

Purpose Statement: To encourage the one who sees the wonder of the glory awaiting them but also sees the many strong obstacles in the way of that glory. It is a study to show that it is God's power at work in them that matters.

Eph 1:15–20 (ESV) 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,

Intro: Continuing our look at this great prayer of Paul

1. A reminder of how logical the order of this prayer is

- A. V. 17 - Paul prays that we would know God better - *intimacy*
- B. V. 18 – He prays we be assured of our hope – We would know we know God - *security*
- C. V. 18 – Now that we've cleared that up – we know that we know God
 - 1). He we will understand what is waiting for those who know God in glory - *inheritance*
- D. Now he prays that we would know the power of God that is in our life - *omnipotence*

Transition: I want to show you why this thought of power links to our assurance of salvation and inheritance

- A. Let's start by thinking through why Paul believes we need this understanding

I. THE NECESSITY OF THIS PETITION

1. Paul prays this because of our natural tendency to fix our gaze upon us

- A. Can you relate: You hear about assurance and this great inheritance waiting and think “Sounds great”
 - 1). But immediately look at those things that can take the joy of that truth away – that create doubt

Transition: Let me show you what I mean – suggest a few of the type of things that can steal this anticipation

Things That Make Us Feel Insecure About Our Future

1. Looking at ourselves will make us insecure

- A. We hear descriptions of inheritance and glory – and think “Sounds nice. I hope I make it!”
- B. We look at our life and talk ourselves out of the joy this truth should bring
 - 1). We think this assurance is only for the super saints – the 3 hour a day devotion folk
- C. When I look at me I can see plenty of things that can cause doubt
 - 1). I see the waywardness of my heart – I know how prone to sin I can be
 - 2). I know how many things I start and fail to finish – my interest – resolve fades
 - a). Will Christianity just be another thing I fail to finish?
 - 3). I know how many times I've picked myself up after failure – made a fresh commitment
Only to find myself crying out to God again after another failure
 - 4). I watch my heart blaze for God then grow cold – be reignited and grow cold again

Point: How can somebody like me ever be sure I'm going to end up in heaven?

- A. Don't get me wrong glory sounds great
But I'm pretty sure I'm going to mess this thing up somewhere along the way!
 - 1). That is the natural result of fixing our gaze upon us!
 - 2). Therefore what should bring great joy can just bring despair – “I don't think I'll make it”

Transition: Looking at ourselves will make us feel insecure

2. Considering the devil will make us insecure

- A. It's bad enough I carry around this flesh that causes so much inconsistency at times
 - 1). This internal force that rises up to try and keep me from doing God's will

- 2). I also have external adversary who is trying to keep me from glory
 - a). Who is constantly tempting me to sin – to stay away from God – the Word and prayer

- B. He is the accuser of the brethren – who uses our every failure to steal our confidence
“You! A Christian? Right! You making it into glory! You! What a joke.”

Thought: He is a stealer of joy – you think of glory – he’s right there to point out your failures

- A. He knows the power of a joy-filled believer so he uses every trick in the book to keep us from joy
- B. AND he’s extremely good at this

Kent Hughes speaking of the Devil: he is supremely cunning. ... He has been honing his methods for millennia. His emissaries visited the church councils at Nicea and Chalcedon. He sat in on medieval faculty meetings. He is an accomplished philosopher, theologian, and psychologist. He has had thousands of years to study.

I am no genius at mathematics, but even with my limited capabilities I could be terrific at math if I worked at it for 100 years (maybe!). If I labored hard at it for a 1,000 years and read all the learned theories, I would be a Newton or an Einstein. Or what if I had 10,000 years? Given that time, any of us could become the world's greatest philosopher or psychologist or theologian or linguist (we could curse or preach in a thousand languages). Satan has had multiple millennia to study and master the human disciplines, and when it comes to human subversion, he is the ultimate manipulator.

