

# Sermon Outline

THE YEAR IN OUR LORD, 2011-2012

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## CHRIST JESUS—OUR FUTURE, OUR GLORY, OUR POWER: A MESSAGE ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD (EPHESIANS 1:17-19)

### I. Seeking to Be More

### II. “He Is Not Here, But Has Risen”

### III. Paul’s Prayer to the God of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:17)

- A. Ephesians 1:17-19 contains a prayer from Paul the apostle.
- B. Paul prays to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory...”
  - 1. Since Paul is a Jew, Paul knows that there is only one God.
  - 2. The fact that he links this one God to Christ demonstrates that the only God is the God who has revealed himself through Jesus Christ.
- C. So, what does Paul pray that God would give to those who believe in Christ?
  - 1. He prays that God would give them “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him [.]”
  - 2. The Scriptures teach us that the Holy Spirit is part of the essence of God.
  - 3. The Holy Spirit is that part of God which acts in the world to reveal God.
  - 4. In this case, Paul prays that God would send his Spirit to instruct believers in God’s will.
  - 5. The terms, “wisdom,” “revelation,” and “knowledge,” all refer to the gift of knowledge that God gives believers in Christ.  
—This is so that they might better understand what God has done for them, and what God wants of them.

#### IV. Enlightened Hearts (Ephesians 1:18)

- A. What would happen when God gives his Spirit of wisdom, and revelation, and knowledge to Christians?  
—The result would be *enlightenment*: “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened...”
- B. The word “enlightened” here means “to be given light,” “to be given understanding, and awareness.”
- C. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher of the Christian.
- D. Elsewhere, in his other writings, Paul makes clear that all Christians already have the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).
- E. Paul is not asking that God would give his Spirit to people who don’t have him.
- F. Rather, Paul is asking God to intensify the Spirit’s influence in the lives of his children.

#### V. The God-Given *Hope* of the Christian (Ephesians 1:18)

- A. In this instance, Paul has a very specific list of things which he says the Spirit will give. Altogether, there are three lessons that the Spirit of Divine Knowledge would impart to the believer.
- B. The first lesson has to do with *the Christian’s God-given future*.
  - 1. Paul writes, “...that you may know what is the *hope* to which he has called you...”
  - 2. “Hope” here refers to the glorious future that awaits the believer in Christ.
- C. What kind of future, then, is this?
  - 1. It is essentially the Kingdom of Heaven, or the “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17), or “the new heavens and the new earth” (Isa 66:22).
  - 2. Revelation 21:3-4: “...‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man....’”
  - 3. The future that awaits the children of God is one where God will be with his them forever, with no more sin to separate them from him.
- D. Paul prays that you and I would be able to understand and embrace this hope.

## VI. The God-Given *Glory* of the Christian (Ephesians 1:18)

- A. The second lesson has to do with *the Christian's God-given glory or dignity*.
1. After he prays for God to give Christians understanding of the hope to which he has called us, he adds, "...what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..."
  2. Paul wants Christians to know that we are God's inheritance.
- B. This is not the first time that the Bible speaks in such a way.
1. Deuteronomy 7:6: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for *his treasured possession...*"
  2. Psalm 78:71: "from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, *Israel his inheritance.*"
  3. Psalm 135:4: "For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as *his own possession.*"
- C. The wealth that God has gained through the death of Christ is a wealth of lives.
- D. And it is not only God who benefits.
1. The fact that we belong to God also means that we too have been given glory and dignity.
  2. Our glory is God himself!
- E. When Paul prays for us to understand that we belong to God, Paul is indirectly praying that we would see God as our ultimate glory and dignity.

## VII. The God-Given *Power* of the Christian (Ephesians 1:19)

- A. Paul adds in verse 19: "and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe"
- B. Paul wants us to know the greatness of the power that God has so lovingly exercised toward us.
- C. Paul wants us to see that *God himself is the Christian's power*.
1. In ourselves, we have no ability to save ourselves from evil
  2. But God has saved us in the resurrection of Christ.
  3. Paul's words recall Moses' hymn in Exodus 15:2: "The LORD is my strength..."
- D. Since God is our strength, a Christian's self-confidence is *not* the most important thing.  
—What matters most is that God is with and for us!

