

Evotional

Date: 21st October 2007 (pm).
Speaker: Neil Durling.
Message title: "Thanksgiving."



Bible passage: Ephesians 1:15-23:

The passage is too long for this page.

The message in brief:

As Paul writes these words he is under house arrest and yet he is still thankful to God.

1: Paul gives thanks for the Ephesian Christians in prayer:

A: For their faith in the Lord Jesus (15): "Faith" here means "knowledge" which enables us to focus on and live for Jesus. When we hear of or meet people who are full of faith they capture us don't they?

B: For their love for all the saints (15): "Saints" are those who are "set apart". Christians have been set apart to love; our faith is expressed in love for other Christians (although Paul wouldn't want to limit love, it should be for all people).

Here's a simple test to see if I'm maturing in Jesus: Am I focussed on Jesus and do I love other Christians?

C: For the eyes of their heart to be enlightened to know the hope to which they are called (18): Paul prays that their heart (literally: the centre of their being) will be opened to their hope which they can be confident in. This hope has a future (inheritance) and a present (the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead).

2: Paul gives thanks to the Godhead in prayer:

Someone once said (tongue in cheek): "God created us in his image and we returned the favour." Walter Wink wrote: "To pray is to remember who owns the house." And so after thanking God for the Christians and reminding them of their hope he concludes this passage by reminding them of who they place their hope in.

A: The glorious Father (17): Literally, "the Father of glory" who raised Jesus from the dead and put everything under him and made him the head of church. The Father also gave us the Holy Spirit and is the source of all good things. Therefore, all the glory belongs to him.

B: The raised and seated Christ (20): Jesus is now sat at the right hand of the Father. This is the seat of highest honour and power. We are Jesus' body (23) and therefore have direct access to the most powerful being in the universe. Let's be careful to not shrink Jesus down to a manageable size!

C: The Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God better (17): "Spirit" here is the gift of wisdom and revelation which is given by the Holy Spirit. Wisdom helps us relate to God and revelation gives us insight into spiritual mysteries. If we want to grow closer to God we must be reliant on the Holy Spirit.

So let's be a people who are thankful for, amongst other things, fellow Christians and God. Thankfulness should be our natural disposition which we can cultivate through prayer.

Question:

What am I thankful for?

A prayer:

Father God,

Thank you for.....

Amen.