

***so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, (1:18b)***

God has called the New Testament believer with a “calling” inundated with “hope.” We discussed this truth when we addressed “predestined” in Ephesians 1:5a. There we found that the saints are called in the sense of being invited to accept Christ, a calling that in no way indicates that they were selected (by God) for salvation from eternity past. It simply means that New Testament believers are invited to become children of God while in their depraved state, as are all individuals who grace the earth. We also discovered that in several instances “calling,” or “called,” references the New Testament believer’s office (area of gifting—1Peter 4:10). Ephesians 1:18b seems to apply to that scenario.

Do you have “hope,” or is your Christian life somewhat mundane and boring? Are you as excited about pursuing Christ today as you were when you first met Him? Is His Word as interesting and refreshing as it once was? Do you have vision, or are you experiencing frustration as you pursue God’s best for your life? Do you “feel” as if nothing you are doing (in Christ’s strength, of course) is impacting anyone’s life, including your own? The believers at Ephesus were apparently faltering. They had been exposed to the wonderful truths of verses 3-14 (and much more since Paul had taught at Ephesus for at least three years), yet Paul prayed that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened so they might “*know what is the hope of His calling*” (Ephesians 1:18). Evidently, these believers were in a rut. They had been exposed to a wealth of truth through a man who had seen Jesus but were lacking in their ability to implement his teachings. They possessed an intellectual understanding of their future destiny (that they would one day receive a resurrected body and reign with Christ), but that event was to occur in the distant future. What they needed was a revelation of what God was doing in the midst of the mundane so hope could be experienced in the present. In much the same way, we have little difficulty appropriating hope for that day when we will receive our glorified bodies and return with Christ. Appropriating hope in the present, in the middle of clogged drains, stopped up commodes, and flat tires, is the greater challenge. For this we have Jesus, Who saves us daily “*by His life*”:

*For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*  
(Romans 5:10)

“Hope” never disappoints (Romans 5:5), allowing believers to rejoice in all circumstances (Romans 12:12) and exude boldness of speech (2Corinthians 3:12). That hope is usually attained through trial (Romans 5:1-5) should not deter us, for hope is found in “*Christ Jesus, who is our hope*” (1Timothy 1:1), “*the Lamb that was slain*” (Revelation 5:6, 8, 12, 13). As we enter into His sufferings, we know Him more deeply and, in turn, live more consistently from His perspective—viewing difficulties as opportunities to display the principle of the cross (selfless living) in all situations of life. Once we experience selfless living, hope inundates our souls to the glory of the Father. Self-centeredness, on the other hand, extinguishes hope.

These believers had reason to possess hope in the present as well as in the future, as validated by verses 3-14. “Hope,” according to Hebrews 6:19, is the “*anchor*” of the believer’s “*soul*.” Without hope, the redeemed sail aimlessly in defeat and despair. In fact, they “*grieve*” (1Thessalonians 4:13). Paul encouraged his readers to focus on the hope made available through Christ—to live by His life in the present, remembering that they would later receive glorified bodies and return with Christ (as God’s “*inheritance*”—Ephesians 1:11) to the “*glory*” of God the Father (Ephesians 1:14). Knowing (really knowing and believing) what lies ahead supplies hope for the future as well as the present. But, as was pointed out earlier, Christ’s work on the cross can be viewed from two perspectives (one proper, the other improper): (1) self-

centeredness, where you are concerned with how it benefits you (2) God-centeredness, where you are concerned with how it benefits God and others. Hence, Paul prayed that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened (Ephesians 1:18) so they might bask in the hope experienced in the present and the future through selfless living.

***what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (1:18c)***

Paul also prayed that his readers would know “*what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*” He had taught earlier, in verse 11, that these saints had been made God’s inheritance. But now he prayed that their eyes would be opened to that truth—that it would become revealed truth rather than remain information. The gospel, from their vantage point, needed to become God-centered rather than remain self-centered (man-centered). They needed to begin to understand what God received through the cross and grow past the shallowness of viewing Calvary selfishly.

All New Testament saints are God’s inheritance. God is glorified in them, and this glory is valuable to the Father. But just as pain (the death of God’s Son) was required prior to our becoming His inheritance, pain (personal suffering) reveals to the believer the value of God’s inheritance in the saints. In fact, only through living by the principle of the cross (selfless living—dying to self when the going gets tough) do we appreciate what God receives through Christ’s offering and bride. Only then is our perspective of the body of Christ (the universal church) drastically revolutionized. Instead of viewing her as random individuals, some lovable and some not so lovable, we view her as precious to the Father—something worth cherishing, something worth our concern due to her great value. Can you see why a deficiency of this perspective could nurture disunity within Christ’s body? May each of us love God by encouraging His inheritance in truth and loving her unconditionally!