- 1). He knows every trick in the book to steal your assurance – to rob you of your joy
- 2). No wonder Peter says

1 Pet 5:8 (NIV) Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

- a). Be self-controlled because THAT GUY Is constantly stalking you

Point: That can steal our confidence when we think of making it to glory

Transition: So focusing on ourselves – and considering the devil can make us feel insecure

- A. But wait! There’s more!

3. Considering the world can make us insecure

- A. Bad enough I’m so weak & have such a strong enemy
 - 1). Now throw in the fact I live in enemy territory that the devil controls
 - 2). That I live in this custom designed environment that is meant to tempt and seduce me
 - a). An environment designed to cool my passion for Christ
 - b). That is filled with people who think I’m foolish for following God
Who persecute, mock and ridicule – who want me to fall – makes them feel good

Point: If I focus on the wrong things – I can begin to think “I’ll never make it”

- A. Who is sufficient for such things!
- B. We can even be tempted to give up altogether – It’s just too hard – I can’t do it
“I mean why keep fighting when I’m just going to lose anyway”

4. Thinking about the future can make us insecure

- A. We see the growing persecution – Christians are open season today – you can say anything about us
 - 1). Joy Behar said Mike Pence believing Jesus speaks to him is a form of mental illness
 - 2). Christian bakers are fined \$135,000 for refusing to bake a cake for a gay wedding
 - 3). The list of cases against Christians is rapidly growing
 - a). Christian businesses have been bullied into closing
 - b). Employees have been fired because they stood for their Christian beliefs
- B. We can think “Would I be able to stand if it meant losing my job?”
 - 1). What if somebody pointed a gun at me “Do you believe in Jesus?” “Would I say yes?”
- C. If my focus is on me and my strength – I have reason to doubt

Transition: These are only a few scenarios that could bring in doubt – there are many

- A. Pastor Paul had studied man enough to know how it works for many
 - 1). They hear of the greatness of glory and immediately find reasons to doubt it's for them
 - 2). All they can see is the greatness of the obstacles and their own personal weakness
- B. So Paul prays God would open their eyes to the power that is working in them
 - 1). Because even though those obstacles are much to great for you to handle
Your getting into glory is not based on your strength – it is based on the power of God in you!
- C. So let's look at this thought of the power of God

II. THE POWER OF GOD DEFINED

The three petitions in these verses: Eph 1:18–19 (ESV) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, **(First)** that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, **(Second)** what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ⁽¹⁹⁾ **(Third)** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe...

1. Paul prays the Spirit will open our eyes to understand this power

- A. Why because it is so immense = it is immeasurable – NIV “Incomparably great”
 - 1). We have nothing to compare power like this too – no reference points to help us grasp it
 - 2). We can measure power – horse power – thrust – torque - watts – but this is immeasurable

Transition: Paul continues in verse 20 and tries to help us get a glimpse of the power working in us

- A. This is meant to comfort you Christian – to help you rest – so you see this power is sufficient

Eph 1:19–20 (ESV) 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,

1. Divine might was on display in the resurrection of Christ

- A. This is what the NT writers pointed to when they want to illustrate the greatness of God's power
 - 1). The OT prophet usually used creation when speaking about the power of God
 - a). The heavens declare his glory and the work of his hand
 - 2). The OT prophet would also point to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt
 - a). God bringing the greatest nation on earth to its knees through 10 great plagues

Point: But the standard of the NT writer is the empty tomb of Christ – his raising from the dead

- A. This is the standard Paul uses to describe the power of God in the believer

But Why Is This the Illustration the Apostle Chooses?

1. Because we are speaking of obstacles on the way to glory

- A. So Paul takes us to the one who went before us – who is already in glory
Who through divine power overcame the greatest obstacle to get there

Question: What happened in that tomb that the resurrection becomes the illustration of the power of God?

