

Praying with Paul Lesson 6 “Praying to the Sovereign God”

Ephesians 1:15–20

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places....”

I. God’s Sovereignty and Prayer

- a. Why should we pray if God is sovereign?
- b. Bible affirms four truths:
 - i. God is utterly sovereign over all.
 - ii. People are still responsible for their actions.
 - iii. God is personal.
 - iv. Being personal, He uses our prayers to accomplish His purposes.
- c. Redemption planned, accomplished, and applied in Eph. 1:1-14
- d. How do you know you are the elect of God before the world began?

II. Paul Gives Thanks for God’s Sovereign Grace (1:15-16)

- a. *“For this reason, **because** I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to **give thanks** for you...”*
- b. Carson writes, *“Without God, they would never have begun to display the trust, faithfulness, and love now richly displayed in their lives. Therefore, whatever Christian virtues characterize them become the occasion for heartfelt praise to God...In the same way that we give thanks to God when we recognize his quiet and effective work in our lives, so also we thank God when we hear of his work in others.”* (170).

III. Paul Makes Requests in View of God’s Sovereign Grace (1:17-19)

- a. **First, he prays that God would reveal Himself to them (1:17-18a)**
 - i. Knowledge of God comes through the Spirit:
 1. *Of Wisdom*
 2. *Of Revelation (Illumination)*
 3. *Having the eyes of our heart enlightened.*
- b. **That they would know what is already theirs in Christ (1:18b-19)**
 - i. First, “what is the hope to which he has called you.”
 - ii. Second, “what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.”
 - iii. Third, “what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe”

John Piper, *“The critical question for our generation—and for every generation—is this: If you could have heaven, with no sickness, and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all*

the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ were not there?" (John Piper in God is the Gospel).

- a. Revelation 21:3, *"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and **they will be his people**, and God himself will be with them as their God."*
- b. Resurrection power: *"**according** to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places" (1:19b-20).*