

A Prayer For The Faithful

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Introduction

In Ephesians 1:15-19, Paul offers a prayer for faithful saints. Let us, therefore, consider this passage, in order to understand its truths and apply its principles to our lives.

Ephesians 1:15-19 ... 15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (NASB95)

Having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints.

Ephesians 1:15 ... 15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, (NASB95)

Faith and love are intertwined in the lives of true believers (2 Cor. 8:7; Col. 1:3-4; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:3; Phile. 4-5).

2 Corinthians 8:7 ... 7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. (NASB95)

Colossians 1:3-4 ... 3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; (NASB95)

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 ... 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 1:3 ... 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; (NASB95)

Philemon 4-5 ... 4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, 5 because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; (NASB95)

I do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers.

Ephesians 1:16 ... 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; (NASB95)

Like the apostle Paul, let us be thankful for the faithful devotion of fellow-Christians (Rom. 1:8; Col. 1:3-4; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 3:9-10; 2 Thess. 1:3-4; 2:13).

Romans 1:8 ... 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. (NASB95)

Colossians 1:3-4 ... 3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; (NASB95)

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 ... 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, (NASB95)

1 Thessalonians 3:9-10 ... 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith? (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 ... 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ... 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. (NASB95)

May (God) give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Ephesians 1:17 ... 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. (NASB95)

As manifested by the Messiah, the spirit of wisdom is coupled with a proper understanding and application of the divine word (Isaiah 11:1-5).

Isaiah 11:1-5 ... 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. (NASB95)

True understanding cannot exist apart from revelation and knowledge (1 Cor. 14:6-12)

1 Corinthians 14:6-12 ... 6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? 7 Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? 8 For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 9 So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. 11 If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. 12 So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. (NASB95)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

Ephesians 1:18 ... 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (NASB95)

Eyes

Physically, the eyes represent the organ of sight; symbolically, they denote mental comprehension or spiritual understanding (Matt. 6:22-23; Luke 11:33-36).

- Thomas defines *ophthalmos* as “the eye” [3788].

- BDAG say it refers to the “(1) eye as organ of sense perception, eye; (2) mental and spiritual understanding, eye, understanding.”

Matthew 6:22-23 ... 22 “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 “But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! (NASB95)

Luke 11:33-36 ... 33 “No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. 34 “The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 “Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness. 36 “If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.” (NASB95)

Heart

Physically, the heart is a vital organ, the blood pump of the body; symbolically, it represents the seat of spiritual and mental life (Prov. 4:23; Luke 6:45).

- Thomas defines *kardia* as “heart” [2588].
- BDAG say it refers to the “(1) heart as seat of physical, spiritual and mental life (as freq. in Gk. lit.), fig. extension of ‘heart’ as an organ of the body; (2) interior, center, heart, fig. ext. of 1.”

Proverbs 4:23 ... 23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. (NASB95)

Luke 6:45 ... 45 “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. (NASB95)

Enlightened

The Greek word translated “enlightened” means to shine or give light, to cause some essential transcendent truth to be made manifest (John 1:9; Heb. 6:4).

- Thomas defines *phōtizō* as “to shine, give light” [5461].
- BDAG say it means “(1) to function as a source of light, to shine; (2) trans. to cause to be illumined, give light to, light (up), illuminate; (3) trans. to make known in reference to the inner life or transcendent matters and thus enlighten, enlighten, give light to, shed light upon, fig. ext. of 2.”

John 1:9 ... 9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (NASB95)

Hebrews 6:4 ... 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (NASB95)

So that you will know what is the hope of His calling

Hope

Biblically speaking, hope is the combination of desire and expectation. Originating in the character of God Himself, hope represents the believer's confident assurance of unseen and future realities (Rom. 8:18-25; Heb. 6:17-20).

- Thomas defines *elpis* as “expectation, hope” [1680].
- BDAG say it refers to “(1) the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment, hope, expectation; (2) that which is the basis for hoping, (foundation of) hope; (3) that for which one hopes, hope, something hoped for.”