- A. Most believe all the powers of hell gathered in an effort to stop Christ's resurrection
 - 1). Hell knew if it could stop that resurrection they stop all resurrections – yours and mine
 - a). Stop that resurrection – and nobody goes to heaven – God's plan fails – Satan wins
- B. Therefore every demon in hell united in an attempt to keep Christ in that grave
 - 1). But when Jesus rose out of that grave – God dealt Satan a crushing defeat
 - a). He ripped Christ out of the grip of the totality of hell's power

2. What is the point? Please get this

This teaches - There are no obstacles big enough to stop God's plan for us

- A. We will never face this degree of resistance on our way to glory
 - 1). We will never have every demon & Satan himself trying to hold us in the grave
 - 2). Here is the point - even if we did - **God would win!!!**
 - a). He has already done it to prove it!
 - B. The argument is the greater to the lesser – a typical form used in the NT
 - 1). If God can do the greater (Harder) - certainly He can do the lesser (Easier)
- Transition:** BUT Divine power on your behalf should not be a surprise to you
Your whole salvation has been a demonstration of God's power - Let's look at that
- A. That is what this whole section is about – God's activity in our salvation
 - B. I want to remind you of God's power at the beginning of your salvation
 - 1). So you can carry that thought all the way through – all the way to glory

The Entirety of Your Salvation Has Been A Demonstration of God's Power

1. When he saved you – he ripped you out of the grip of the devil

- A. John 8 says the devil is the spiritual father of the unbeliever
 - 1). But God who is great in mercy – lit up your understanding about your sin and his savior
 - a). He drew you to himself – and **you rose out of spiritual death to spiritual life**
 - 1a). You have had a type of resurrection already haven't you
 - 2a). You will have the ultimate experience of that soon
- B. You were blinded by the god of this world (2 Cor 4) and God gave you sight
You were spiritually dead and he gave you life (Eph 2)
You were born with a fallen nature he changed you at the very root of who you are (2 Cor 5:17)
 - 1). Christian – you are a miracle – you are a walking demonstration of divine power
 - a). You are a Christian because of unstoppable – conquering – life giving – resurrecting power

Transition: Let's look at a few scriptures to drive this home – the power of God on display in your salvation

2. Scriptures that show us the power of God in our salvation

Ro 1:16 (ESV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, **for it is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

- A. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation – why?
 - 1). Because of God's power linked to it
See it here: 1 Th 1:5 (ESV) ...our gospel came to you not only in word, **but also in power** and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.
 - a). The Spirit takes that message and powerfully applies it
AND dead people come to life – rebels turn from sin
Children of Satan become children of God
- B. When this all comes together and a person comes into the kingdom – that is God's power
 - 1). That saved saint is a work of God – not a work of man
 - a). If preaching was used – it was effective only because of God's power
1 Cor 2:4 (NIV) My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the **Spirit's power,**
 - 2). Paul tells us in Ephesians how we became Christians
Eph 2:10 (ESV) For we are **his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 - 3). 2 Corinthians tells us how extensive this work of God is in our life

2 Co 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a *new creation*. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- a). Eph 2:10 we are created in Christ Jesus – His workmanship
And that new creation changes everything
- b). The Christian is not just a man or woman who decided to be better – be more religious
 - 1a). So they determine to be more honest – a better worker – a better husband or wife
To be a better neighbor and a better citizen
- c). No! The Christian is a work of God! Something he has done - A new creation!!
 - 1a). Just as when God created the universe – he started with nothing
It is the same with us - there was nothing there that God could use of the old man
 - 2a). He couldn't take the old and reshape it
Sin had brought so much destruction into every area of our life – total depravity
There was nothing there to use
 - 3a). Out of that spiritual void – God created a new person – a new creation
A new birth – born again – new nature wired with new desires
- d).

Point: Christian you are a walking demonstration of the power of God

- A. You were dead but now you're alive!

