

## ***Session 1: Sonship Prayer – Homework Assignment***

*(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 1)*

*The Lord's Table mentioned on recording for August 19<sup>th</sup> has been postponed.*

Here at the beginning, I want to give you an assignment: read two of Paul's prayers found in Ephesians 1 and 3 as many times as you can this week.

### **Prayer #1:**

***Ephesians 1:15** Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, <sup>16</sup> Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; <sup>17</sup> 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: <sup>18</sup> The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, <sup>20</sup> Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: <sup>22</sup> And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Just so we are not reading words without some foundational understanding, let us go over some of the basics in each of these two prayers. In this prayer, Paul is praying for the saints to have something:

- The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him which will:
  - Enlighten the eyes of their understanding.

#### *Oxford English Dictionary*

*Spirit:* 7) the frame of mind as operating on or in persons, 8) a particular character or disposition existing in, pervading, or animating a person or set of persons; a special attitude or bent of mind characterizing men individually or collectively

When Paul prays that God may “give unto you” the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, he does not mean that God will somehow magically give wisdom to the Ephesians. The means by which the Ephesians (or any other believer, for that matter) will obtain this understanding is by believing the word.

Once they do, the wisdom they will possess and the understanding they will have will have come from God. And God will give them that in response to their believing and responding properly to the doctrine. So when Paul prays that God may grant unto them this spirit of wisdom and understanding, what is he really praying? He is praying that they will respond properly to the doctrine!

Why does Paul want them to have this wisdom and understanding? It is just so they can be considered smart?

Paul prays for them to have this wisdom and understanding so that they might know:

1. The hope of his calling (to them as saints).
2. The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.
3. The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.

Of course there is much more to say about all of this, but at least this is the foundational truth behind this first prayer. Paul was praying for them to respond properly to the doctrine so that they would understand three very important and essential issues which are necessary for the saints to know both now and later on in the creature.

### **Prayer #2:**

*Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup> That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; <sup>17</sup> That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; <sup>19</sup> And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, <sup>21</sup> Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

In this prayer, Paul is asking for them:

- To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

How does the Spirit strengthen our inner man? By the excellency of God's word working in us. When we respond by faith to the truth of the word that is how our inner man is strengthened by his Spirit.

*Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

Why did Paul want them to be strengthened by the Spirit in their inner man? So that Christ could dwell in their hearts by faith. When we respond by faith to the doctrine in the word, something happens in our inner man which makes it possible for Christ to dwell in them/us.

**Space for personal reflection and notes**

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## ***Session 2: Sonship Prayer – Homework Assignment Continued***

*(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 2)*

***Ephesians 3:14*** *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup> That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

Why did Paul want them to be strengthened by the Spirit in their inner man?

***Ephesians 3:17*** *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;*

So that Christ could dwell in their hearts by faith. When we respond by faith to the doctrine in the word, something happens in our inner man which makes it possible for Christ to dwell in them/us.

The prerequisite for Christ to dwell in us (for Christ to live his life through us) is for the Spirit to strengthen our inner man. And what is the mechanical means by which the Spirit does that? The Spirit strengthens our inner man in response to us responding by faith to the doctrines given to us by Christ through Paul.

- That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

(Notice Paul wrote, “dwell,” not ‘have.’ It is not that we do not have him, we do. But Paul is after more than that. Paul does not just want Christ to be in us, but he wants Christ’s life being lived in us and that is different. What is his Spirit working to do in us as it strengthens our inner man by means of the word? It works to produce the life of Christ in us, so that Christ will be our life; he will be the One we are occupied with. That is what it means to have Christ dwell in our hearts by faith. And that comes by the word working in us; as we believe that word, it works to produce the life of Christ in us instead of producing some kind of religion.)

Aside talking about the writing of 2 Timothy religion versus a living relationship (no notes).

***Ephesians 3:17*** *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

To be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man is when we are occupied with Christ living in our inner man. When that happens, we are being rooted and grounded in love, in the love of Christ. Or, to say it another way, we are being rooted and grounded in the things which Christ loves; to love the things he loves for the same reasons he loves them.

- Only by being rooted and grounded in love will the saints comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height.

Paul was not praying that they would become rooted and grounded in love; the Ephesians already were. Paul is saying that being rooted and grounded in love is necessary in order for them to understand (comprehend) something. So what are the dimensions about in this verse? He does not define them; therefore we know that we should already know what this is about. These dimensions are describing the fullness of the mystery. So this part of Paul's prayer is for the Ephesians, who are rooted and grounded in love, to fully comprehend every dimension of the mystery. That means that Paul wants them/us to comprehend all that God intends to do with us; the vastness of what God has made us a part of.

