

EPHESIANS 1:18c
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 28, November 28, 1999

INTRO: We have been looking at the second reason why Paul prays on a regular basis for the Ephesian believers. It was that the eyes of their understanding might be opened. I mentioned that the word *understanding* is the Greek word *dianoia* which is a thinking through. It is to pull some past information out of the storage part and rethink it or think upon it. Someone asked what the difference was between this word and meditation. I checked through the NT. The word *to meditate* in any form is found only twice in the NT (Lk. 21:14; 1 Ti. 4:15) and in those references I think it is not the best translation for both refer more to care than to meditation. Now the Greek language of the NT is so precise in its descriptions of the mind and its actions that it distinguishes between that which is generated as ideas and thoughts which come from the process of thinking and thoughts which are a regurgitation of something already stored in the nous of the mind. The regurgitation of something already processed and stored in the mind is called, as I understand it, *dianoia*. In all the Greek words for the workings of the mind, and there are many, *dianoia* probably fits best of all the OT concept of meditation.

Now Paul wishes that when we reflect on the knowledge of God which has been placed in the mind, that the lights may go on with regard to three major areas. The first of these was that we might know what is the hope of God's call in salvation. I gave a threefold hope of our salvation as derived from God's threefold purpose of predestining man. First, the hope of being conformed to the image of God's Son. Second, the hope of the redemption of the body and third the hope of ever existing to the praise of God's glory.

It is not surprising then, that the second thing Paul desires is that when we reflect on the knowledge of God we might discover what are the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. To this thought we now turn our attention.

2) The riches of the glory (18c)

The second thing Paul wished for the Ephesian believers to know is what are the

riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. In 1:14 we have already seen that at death we receive an inheritance. We considered the difference of this inheritance with that of an earthly inheritance. In the earthly inheritance we leave an inheritance at death. In the heavenly inheritance we receive an inheritance at death.

Now here is indeed an interesting passage. So marvelous and so beyond human comprehension are the words before us that most commentators refuse to believe them and so a second view is presented by many because that which the text so plainly says is simply incomprehensible. For, you see, this text speaks of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. D. Martin Lloyd Jones says that both views are possible and there is no proof of which is right but he takes the second view because; and here are his words, "...I am not happy with the idea of God having an inheritance. Everything belongs to God; the whole universe is God's."

Now I have to say, "Who am I to argue with such a great man of God." And yet, it seems to me that his very explanation as to why God cannot have an inheritance is wrong. He argues that everything belongs to God. I ask you, who does the person belong to that does not know Jesus Christ as personal Savior? Consider John 8:44 where Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, "You are of your father the devil." Surely those people do not belong to God. 1 John 5:19 says, "...the whole world lies in the wicked one..." (not wickedness as KJV). When Satan tempted Jesus he said he would give to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (governing authorities etc...) if Jesus would fall down and worship him. Jesus did not say, "Listen Devil, that is mine already." And so we see that not all things belong to God. Oh, in order to

understand the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, we need the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; we need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened for what Paul is speaking of here is only for such people.

I have no doubt that in this text Paul is speaking, not of our inheritance in Christ, but of God's inheritance in the Saints (See Deut. 4:20; 9:29; 32:9-10). And so in verse 18 we find that God has an inheritance in the saints. And this verse speaks of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints.

I would like to change topics for just a moment and consider our inheritance in Christ. I think in order to understand our inheritance in Christ we need we also need the eyes of our understanding enlightened. Let's take a moment to look at 1 Cor. 2:9 (read). You see, through the means of natural science, the collecting of data via the five senses, we are not able to begin to comprehend the things God has prepared for us. No, general revelation in no wise reveals to man what God has in store for the believer. But verse 10 gives a wonderful revelation for it says, "But God has *revealed* them to us through the Spirit." Now consider carefully that the word revealed is the word *apocalypsis*! I can sense already that if the Lord tarries and so wills it, someday I will do a series on life hereafter. I think here is a much neglected and misunderstood topic.

Oh the glory of our inheritance in Christ! But what then of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints? If ever I have felt it necessary to take ask us to take off our shoes because the ground on which we stand is holy, here it is. I almost fear to speak on this lest while I speak some will not be hushed before God. I almost fear because there

may be those here who have a disrespect for God. (Youth?) This text speaks of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints.

In messages #9, December the 20th, 1998 I spoke to you on what I believe to be God's purpose for making man and what He will accomplish through man. I believe that someday God will banish to hell, the devil and all his angels and all his human followers. And in the midst of all this He will remain just and justifier. And the sinners who have been saved will bring glory to God for all eternity and it will all be through the grace of God and a personal, free willing choice to follow God by faith. And those thus saved will never be tempted to go the route of Lucifer because of what they have experienced in life. And there, in glory and for all eternity, man will learn and reveal the character of God Almighty and eternity will be filled with the glory of God. And so vast and so huge is the goodness of God that in all of eternity, God's goodness will never be exhausted! Many believe that God's chief attribute is holiness but I believe it is goodness. I believe God is all of what He is because He is entirely good. He is just because He is good. He is holy because He is good etc...

And the more we will understand the character of God the greater will be our appreciation and admiration of God and the richer will be the glory of God!

