessings in heavenly places which are ours in Christ may be divided into three classes:

* The first is those which come to us immediately upon our believing unto salvation, such as forgiveness, justification, regeneration, sonship to God and baptism into the Body of Christ.
* The second class is those riches which are ours by inheritance but which we cannot enjoy in actuality until our Lord returns.
* The third class of blessing consists of spiritual treasures which are ours by blood atonement but which will not come to us unless we make a determined effort to possess them….These do not come to us automatically nor must we wait to claim them at the day of Christ’s coming. They are to us what the Promised Land was to Israel, to be entered into as our faith and courage mount.

 To make things clearer let me set forth four propositions touching this heritage of joy which God has set before us:

 ***You will get nothing unless you go after it****.* God will not force anything on you

 ***You may have as much as you insist upon having.***‘Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you,’ said God to Joshua, and this principle runs throughout the entire Bible.

 ***You will have as little as you are satisfied with*.** God giveth to all men liberally, but it would be absurd to think that God’s liberality will make a man more godly than he wants to be. The man, for instance, who is satisfied to live a defeated life will never be forced to take victory.

 ***You now have as much as you really want.***Every man is as close to God as he wants to be; he is as holy and as full of the Spirit as he wills to be.”

LEARNING TO PRAY WITH PAUL (Prayers of Longing #1 ) Ephesians 1:15-23

1. It is often pointed out that there are three steps in our relationship with God:
* Coming to faith in Christ
* Learning the facts of our salvation
* Experiencing that salvation
1. Ephesians 1 can be seen as addressing these three steps:
* Coming to the Savior – v. 1-2
* Learning the facts of our salvation – v. 3-14
* Experiencing that salvation – v. 15-23
1. Paul prays that believers might “experience” the realities of their salvation; that what they know to be true be realized in daily life.
2. His prayer of petition moves from the general to the specific:
* Prayer for a “spirit of wisdom and revelation*”* (1:17)
* Prayer for “the eyes of the heart to be enlightened” (1:18)
* Prayer that “you may know” (1:18)
1. This is a prayer for believers to know experientially:
* The hope to which God has called them (1:18)
* The riches of God’s glorious inheritance among the saints (1:18)

In 1:11 and 1:14 Paul talks about the *our* inheritance *in Christ.* Now in 1:18 Paul talks about *Christ’s* inheritance *in us*: God thinks of us as his inheritance. God glories in his people.

* The immeasurable greatness of God’s power to those who believe (1:19ff.)
* This power is beyond human comprehension so that it requires divine illumination.
* The standard and measure of the power of God directed towards us is:

 The power that raised Jesus from the dead

 The power that seated him at God’s right hand (the power of the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement over all)

 See Romans 8:11: *“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.”*

 See Philippians 3:10: *“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.”*

# Ephesians 1:15-13 (New Revised Standard Version)

# *15 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love**\** *towards all the saints, and for this reason 16I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. 20God**\** *put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. 22And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

Ephesians 1:15-23 (The Message)

***15-19****That's why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn't stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!*

***20-23****All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.*