

LET HIM DO IT TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

Ephesians 1:7-23

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

HE IS RISEN! When one considers what God has had to go through in building and establishing His kingdom, it should leave one in awe and holy reverence. We know from Scripture that Jesus took with Him, in dying on the cross, our sins upon Himself. As the Apostle Peter explains saying, "when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself **bore our sins in His own body on the tree**, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by

whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now **returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**" (**1 Peter 2:23-25**) That is the key to the wisdom of God that is for us today in this message. Returning to, going to, and living our lives, looking unto Jesus, who is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.

Not only has God been incredibly patient towards His people, as King David spoke of in his prayer in Psalm 86, "But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth" (Psalm 86), but He chose to be humiliated, taunted, tortured, and die on a cross so that we can be reconciled to God and have a place in Him, in His eternal kingdom. The world continues to mock and taunt our Lord God and Savior but for those who believe, we just say thank You Jesus! Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior! Glory to God on high! You are worthy of all of our praise, Lord Jesus!

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory."

There was but one way that God knew of, based on His perfectness in Righteousness and Justice and Wisdom, that His creation could be reconciled back to Him after man chose to sin. God knew that only His Righteousness could pay the requirement of the law based on His perfect justice. John the Baptist understood that, as He recognized Jesus coming toward Him saying, "'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**) In the heavenly vision, the Apostle John had on the island of Patmos, he recounts to us in **Revelation 5:6-10**, "And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and **have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.**"

Sound familiar? As Peter says in **1 Peter 2:9**, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

"Paul gives us several things that God wants us to know in the wisdom that He imparts to us. Paul says this, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come."

1. To KNOW Jesus. To know the exceeding great love that God has for us, for YOU! God IS love. (**1 John 4:7-8**) In the next chapter, chapter 2 of Ephesians, Paul goes on to say, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 4:2-10**) Not only has God been longsuffering toward us in our sin, but in His kindness toward us, He is leading us out of that sin, out of that darkness and into His marvelous light!

2. To KNOW the hope of His calling. We are His workmanship. God has a specific plan and calling for each of us. Collectively it is for us to be of the same mind, spirit and purpose. Individually He is working through us in building and establishing His eternal kingdom. As Paul says, that those who trust in Christ are to the praise of His glory. He is glorified in our believing on Him. He is also glorified in the work that He is doing through us for His pleasure, purpose and glory. That is where Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (**Matthew 5:16**) We're not looking for accolades and praise of men in this world. We're looking for how Jesus wants to use us to edify, uplift, encourage people in Christ and to point them to Jesus.

Paul told his spiritual son Timothy, "If we endure, We shall also reign with Him." (**2 Timothy 2:12**) That reign begins even now. "You2.

are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Jesus has already conquered death and IS reigning over the darkness for those who will believe on Him! As I read in Revelation, "For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have **made us kings and priests to our God**; And we shall reign on the earth." Did you catch the part of "every tribe and tongue and people and nation." God is saying that to all who put their hope and trust in Jesus. That begins now. The reigning part is that we can reign in Him over darkness and be His light. The fullness of the reign comes later but God has already declared it to be so. Right now we are His royal priesthood, leading by example, sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ!

You are redeemed in Christ! That is, you ARE saved by believing on Christ. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17) When we believe on Christ, we are then to be born-again, that is born of the Holy Spirit, to become a child of God! We are to then RECEIVE Christ, into our hearts. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13) Then as Paul says, "you [are] sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14) "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:12)

While we celebrate Resurrection Sunday every April, rejoicing in the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, conquering death, so that we too can overcome death by putting our hope and trust in Him, we have to know, believe, and live our lives as though every day is our day of salvation. We can study, study, study, on end-time prophesy and think we know when Jesus is coming back, who the antichrist is, and where we are historically in those end-times prophesies, but God wants us to know Him, to trust Him in His promises, and to believe that He is going to get us to where He is leading us. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

I've enjoyed studying about ancient religions, the mystery religion of Babylon stuff. I've been listening to a video series called "Know Your Enemy." But experience and the Word and the Holy Spirit tells me continually, to know HIM, to know His WORD! Just like it is said

about the legal experts that keep a look out for counterfeit money. They can spot a counterfeit by knowing the genuine article. Same way with us. As we know Christ and His Word, we can know when we are being led down a wrong path. As Jesus tells us to abide in Him what is He talking about? After all, you can go about your merry way in the affairs of this world and get by without "abiding" in Jesus. I've done it more times than I want to remember. In context, Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." We cannot bear fruit in Christ if we are not proactively abiding in Him. I hope no one misunderstands what I am saying here. There are times and will be times when God uses us even when we are unaware or not looking to "bear fruit for His glory." Yet if the Spirit is leading us here or there to help someone and we choose to go a different way, we won't bear that fruit then will we? If the Spirit is intending you to show kindness to someone or pray for someone and you choose to ignore that, what happens. Nothing, most likely.