Now I want you to go back in your minds and pull into the memory the meaning of *glory* as I gave it to you not too many messages ago. You will recall that according to my explanation of it, glory is the revelation of some positive characteristic of a person. Now let us take God Almighty for a moment. Let us go

back before He made man, no, let us go back before He made angels. Here He is, a great and awesome and good God but He is alone. There is no one to appreciate the glory of God. I believe, and it is speculation, that is the reason God created angels. I further believe that when some of the angels sinned through the fall of Lucifer, Son of the morning, that God decided to make man. And I believe that through man God will forever banish Satan and his followers to hell and at the same time, through saved man and unfallen angels He will reveal Himself to these created beings for all eternity.

But now, while man is in his fallen sinful state God can only very lightly reveal Himself to man and man is very limited in the glory he can bring to God. But some day, on the other side, we will see Him face to face and behold His glory in unveiled manner. You see, God wants to reveal His glory to us and God wants us to glorify Him. We can only glorify Him to the extent that we know Him. But in the state we are in now, we can in no wise handle His glory to any strength.

Consider for a moment, Moses deep desire to see the glory of God (Read Ex. 33:12-23). Here we notice that the amount of glory that can be revealed to sinful man is very limited. Consider also the time when Moses communed with God when God gave him all the commandments, how just being in the presence of God altered his being, especially his face where character is revealed the most (Ex. 34:29-35). Look at the NT account of that (2 Cor. 3:7-18).

You talk about the riches of God's glory. We have a small revelation in those passages of it. But it is still minuscule compared to what shall be hereafter. You see, God's glory involves all His attributes. Let us take one area of God's

goodness for a moment, the area of His grace. Now let us go ahead in Ephesians briefly and look at 2:7 (read). Here Paul says it will take God into the ages to come to show us of the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus! There we have one area in the whole of the goodness of God, and that one alone will take God into the ages to come to show us. And if it takes into the ages to come to show us of the exceeding riches of His grace, then what will it be like when you add one attribute upon another?

We have all learned of the principle of multiplication. Take the area of God's goodness, that of grace. Give God millions of years to show us this area alone. Then add another area, and another. And when you do this, soon fuses pop in our mind and we can go no further. Now you see, in this third thing Paul wants the Ephesians to know we are speaking of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. How are we able to measure the riches of this glory?

So now, in some small way, we are beginning to see the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. You see, when you and I receive Jesus Christ as our personal Savior we become God's possession. I have mentioned earlier that in an earthly inheritance, the person who dies leaves an inheritance, but in the heavenly inheritance we gain an inheritance when we die. Surely that is far better. But when we die, not only do we gain an inheritance; God gains an inheritance as well. And from the time we pass out of this life, through the time before the tribulation and during the time of the tribulation and into the time of the millennium and through the short season and on into the new heavens and new earth, we will contribute to the riches of

His glory. His goodness will be revealed to us and we will not see his back part but we will see Him face to face. We will know Him and He will know us. He will reveal Himself to us in ways unimaginable and we will adore and magnify Him until the riches of His glory are known far and wide.

Five times, when the Scriptures speak of the millennium, we are told that the earth will be filled with the glory of God (See, Hab. 2:14). During the millennium God does not dwell on the earth in Person and yet the earth is filled with the glory of God. But when we come to the time of the new heaven and the new earth, then God Almighty and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit will all dwell on earth and time and life will only grow from glory to more and more glory. Someone has well said, "Shared sorrow is half the sorrow, but shared joy is twice the joy." I would like to add that when the glory of God is known and made known from person to person it will only multiply itself more and more. It does not become less and less but more and more. Glory!

CONCL: I would like to include this message with a thought of one of those things God will inherit in the saints. God will inherit the praise, honor and glory of all saved mankind. You see, at the judgement seat of Christ Christians will be rewarded for their life for God and they will receive crowns in recognition of their work for God. But saved and rewarded man will cast his crowns before the Lord with a recognition that glory and honor and power belong to One Alone (Read Rev. 4:8-11; 5:8-14). And thus the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints will abound throughout all eternity.

Years ago the Daily Bread ran this little story: In 1808, just a year before the death of Franz Joseph Haydn, a grand performance of his outstanding oratorio *The Creation* took place in Vienna. The composer himself was there for the occasion. Old and feeble, he was brought into the great

hall in a wheelchair. His presence caused an electrifying enthusiasm in the audience. As the orchestra and chorus burst forth with full power into the passage, "And there was light," a crescendo of applause broke out. Moved by this response, the elderly musician struggled to his feet. Summoning all his strength, he raised his trembling arms upward, crying, "No, No! Not from me, but from thence - from Heaven above comes all!" And although he fell back exhausted in his chair and had to be carried from the hall, the old master had made his point in a dramatic and unforgettable fashion.

Oh, may God give to us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation as we get to know Him in His Word; may the eyes of our understanding be enlightened until heaven becomes so bright that this world loses all its power on us! May the enlightened eyes of our understanding consume all the dross of worldliness out of our lives until we live solely for Him alone! May God grant to each of us such times through the study of His Word that for a moment He hides us in the cleft of the rock and lets us see even just a little of His back. And then, may there come into being an ever growing hunger for the day when we shall see Him face to face; a day when we shall see Him as He is. And so I close this message with a reading of 1 John 3:1-3.