Romans 8:18-25 ... 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (NASB95)

Hebrews 6:17-20 ... 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NASB95)

Calling

God calls sinners to humbly accept his offer of salvation. While the wise, mighty and noble often reject divine wisdom, faithful disciples endeavor to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of their calling (1 Cor. 1:26-31; 2 Thess. 1:11-12).

- Thomas defines *klēsis* as “a calling” [2821].
- BDAG say it refers to an “(1) invitation to experience of special privilege and responsibility, call, calling, invitation; (2) position that one holds, position, condition.”

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 ... 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has

chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 ... 11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NASB95)

What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints

Riches

Spiritual riches found in Christ Jesus are beyond compare; therefore, let us be storing up the treasure of a good foundation for the future (Rom. 11:33-36; 1 Tim. 6:17-19).

- Thomas defines *ploutos* as "wealth" [4149].
- BDAG say it refers to an "(1) abundance of many earthly goods, wealth; (2) plentiful supply of something, a wealth, abundance, fig. ext. of 1."

Romans 11:33-36 ... 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 6:17-19 ... 17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (NASB95)

Glory

Kingly majesty attaches to those things which belong to God. Similar blessedness belongs to the faithful, both now and in the future (2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:20-21).

- Thomas defines *doxa* as "praise, honor, glory" [1391].
- BDAG say it refers to "(1) the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendor, radiance; (2) a state of being magnificent, greatness, splendor; (3) honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige..."

2 Corinthians 3:18 ... 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (NASB95)

Philippians 3:20-21 ... 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (NASB95)

Inheritance

While the believer's inheritance is beyond compare, it is based upon a faithful and obedient response to the message of Truth (Acts 20:28-32; 1 Peter 1:3-5).

- Thomas defines *klēronomia* as “an inheritance” [2817].
- BDAG say it refers to an “(1) inheritance; (2) possession, property; (3) common in Christian usage (the possession of) transcendent salvation (as the inheritance of God's children); (4) abstract for the concrete = the heirs.”

Acts 20:28-32 ... 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (NASB95)

1 Peter 1:3-5 ... 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (NASB95)

I pray you will know the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Ephesians 1:19 ... 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (NASB95)

Surpassing

God constantly surpasses man's expectations (Eph. 3:20-21). His glory excelleth (2 Cor. 3:10); so also His grace (2 Cor. 9:14; Eph. 2:7), His power (Eph. 1:19) and His love (Eph. 3:19).

- Thomas defines *huperballō* as “to throw over or beyond, to run beyond” [5235].
- BDAG say it means “to attain a degree that extraordinarily exceeds a point on a scale of extent, go beyond, surpass, outdo.”

Ephesians 3:20-21 ... 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 3:10 ... 10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 9:14 ... 14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. (NASB95)

Ephesians 2:7 ... 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

Ephesians 1:19 ... 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (NASB95)

Ephesians 3:19 ... 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (NASB95)

Greatness

- Thomas defines *megethos* as “greatness” [3174].
- BDAG say it refers to the “(1) quality of exceeding a standard involving physical magnitude, size, lit.; (2) quality of exceeding a standard of excellence, greatness.”

Power

Realizing that the preaching of the cross is a demonstration of God’s power (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:4-5), let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17).

- Thomas defines *dunamis* as “(miraculous) power, might, strength” [1411].
- BDAG say it refers to the “(1) potential for functioning in some way, power, might, strength, force, capability; (2) ability to carry out something, ability, capability; (3) a deed that exhibits ability to function powerfully, deed of power, miracle, wonder; (4) something that serves as an adjunct of power, resource...”

1 Corinthians 1:18 ... 18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 ... 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (NASB95)

Romans 1:16-17 ... 16 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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." (NASB95)

Conclusion

Note that the aforementioned blessings are found exclusively in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3-5). This glorious and rich inheritance is made available "in the saints;" his power is manifest "toward us who believe" (Eph. 1:18-19). Have you been baptized into Christ? Have you clothed yourselves in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-29)?

*Ephesians 1:3-5 ... 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (NASB95)*

*Ephesians 1:18-19 ... 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance **in the saints**, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power **toward us who believe**. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (NASB95)*

Romans 6:3-4 ... 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (NASB95)

Galatians 3:26-29 ... 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. (NASB95)