Before we can comprehend the positive ramifications of being a part of God’s inheritance, we must realize the type of work that God is doing today, even this very moment, in those who make up His inheritance. This work is an awesome work, one that can be understood through a proper knowledge of a previous topic—“the principle of the cross.”

The church, made up of “*glorified*” saints (Romans 8:30) “*conformed to the image of*” Christ (Romans 8:29), will return as the body of Christ at Jesus’ Second Coming. This event will occur after each member of the church has received a resurrected body (1Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-16), bringing much glory to the Father. By this time the Father’s inheritance (masterpiece) will be totally conformed to the image of His Son in soul and spirit, as well as body. Consequently, we will respond to all situations exactly as Christ responds.

God is in the process, even today, of bringing us to maturity. His goal is that we begin to think and respond as Christ thinks and responds. From earlier lessons, we learned that Jesus does nothing for Himself, but only for others—including the other two Persons of the Trinity. He lives, in other words, by the principle of the cross. We, therefore, must move from a self-centered gospel to a God-centered gospel. We must move past the place of serving God for our own glory (2Corinthians 4:17) and serve Him for the glory that He is to receive through His inheritance, the church (Ephesians 1:18), when she returns in glory. Only through God opening the eyes of our hearts (Ephesians 1:18), as we passionately pursue His heart, will we grow past our selfishness to comprehend “*what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*” Thus, Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus.

**Ephesians 1:19-20 —and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe (19a). These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (19b) which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead (20a), and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places (20b),**

*and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. (1:19a)*

“Power” is from the Greek *dunamis* and points to God’s power supplied to the New Testament believer, not only in the future, but also in the present. “Surpassing” is from the Greek *huperbaloon* meaning “to throw over or beyond,” confirming that God’s power exceeds any power that has or will exist. Hence, God’s power fulfills the New Testament believer’s “hope” (Ephesians 1:18b) today, tomorrow, and throughout eternity. Therefore, His power sustains the church, His “inheritance” (Ephesians 1:18c), both today and forever.

Because we receive this type of power (“toward us who believe”—Ephesians 1:19a), we have been called to live by this power as we function in the spiritual gift (1Peter 4:10) we received the moment we repented and believed, were placed in Christ and made new, and predestined to receive a glorified body. Read Psalm 18:1-19 for additional insight into the magnitude of the power made available to God’s children.

***These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (1:19b) which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead (1:20a),***

The power described in Ephesians 1:19a is “in accordance with the working of the strength of His might” (Ephesians 1:19b). “Working,” from the Greek *energeia*, can be viewed as God’s “operative power” or “energizing” (refer to notes on Ephesians 1:11). “Strength” is from the Greek *kratos*, meaning “strength, power, might, or force.” “Might” is from the Greek *ischus*, meaning “strength, might, or power.” Clearly, Paul is referencing power of infinite magnitude, the same power that brought Jesus out of the grave (Ephesians 1:20a) and allows New Testament believers to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4)—walk with boldness and authority as redeemed saints of God. For this reason, Jesus stated to the disciples:

*but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;... (Acts 1:8)*

This same Spirit and power came upon us when we received Christ, for Paul writes:

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,... (1Corinthians 2:12)*

Paul also states:

*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. (Romans 8:11)*

Paul is not pointing solely to that day when we will receive our resurrected bodies, but is also reminding us of the power available today through the indwelling Spirit. Paul, having as his ultimate goal to know Christ and the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10), teaches us a critical principle: We will never experience the power of His resurrection in the daily affairs of life until we know Him intimately. Authority and power for victorious living come only through

knowing Him and living by His very life (Romans 5:10; Colossians 3:4).

***and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places (1:20b),***

The fact that Jesus is seated in heaven means that His work as our high priest, in the heavenly tabernacle, is completed (Hebrews 8:1-2). Since the earthly priests' work was never done, they were in constant motion. Not so with Christ. He could sit down because His blood (and death) produced a finished work. Consequently, future sacrifices are unnecessary.

Not only did the Father's power raise Jesus from the dead (Galatians 1:1), but this same power also seated Jesus at the Father's "*right hand*" in heaven (Ephesians 1:20b). The "*right hand*" of God has always been considered His hand of power. Moses stated:

*"Thy right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power, Thy right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. (Exodus 15:6)*

(For more insight into this topic, read the following passages: Psalm 18:35; 98:1; 108:6; 118:15; 138:7; Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; Luke 22:69; Acts 5:31; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 8:1; 10:12—only a partial listing of the verses that address this subject are recorded here.)

Jesus holds tremendous authority at the Father's right hand. Just think of the power made available to every church saint through Christ's indwelling presence (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:29). Also, Ephesians 2:6 reveals that the Father raises up New Testament believers and seats them with Him in heaven, in Christ, the moment they repent and believe while depraved. Thus, if you have accepted Christ, you too are at the Father's right hand of power—you are in heaven in Christ (Ephesians 2:6) and Christ is in you on earth (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). Note: "*The heavenly places*" (Ephesians 1:20b) is heaven itself.