***Ephesians 3:19** And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

- That they will know the love of Christ so that they will be:  
Filled with all the fullness of God

Let me ask you a question. Who taught Paul to pray this way? The Lord Jesus, right? Everything about the mystery was taught to Paul by the Lord Jesus himself. Well, since we need to learn how to pray in accordance with what God is doing in this dispensation of Gentile grace, we are going to let our designated apostle teach us to pray.

The section on Sonship Prayer as it pertains to our establishment is contained in Romans 8:26-27. It is the second section of our establishment as sons. In order to look at it properly, we need to see it in its context.

### **Space for personal reflection and notes**

### ***Session 3: The Context of Sonship Prayer***

*(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 10, Session 3)*

Back in Romans 8:14-15, we were introduced to the third element in our sanctification of our new identity in Christ: the adoption of sons.

***Romans 8:14*** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Verse 14 told us that we are “sons of God” (in connection with our sanctification, not justification) and verse 15 said that we have received the Spirit of adoption.

God has done everything necessary in order for us to be his adopted sons. When I say that, I am not referring to our status in his eyes, I am talking about us being transformed to function as the sons he has made us to be.

Being given the Spirit of adoption is a repeat of what we were told back in Romans 5 where we learned that we were given the Spirit the moment we trusted Jesus Christ as Savior.

***Romans 5:5*** *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

What is being told to us in Romans 8 is an advancement of what was told to us in Romans 5. In Romans 8, we see that one of the reasons the Spirit was given to us is so he can function as the Spirit of adoption. To say it another way, the Spirit teaches us to live out of the adoption we were given.

This is why it said in verse 14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit...”

He is the one leading us to think, live, and labor like the ‘sons’ we have been made to be.

The last phrase in verse 15 marks the beginning of our adoption process.

***Romans 8:15*** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

It is the cry of Abba, Father that formally begins our training in living out of our adoption status.

In verses 16-17, we learned about our two inheritances: one in connection with being children of God and the other in connection with being sons. The latter inheritance is predicated upon our suffering “with him.”

This is the first time we have seen the issue of suffering in the book of Romans. It is in connection with our joint-heir inheritance. Paul is going to pick up on this issue of suffering and expand upon it.

In verse 18, we were introduced to the sufferings of this present time and how they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

***Romans 8:17** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. <sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Paul did not say that if we suffer with him, that we will be delivered from having to suffer. He makes no such promise. Instead, he said that the sufferings result in a glory.

Even though we will suffer, the good news is that enduring those sufferings, with a particular attitude and Christ-like response to them, produces a glory in us that makes them pale in comparison.

Then, we learned that both the creature and we are under the bondage of corruption. As a result, the whole creation groans and travails in pain.

***Romans 8:19** For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, <sup>21</sup> Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves...*

This is what happens to us throughout our lifetime. We are under the bondage of corruption and we all suffer to one degree or another.

Fortunately however, our groaning is not the end of the verse.

***Romans 8:23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

In connection with our sufferings, we have been given a hope, which involves the completion of our adoption process: the redemption of our body.

The beginning of the adoption process is when we make the cry of Abba, Father, and the end of that process is the redemption of our body. This is why we say that at the blessed hope, our adoption process is over. It is also why we say that if God had redeemed our body at the point of salvation, there would be no further growing in grace, no coming unto a perfect man, no further edification unto godliness.

Lastly, in that first section of our establishment as sons, we are told that even though we do not yet have the redemption of our body, we patiently wait for it.

***Romans 8:23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup>For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

The first good news is that there is a joint-heir inheritance in connection to suffering ‘with Christ.’

The next good news is that there is a glory which shall be revealed in us as a result of our right response to suffering.

The next good news is that we have a hope that these bodies are going to be redeemed.

That is not all of the good news. While we are patiently waiting for the redemption of our bodies, there is something else that helps us.

***Romans 8:25** But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. <sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities...*

The “infirmities” are part of the bondage of corruption that plagues these bodies which are yet unredeemed. But the Spirit is going to help us with our sufferings. And how will he do that?

***Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought...*

Until the dispensation of Gentile grace came along and the Lord Jesus revealed the mystery of Christ to the apostle Paul, no one knew how to pray the way we “ought” to pray today. Therefore, we have to be taught how to pray the way we ought to pray: to pray in accordance with how God is dealing with us today in this dispensation of Gentile grace.

***Romans 8:23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, ...*

***Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us...*

**Space for personal reflection and notes**