

Paul's High Priestly Prayer

Ephesians 1:17-18: "And the God of Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you might know what is the hope of His calling..."

In the first chapter of Ephesians and again in chapter 3, Paul prays a magnificent prayer. I call it a "high priestly prayer". It is in the same spirit as Jesus' prayer in John 17. Paul prayed for the church, the body of Christ, for you and me. This is an apostle's high priestly prayer, but I believe it also comes from a pastor's heart as he prays for his people with pastoral love.

I want to tell you that God is underestimated by most of us. God's will for us and His desire to bring us along into holy things is more than our hearts can imagine. If we could only, by faith, lay hold on God's goal for us: God's will for us. I tell you that God's will for the church is more than you or I have ever thought or imagined and it is tangible for the trusting heart if with all our hearts we truly seek Him. We can attain, by God's grace, to the purpose in this prayer.

Never underestimate God's will for you and I, but lay hold on it by hope. Have you realized what God's will is for the church? In this high priestly prayer for the church, just the introduction to it, in verse 17, he says that we may come to wisdom and revelation into the knowledge of Him." This first part of Paul's prayer is a glimpse into God's goals for our lives and the holiness of God. Now the knowledge of the holy is our opportunity and God wants to give us wisdom and revelation and insight. These are bound up in Jesus. We have wisdom and revelation if we have Him in our hearts and in our lives. God wants us, as Paul was praying for us, to be people of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Now the knowledge of theology is great. The knowledge of education and culture is wonderful, but the knowledge of HIM is what we must have: the knowledge of the Holy.

Paul went on praying in verse 18, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened..." Oh may God enlighten our understanding that we may know what is the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Now, I ask you, "What is the hope of your calling?" We have hopes and goals, financial goals, educational goals, hopes for life, hopes for our careers, hopes for our ambitions; but, here the greatest prayer of all is that we might understand and know the hope of HIS calling. Now it's HIS calling that counts. Not yours and mine. We are called to certain things and there are various callings in our Christian life. But, there is an overwhelming calling for all and the only calling that really counts is HIS calling. This is Christ's calling: God's will through Christ for us; the goals of God through Christ. We in the church need to get on the same page and have the same vision and the same desire and that is the hope of His calling. Jesus has a hope for you and me. It's better than my hope for my life. The hope of Jesus is that His calling may be shared with his church. May it come to fruition and reality - the hope of His calling, His calling for the church, His will for the church and for our lives. All is bound up in Jesus. He is to be in us, through us, controlling us, having His way.