**Ephesians 1:21—far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.**

***far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, (1:21a)***

Jesus, as a result of His resurrection, was given authority "*far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.*" Because "*rule,*" "*authority,*" "*power,*" and "*dominion*" can be used to describe angelic beings of great rank or power, anything in the created realm, even angelic beings (both holy and unholy), must submit to Christ. In fact, any "*name that is named*" must bow before Him. Because Jesus (being God, Hebrews 1:8, and one with the Father and Spirit) outranks any power or authority that can be "*named,*" no created thing supersedes Christ in rank—not even Satan and his demons. Remember this truth when we study Ephesians 6:12:

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)*

Because our Leader possesses such "*authority and power*" (Ephesians 1:21), we can take on the forces of darkness (in His strength and authority) and know the battle is won.

***not only in this age, but also in the one to come. (1:21b)***

Our discoveries concerning Christ's authority apply to both the present and the future. His authority will exceed anything in the created realm from now throughout the Millennium. After the Millennium, and after all things "*in the heavens*" and "*the earth*" are summed up "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:10), He will present what He possesses to the Father for all eternity (1Corinthians 15:28). He will, of course, retain His authority over all created things.

**Ephesians 1:22—And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,**

***And He put all things in subjection under His feet, (1:22a)***

1Peter 3:22 states:

*who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. (1Peter 3:22)*

Jesus was taken to heaven after "*all things*" (Ephesians 1:22) in the created realm were "*subjected to Him*" (1Peter 3:22). Once in heaven, and "*seated*" at the "*right hand*" of God (Ephesians 1:20), "*above all rule and authority and power and dominion*" (Ephesians 1:21), many people accepted Him as Savior and were made part of His body. Hence, God the Father placed all things "*under His feet*" (Ephesians 1:22a). Paul uses "*feet*" because Jesus, since Acts 2 (the birth of the church), has possessed a "*body*" made up of New Testament believers (Ephesians 1:22-23). Oh, the consistency of the detail implemented within the Scriptures!

***and gave Him as head over all things to the church, (1:22b)***

Jesus is the "*head*" of the universal church, not just in the sense of being her Supreme Authority, but also serving as her very "*life*" (Colossians 3:4—"*When Christ, who is our life,...*"). Thus, we live by His "*life*" (John 1:4; John 14:6) and are "*saved*" on a daily basis "*by His life*" (Romans 5:10). Note: By no means am I communicating that a church saint is a little Jesus. God's Spirit and our spirit, though in union, are two separate entities (Romans 8:16; 2Timothy 4:22).

**Ephesians 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

***which is His body, (1:23a)***

Considering what we discussed earlier, we can conclude the following: Christ is the "*head*" of the church (Ephesians 1:22b), "*which is His body*" (Ephesians 1:23a). Consequently, Ephesians 1:22a does not say, "And He put all things in subjection under His head." The passage states "*And He put all things in subjection under His feet.*" Who happens to make up Christ's body (His very feet and the remainder of His body)? The universal church fulfills that role, made up of all believers who have accepted Christ since Acts 2. Paul desired that the church at Ephesus understand her authority: That all things had been placed in subjection under her—she being part of Christ's body. Hence, she could stand in Christ's strength against any "*rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named*" (Ephesians 1:21). We, being part of the universal body of Christ, can do the same.

***the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (1:23b)***

Christ's body is His "*fullness*" or His full development (Ephesians 1:23b), which means that Jesus' body (which is in the process of being developed) is incomplete (so to speak) until the church has been completed—especially since the head (Jesus) manifests Himself through the body (Philippians 2:20). All believers from Acts 2 to the Rapture make up Christ's body. Because the Rapture has not yet occurred, the body receives new members each day. Christ's body, therefore, will be made complete when the final member is added and all members receive their glorified bodies at the Rapture. Jesus will then be capable of fully expressing Himself through His holy, glorified body, the church, which returns with Him as His bride at the Second Coming (Revelation 19:11-16).

In Jesus, "*all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form*" (Colossians 2:9). In fact, "*it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him*" (Colossians 1:19). Because the fullness of Deity dwells in Jesus, He is God (John 10:30; Hebrews 1:8). To see Him is to see the Father (John 14:9), for He "*is the image of the invisible God*" (Colossians 1:15). Thus, the Godhead's riches, power, and presence reside within each member of the universal body of Christ through the Person of the Son of God.

The "*fullness of Deity*" (Colossians 2:9) resides within us when Christ enters our lives (Galatians 2:20; John 1:16). Yet, we must be careful with "*fills*" in Ephesians 1:23b. Jesus "*fills*" New Testament believers who allow Him to bring them to maturity. When we live in this manner, we are "*filled up to all the fullness of God*" (Ephesians 3:19)—a subject addressed in more detail in Ephesians 3:19, 4:10, and 4:13.