Eph 2:1 (ESV) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

Eph 2:4–5 (ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁽⁵⁾ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

- 1). God turned you from the sin you loved to the God you never wanted
- 2). Spiritual death = you had no desire for God – no willingness to bow to his authority
 - a). You wanted him to keep away from you – leave you alone
 - b). He changed all that – He drew you – gave you life – changed your nature

- D. Because it is a work that God has begun therefore it is a work that will be completed

Php 1:6 (ESV) And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Thought: We need to rethink our Christianity – and what has happened to us

- A. Our view is usually far to small – because we take up to much of our thoughts
 - 1). I focus me – what I do – how I live – what my plans are
 - 2). But the NT emphasis is on God – who he is – what he had done – what he will do
- B. We are saved because of the power of God – we have life because he has given us life
 - 1). We will be with him because he keeps his children safe

Transition: Paul is asking God to open our eyes to see the divine power that is keeping us – sustaining us

- A. He wants us to be able to rest in him – to be excited about glory because he will get us there
 - 1). To see that our security is based on the truth that God is holding us
Not on the fact that we are holding onto him
 - 2). Therefore no obstacle that stands in your way is great enough to thwart him completing his work
- B. This is why Jude is able to say

Jude 1:24 (NIV) To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—

- 1). Not sinless perfection - but he will keep you from falling into spiritual destruction
- 2). He will keep doing that until when? That day He presents you to the Father
- 3). How will He present you? - without fault and with great joy

He will do that – He will finish the work he started

- C. This is why our history looks like this – we walk with him – fail – get back up – walk – fail – get back up
1). Why do we keep getting up? Because of his power!

Point: He will continue his work – against all obstacles arrayed against us

- A. So we can look ahead to glory – to our inheritance with an excited anticipation
1). Yes I am weak – but he isn't – he will finish what he started – I will be with him

THE APPLICATION

1. What is the obstacle you are concerned about?

- A. Answer that fear with this - can it stand against this divine, irresistible energy
B. All the soldiers and high priest tried to keep Christ in the tomb & couldn't
All the demons & Satan tried to keep Christ from glory and couldn't
Even death itself fell under this mighty divine strength
1). This is the same power that brought you into His family
2). This is the same power that will keep you in His family
C. The same God who began this work with this incredible power
1). Will complete this work through this incredible power

2. You must see this by faith and apply it to your situation

- A. You can choose to see things through the eyes of "**FEAR**"
1). I'm so weak - the enemy is so strong - the world is so tempting
"I don't think I'll ever make it"
B. Or you can choose to see things through the eyes of "**FAITH**"
1). Faith looks away from self to the object of that faith God
a). He has already taken Jesus into glory – against many more obstacles
b). He has promised he will do the same for me
C. The work he began is designed to end in my glorification – that's the promise
1). Jesus said he will lose none that the Father gave him
John 6:39 (ESV) And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.
a). If that is the Father's will and Jesus doesn't do it – that is sin isn't it?
2). Jesus said that he and the Father will conspire together to make sure we will be with them
Jn 10:28–29 (ESV) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ⁽²⁹⁾ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
a). I am safe in this wonderful double grip of divine love – that Father and Son

3. Next time your tempted to doubt, fear - remember this

- A. Thought flashes through your head - "You'll never make it - you are too weak"
1). Answer Biblically "I will make it because of God's divine power at work in me"
a). That power that overcomes any obstacle it comes up against
B. Thought flashes through your head "Devil is going to devour you - you won't make it"
1). Remember the devil is a created being – he is a puppet to our King
2). One day he will bow and call him Lord – on his way into the Lake of Fire
a). Don't waste time focusing on the devil when you can gaze on Christ
Don't shiver at the devils power when you can rest in the creators might

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- C. Thought flashes through your mind "This world is so tempting how can I go on"
- 1). Answer it biblically - "You can go on because He will strengthen you"
 - a). He is going to present you to the Father faultless and with great joy
- D. Thought flashes through your mind "What about death - martyred – will I cave"
- 1). Answer it Biblically "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"
 - a). His mighty strength at work in me will overcome - it will be there when I need it
 - b). His mighty strength at work in me will accomplish His purpose - get me to glory
- E. Answer all of your fears and doubts Biblically with this answer
- 2 Tim 4:18 (NIV)** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- 1). Every attack whether from flesh, Devil or world
 - a). His strength will finish the work He began in you
He will take you safely to His kingdom
 - b). The result of this truth - WORSHIP
"To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

LET'S PRAY