## VIII. Christ Jesus, the Basis for God's Work in Us (Ephesians 1:19-20)

- A. What has God done for us, that we might see him as our future, glory, and power?
1. This is where we come to the heart of the apostle Paul's thinking in this Scripture.
  2. Paul writes, "...according to the working of his great might that he worked *in Christ* ...."
  3. What God did in Christ is the basis of what God will do in us.
  4. What God will give to us—our heavenly future, our glory in him, the power of God for us—all those things are *based on*, "*according to*," a previous expression of God's power in Christ Jesus.
- B. When did God work his great power in Christ?
1. God worked his power in Christ all throughout Christ's life.
  2. But the main event that Paul has in mind is the resurrection: "...when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places."
- C. Are you beginning to see now why the resurrection is relevant for us today?
1. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation, the basis, for everything else that God wants to do in us and for us.
  2. With God, Christ Jesus is our future, our glory, and our power; because it is in Christ and through Christ that all these good things come from God to us.
  3. If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are people with a future; we are people with glory and dignity, and we are people with power.

## IX. Life Defined by the Resurrected Jesus

**Since the resurrected Christ is our future, glory, and power, God does not want us to live our lives out of fear or self-seeking rivalry. Instead, he has freed us through Christ to live with dignity and strength in our present, and the Kingdom of God as our destiny.**

- A. *Since Jesus Christ is our future, glory, and power, God does not want us to live out of fear or rivalry any longer.*
1. How much of your own life is driven by fear and a desire to outdo someone else?
    - a. When fear and competition become so much a part of our lives, we find it hard to have wholesome relationships with others.

- b. Some competition is needed to help us improve ourselves.
  - c. But it's sad when almost everything in life becomes competitive.
  - d. When fear is the underlying motive for why we do what we do, life becomes toxic and cruel.
2. Through the resurrection of Christ, God removes fear or rivalry as primary motivations for life.
- a. By raising his Son from the dead, and joining our fates to him, God shows us that we no longer need to be driven by fear.
  - b. You...
    - don't have to live your life to fulfill someone else's dreams.
    - don't have to worry about your future.
    - don't have to force your kids to sacrifice their wellbeing for academic grades.
    - can afford to choose a less well-paid, but less stressful job.
- Why? Because Jesus Christ has been raised for you.
3. If you believe in Jesus, the resurrection becomes God's word of love to you.
- John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."

B. *Since Jesus Christ is our future, glory, and power, God wants us to live with dignity and strength in our present.*

1. Our ultimate dignity is not rooted in us, but in the fact that God has made us his own through Christ's death and resurrection.
2. Our ultimate strength is from God and Christ.
3. What does a life of Christ-dependent dignity and strength look like?
  - a. It is a life that is not driven by fear or self-serving competitiveness.
  - b. It is the kind of life described in Galatians 5:22-23:
 

—"...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..."
4. Why can the believer in Jesus have all these qualities?
  - Why can he love the unlovable?
  - Why can she show patience while dealing with her students?
  - Why can he show kindness to his co-workers while under pressure to perform?
  - Why can she radiate goodness when her colleagues are filled with venom?
  - Why can he retain a sense of humor even when things are stressful?

—These qualities can only come from one who is secure in Christ at the core of his or her being.

- C. *Since Jesus Christ is our future, glory, and power, God wants us to have his Kingdom as our destiny.*
1. Jesus died and rose from the dead so that we can live (and die, if need be) for the most important thing—the Kingdom of God.
  2. The Kingdom is the Christian’s destiny because....
    - a. it is the hope to which we were called (Eph 1:18).
    - b. it is where Christ our King has gone and will take us to someday (Eph 1:20; Jn 14:3).  
—God’s Kingdom is humankind’s highest good.
  3. As priests of God, we are to do two main things:
    - a. We are to live under the Kingdom of God.
    - b. We are to increasingly bring the world under that Kingdom (knowing that Christ himself will complete the work when he returns).

## X. **Receiving Christ as Our Future, Glory, and Power**

- A. The desire to be more, to be fulfilled, to be empowered, is ultimately answered in Jesus Christ.  
—Not only is Christ the Answer to the Old Testament (Lk 9:35), he is the Answer to our personal life-quests.
- B. God wants Jesus to be the future, glory, and power of his people.

Will *you* receive Jesus as your future, glory, and power?

<sup>30</sup>It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

<sup>31</sup>Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”  
(1 Cor 1:30-31 NIV)