

Ephesians Part 4

*For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.
Ephesians 1:15-16*

Paul has called followers of Christ to a higher level of living. He has called us to a heavenly perspective (1:3), he has challenged us to know who we really are since we have been adopted as sons and daughters (4-10) and he has charged us to conform to the predestined plan of Him who has chosen us (11-14). The problem with most of us is that we lose perspective. Our earthly culture is in conflict with the heavenly culture. Our earthly culture is ever present. We live in it; we can see it and we can hear it. Therefore, it has the upper hand in the way our lives are influenced.

This is why Paul prays as he does. He has seen the faith of the Ephesians. He has seen their love for one another but this causes him to pray for their spiritual eyes to be continually open in order that they may have wisdom and revelation. Read verses 17-23. There are three awesome things that Paul asks for. He wants every believer to know the hope to which he has been called, the riches of his glorious inheritance and the incomparable great power for us who believe (that power being compared to the power that raised Jesus from the dead). Hope, inheritance and power, just what everyone needs. But many, including myself, walk daily without the influence of these great treasures in our lives. What's the problem?

One day I was at the church office and the Lord nudged me to take a walk. I walked all around Columbus and then came to a stop at the crossroads where the only traffic light in Columbus directs the ebb and flow of cars and trucks. The voice of the Lord came to me and asked, "What do you see?" Quite frankly all I saw was the light, the traffic, a bar, a restaurant, a bank (now gone), a flower shop and a deli. But that was too obvious, so I kept looking. The little crossroads of Columbus is obviously a place of commerce so as I watched the people come and go and looked up and down the streets, feeling strangely conspicuous, I started to sense a little pain. Pain? What is that all about? Good question. Many times we ignore that pain or the uncomfortable feeling inside of us and don't ask what that pain is doing there. The pain or discomfort has words behind it. It is saying something. As I prayed and listened with my inner ear I heard the word, loss. When I heard that word I opened my eyes and all I could see was loss. People coming to and fro shopping, eating and drinking, but lost. Houses lined the streets that would someday be gone. Our church that used to be in The Grange now no longer there. I could go on with what I saw but the point was that everything that we see about us, that influences our lives, is temporary. But the temporary is robbing our time, our focus and our energy. I hear too many people crying burnout and that there is no time for God and church and ministry because we are too busy.

The true thief is the devil (see John 10:10) and the true life-giver is Jesus. We need to see from a better and more energizing vantage point. Rather than standing at the crossroads of man's paved highway, we need to stand with the Most High and see what He sees. Paul prays that we will have wisdom, revelation and that the eyes of our heart will be enlightened (17-18). We will look at this prayer next week but for now, what is the pain inside of you? What are you neglecting to see?