Let's review what Paul said for us to know. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the **knowledge of Him**, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the **hope of His calling**, what are the **riches of the glory of His inheritance** in the saints, and what is the **exceeding greatness of His power** toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come."

1. That you may know Him, as your Lord and Savior.
2. That you may know the hope of your calling, to be a child of God, a joint-heir with Christ (**Romans 8:17**), and to reign with Him.
3. To know the exceeding greatness of His power. If Jesus rose from the dead, He can raise you! If God forgave Peter for denying Him 3 times, He can forgive you! If God forgave Paul for being an accessory to murders of Christians, He can forgive you! God's love is guaranteed to be greater than your evil, your sin. The enemy of our souls wants us to think God's kingdom is for all of those good Christians who seem to be just better than you. I used to think that way. Paul asked, "do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (**Romans 2:4**)

Paul wants his readers to know, as then God wants us to know "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He

raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." What that immediately said to me is that God can save, deliver, or heal anyone at anytime who will believe on Him. "For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Paul was speaking to Christians in saying that. Today is our day of salvation and tomorrow and the next until He calls us to our eternal home. Every day we can enter His rest, every day we can receive His grace for our time of need, and every day we can and should recognize and give praise, thanks, and glory to God in Christ for our salvation, deliverance, and healing. You say it hasn't come? It's coming. Jesus is our eternal hope from beginning to end. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Romans 1:16) "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." (Romans 10:11)

In a book called *Starting Well*, Paul Leavenworth gives us this testimony, "As a new Christian in the early 1970s, I knew that something dramatic and life changing had happened to me; but I was not sure what it was, or what it meant, or what would happen to me in the future. All I knew was that I was headed in one direction and the next day I was headed in another completely different direction.

Although I had grown up in a Christian family, had attended church regularly, and had even gone to yearly summer camps; during my teenage years in the 1960s I had quietly (and later more noisily) rebelled from the faith of my parents. Christianity seemed like a lot of crazy rules and I wanted my freedom and independence.

My search for freedom and independence ultimately led to emptiness and despair as I looked to the "truths" of the youth culture of the 1960s for satisfaction. When I finally gave my life to Christ in 1971, I knew I was a sinner. The prospect of forgiveness and newness of life was really good news to me. But once I got saved, what then? Some well-meaning folks told me to go to church, read the Bible, and pray each day. Others told me to witness. Still others told me to read this book or go to that flurry of activity, I found myself tired, somewhat confused, and unsatisfied. Was this what Christianity was all about?

I was not interested in going back where I came from, but I was not satisfied where I was. What was I to do? Unfortunately it took me several years to begin to understand that doing the right things was not the core of Biblical Christianity. During a premature mid-life crisis in my mid-thirties, I began to get a glimpse of the centrality

of Biblical Christianity as right relationship with God. At this point in my life I began to understand that out of a right relationship with God comes transformed character and obedient actions. How could I have missed this? I read the Bible, been a regular church attendee, and even gone to seminary. For years I had been trying to live a life pleasing to God instead of enjoying a relationship with Him. I had been like the little boy who tries to get his busy father's attention by performing some heroic feat, not realizing that all along I had His attention and acceptance. What God wanted was me, not just my actions or accomplishments!"¹

Revelation 5

"Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it." "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

In Christ, in our relationship with Christ, HE is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption from God. (**1 Corinthians 1:30**) We will one day reign with Christ. We are saved and are being saved. We will reign with Him and we ARE reigning with Him in sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ. "We are HIS workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." He's doing the work, we're just walking in it. LET HIM DO IT! LET HIM DO IT!

So then all who glory, glory in the Lord Christ Jesus! (**1 Corinthians 1:31**) FOR HE HAS RISEN INDEED!

¹ Richard Clinton Paul Leavenworth, Starting Well (Covergence Publishing, 2012), 33-34.

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Heavenly Father,
I confess that I have sinned against You.
I ask that You forgive me of my sins.
I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins,
I confess with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord,
and I believe in my heart
that You raised Jesus from the dead,
so that I can have forgiveness of sins,
and be reconciled to You,
God, My Father.
I now commit to You,
that I will repent of my sins,
and live in the newness of life,
being led by Your Holy Spirit,
all this I pray,
in Christ Jesus,
my Savior and Lord.
Thank You Lord! Amen.

In John 6:54 Jesus said, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The image of the Passover was and is a representation of being covered by the blood of Jesus and then feeding on the Word of God. These are things in the spiritual. And then Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death, will also give eternal life to all who will put their trust in Him. When we partake in what is called the Lord's Supper, or Communion, we are doing it in remembrance of what Jesus did and is doing for us and in us.

Heavenly Father thank You for the giving us Your Son Jesus. May You bless this time of remembrance of the Lord's Supper.

"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (**Luke 22:19**)

"Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (**Luke 26:27**)