

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes August 1, 2007

Ephesians 1: 15-19

- 15: For this reason,
 because I have heard of
 your faith in the Lord Jesus and
 your love toward all the saints,
- 16: I do not cease to give thanks for you,
 remembering you in my prayers,
- 17: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 the Father of glory,
 may give you a spirit of wisdom
 and of revelation in the knowledge of him,
- 18: **having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,**
 that you may know
 what is the hope to which he has called you,
 what are the riches of his glorious inheritance
 in the saints, and
- 19: what is the immeasurable greatness of his power
 in us who believe...

Introduction:

- For many of us, our baptism, that happened many years ago, has very little present meaning. For most of us, this happened when we were babies, leaving us no cognitive memory of the event. For others of us, our baptism occurred when we were believing teenagers or adults, and sometimes only as a visible symbol of our faith, with no expectation that the rite itself had any actual effect. The same can be true for many of us who were confirmed. What did these sacraments do for us, how ought our lives to have been different afterwards, and what can we do to help others experience the fullness of their baptism and confirmation? This is part of what we will discuss today on **Deep In Scripture**.

Discussion:

- Welcome....website ... Phone numbers ... special: "The Three Conversions of the Spiritual Life"
- We continue in Ephesians from one long sentence to another! Verses 15-23 are one long sentence!
- Sometimes the best way to *hear* Scripture is to condense long sentences down into their most basic thoughts: last week we looked at vs 15-16, with the most basic idea in vs 16...

Review:

Vs 16: Saint Paul prayers for them:

1. He prays;
2. He intercedes for them;
3. He gives thanks for them (euchariston)
4. He does this without ceasing.

Vs 15: Why does he pray for them?

1. Because of what he knows about what Baptism does for them;
2. Because of what he has heard about them;
3. Because of what he knows about the Christian life in general.

In today's text (17-19), St. Paul explains the purpose for which he is praying:

- 17: *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of glory,
may give you a spirit of wisdom and
of revelation in the knowledge of him,*
- 18: *having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,
that you may know
what is the hope to which he has called you,
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and*
- 19: *what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe,*

I think Saint Paul was struggling with "Holy frustration":

- ❑ Ever since his own conversion, his life has been consumed with wanting this for others...
- ❑ Sometimes he saw fruit...other times he saw converts flounder...
- ❑ Now he sits in prison wanting to exhort these newly baptized Gentile converts to realize and live out and experience all the blessings of their new life in Christ! But how?!!
- ❑ Possibly the reason these opening invocations are so long & wordy:
 - He is trying to put into words the great spiritual blessings he himself has experienced, blessings that in many ways are beyond human language because they are "in the heavenly places" (vs 1:3).
 - These blessings are supernatural, elusive, and often passive gifts of God's mercy.

Essentially, he is praying that God will grant that their baptismal graces become confirmed and realized:

- ❑ What happens at baptism?
 - Is this always realized in the life of the baptized?
- ❑ What happens at confirmation?
 - Is this always realized in the life of the confirmed?
- ❑ Some evidence from the ECF of the development of confirmation rites...
- ❑ Essentially St. Paul is praying that God will grant them the gift of experiencing the graces of their baptism, which they have received but may squander!

17: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory"

- ❑ Following Jesus' lead, the focus of his prayers is God the Father.
- ❑ Traditionally prayers are TO God the Father THROUGH Jesus BY THE POWER OF the Holy Spirit.

"may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened"

- ❑ In baptism, they received the Holy Spirit, so this "spirit" is not another spirit;
 - Like the relationship between the Upper room in John 20 and Pentecost in Acts 2...
- ❑ He is essentially praying that the blessing of grace through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which their own spirit / soul received through baptism, would lead to an increase / growth / infused "wisdom & revelation in the knowledge of him."
 - Not mere information, but an intimate knowing ... union with God.
- ❑ **The key is "having the eyes of your heart enlightened."**
 - This is what needs to happen within them by grace for them to awaken to what is now real about them and to live accordingly, again by grace.
 - "heart" = the inner person / conscience / soul / our very self
 - "eyes": our soul has no senses; refers rather to the removal of spiritual blindness;
 - He will elaborate on this throughout his Letter:

Eph 3:14-17, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father ... that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit **in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ...**"

Eph 4:17-18, "Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, **due to their hardness of heart...**"

- This is what we want to happen in our lives & in the lives of others!

WHY?

that you may know

**what is the hope to which he has called you,
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and
what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe,**

- This "knowledge" is not the secret gnosis of the Gnostic sects...
- This is essentially a deeper, intimate believing:

Jn 6:68-9: Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and **we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.**"

Jn 8:19: They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "**You know neither me nor my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also.**"

Jn 8:54-5: Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God. **But you have not known him; I know him. If I said, I do not know him, I should be a liar like you; but I do know him and I keep his word.**"

Jn 14: 6-20: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

7: **If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him.**"

8: Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied."

9: Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and **yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?**"

16: And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever,

17: even **the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.**

18: "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.

19: Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but **you will see me; because I live, you will live also.**

20: **In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.**

Jn 17: 3: **And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.**

St. Paul lists three specific things for which he prays that they will come to KNOW (which they already have through their baptism), all are interconnected:

that you may know

- *what is the hope to which he has called you,*
- *what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and*
- *what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe,*

*Romans 5: 1-5, "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and **we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.** More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces **hope, and hope does not disappoint us,** because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us."*

*Titus 3:3-7, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in **hope of eternal life.**"*

CONCLUSION:

- What can we do to help others experience the blessings they already have through baptism?
- What can we do to help ourselves?
- For what should we pray?