

Life Group Topic #13 Ephesians 1:15-23

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Who would you consider as one of the most powerful influences in the world during the 20th century? Why?

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God—including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Read the prayer of Ephesians 1:15-23 audibly as a group and then silently. You can then either share together the things the Lord impresses on you or share briefly the following notes before using the questions below to stimulate application:

1. THE HOPE OF GOD'S CALL...v 18a

The New Testament word "hope" means *favorable and confident expectations*.

God wants these thoughts tied to your belief in His call...This takes us back to the very beginning of our Christian lives.

Romans 8:30...*And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

We did call on Him for our salvation but it was because He first called us...we were responding to His call. So what did God call us for? The whole of the NT speaks to this purpose...

- To be adopted, redeemed, made recipients of wisdom and understanding.
- To be set apart for His use
- To spiritual opposition and suffering
- To rule and reign with His Son for all eternity

2. THE GLORY OF GOD'S INHERITANCE...v 18b

The Greek text has been translated as us being God's inheritance or God giving us an inheritance but the parallel passage in Colossians 1:12 speaks for the inheritance that God will give us.

I Peter 1:4 describes it us...*an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.*

We are heirs with Jesus Christ and one day the inheritance will be ours. I Corinthians 2:9

promises...*"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"* There are some specifics that are worth noting. We are promised that...

- We will see and worship God and His Son, Jesus
- We will be like Jesus in character and like Him with resurrected bodies
- We will join a crowd of people standing in front of God's throne and that crowd will be from every nation, tribe and tongue and it will be innumerable

Paul speaks of this inheritance as *the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints*.

3. THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER...v 19-23

The focus of God's call was looking back and the focus of our inheritance is looking forward so now the focus on God's power is the interim in between. Paul camps here because it is only through God's power that His purpose will find its fulfillment in our inheritance. He is absolutely convinced of its adequacy and seems to stumble over words to try and express it.

Paul prays that we would be given divine awareness of this power that they already possessed in Christ. How has He demonstrated His power?...through the resurrection and enthroning of Jesus.

- He raised Him from the dead...v 20a
- He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all competitors...v 20b-21
- He appointed Him to be head over everything...v 22

The resurrection and ascension were decisive demonstrations of God's power. There are two things which we cannot control—death and evil. God, in Jesus Christ, defeated both and can rescue us from both.

Paul repetitively asks because these things do not come without asking...

- Wisdom and revelation so that we would know God better
- An opening of the eyes of our hearts so that we would know...
 1. The hope to which God has called us
 2. The inheritance that is ours
 3. The experience of His power

Word Application Questions:

1. What do you most need God to open your eyes to see- hope, inheritance, or power in Christ? Why? (vs 18-19).
2. Meditate together on the power of God in vs. 19-23. Paraphrase in your own words what you learn here about the power of God.
3. In what areas of your life do you need to experience the divine power of God?
4. Jesus is said to be the head over everything for the church, his body. How could your Life Group experience in a fuller way the Lordship of Jesus in the group?
5. The clear application of this passage is as a template for our prayers for each other. Using this prayer as a guide from vs. 17-19, pray over each member of the group- applying this prayer to the realities of their current life challenges. You can do this as a full group or in break-out groups.

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

Don't forget the lessons from Soul Cravings. Keep praying through your "Friends List." Keep passing out the SC Prequel. What new opportunities has this given your group?