

Citizens & Saints
Open My Eyes • Message 2
Bryan Jones
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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- **Pray that God would open your heart to His truth.**
- **Pray for a deeper understanding of God's love for you.**
- **Pray that God would use your life to help awaken faith in someone else.**

Worship Psalm:

But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57 (NLT)

Scripture Reading:

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 1:15-23 (NIV)

A. Introduction

(Ephesians 1:15-18)

All the cars... So, hey Brookwood, aren't we glad for all the new people... even though all you new people have made our parking lot like an episode of *The Hunger Games*!

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Ephesians 1:15-17 (NIV)

Because they awakened to the thrill of faith... they start telling everyone about Jesus, and it spreads all over. Did you notice he again starts off with praise... he can't stop thanking God...

And so, let me just say this: gratitude, not cynicism, is from the Spirit of God...

But then in verse 18... he wants them to be awakened more to what they have in Christ, and listen to what he says...

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.

Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)

Remember that song, *Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord*? It was a smash hit in the '90s, but it was written from this text.

Now, why this phrase? Hearts don't have eyes. What's he saying? In Hebrew culture, though, the heart wasn't just feelings or emotions...

America- affections

Ancient culture- inner person, will, intellect, your inner life

We say phrases like, *Your heart's not in it*. Because in American culture, we define the heart as emotion... but it was more than that in Hebrew culture.

If eyes help you see, the heart helps you perceive and receive.

Is it possible that we have people all around the world who will go to church and see some things with the eyes in their head, but their hearts aren't moved?

See, some people in this room, you will see today with the eyes in your head, you will hear some truths, it will be interesting or uninteresting, but you won't really awaken to your soul.

But for some of you, what God's going to do is He's going to awaken the eyes of your heart. God's going to speak and stir you... Church, don't you want that?

This is what Paul wants. He wants you to awaken...

Saw this video I want to show you...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plCOPfl8Tgo>

What if today you had an "aha" moment... what if God awakened the eyes of your heart? Because to open the eyes of your head is natural, but to open the eyes of your heart is supernatural.

B. Open the Eyes of Your Heart...

1. To our HOPE.

(Hebrews 13:8)

But notice Paul specifically says, *the eyes of your heart to the hope...*

This is important because the believers in Ephesus and around the Roman Empire are experiencing persecution.

Nero was the emperor. They did some recent pictures of what they believed he might have looked like—

(show picture)

Looks like that annoying kid from middle school. And if you don't know who that kid was, it was probably you...

Nero started ruling at 16 years old. And it's hard to state how wicked and evil he was...

A year before this letter was written, Nero had his mother murdered. His wife murdered. And then remarried and had his new wife murdered. He was corrupt.

In AD 64, the Great Fire of Rome—many believe Nero did it to make space. But he blamed Christians. He hated Christians. He actually would put Christians on poles and dip them in tar and light them on fire, and they would serve as lights in his garden.

Paul was beheaded under his leadership. Peter was crucified upside down under his leadership...

Paul wants you to understand the hope we have. Biblical hope is different than how we use hope...

We use it for things we are uncertain of.

I hope everything works out.

I hope my team wins the game!

I hope she returns my call.

I hope Bryan gets done before noon, which will never happen...

The word hope above literally means confident expectation. That's why the Bible compares hope to an anchor.

See, "worldly hope" is in circumstances... Biblical hope is in Christ. You don't have to know the future if you know the One who holds the future in His hands... That's why the Bible says He's the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow...

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Hebrews 13:8 (NLT)

He was faithful, he is faithful, and he will always be faithful... that's why you can hope...

As an anchor ties a boat securely to the seabed so it's secure, hope ties us securely to the unshakable promises of God.

Anxiety may come, opposition may arise, storms may surface... but our confidence is unwavering because our hope is an anchor that holds us fast and secure to an unchanging and unmovable God!

2. To my VALUE.

(Ephesians 1:18)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.

Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)

Did you notice it says, *the riches of his glorious inheritance*? Now, Ephesus was one of the wealthiest cities in the Roman Empire.

In fact, I preached on this last year from Acts 19... But in Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the World: the Temple of Artemis... but it also was the place where the Caesars stored their gold.

(Show picture of Ephesus shops)... Did you see the floors? Those are mosaics. And those would be shops, that's their streets. We don't have that in downtown Greenville... and those are where shops are. That's not Food Lion right there... that's Whole Foods... that's where all the rich people go...

This is some of the greatest wealth in the ancient world...

The richest person in the world is Elon Musk, who is worth \$800 billion, soon expected to be a trillion dollars. Now, because these are just numbers, I want you to turn to the person next to you and tell them how long you think:

A million seconds is?? = Just shy of 2 weeks? You have no idea.

A billion seconds is?? = 32 years.

A trillion seconds is?? = 31,000 years.

Perspective.

Think about this: God owns it all. See, I tricked you. The richest person isn't Elon Musk; it's God. He owns it all.

Paul is going... God's greatest treasure isn't a marble street, or a gold bar, creation, or even angels... it's you. You are His great inheritance. His greatest treasure...

Some of you see that, but you see it with the eyes of your head, not your heart.

Because some of you think God views you as a disappointment. You haven't been that faithful or committed... and so you think, *I'm God's disappointment*.

Paul's going, *No, you're His treasure*. What would that change in you if you actually understood this?

A.W. Tozer famously wrote:

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

- A.W. Tozer

What comes to mind when God thinks of you is joy and treasure. See, we don't worship God because we are good people; we worship because we are forgiven and loved.

I need you to get this: your parents don't get to tell you who you are, your past doesn't get to tell you who you are, your job doesn't get to tell you who you are, culture doesn't get to tell you who you are.

God does... and He says you're His...

3. To His POWER.

(Ephesians 1:19-20. C/R: Acts 1:8)

And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms ...

Ephesians 1:19-20 (NIV)

Think about this: Rome and Ephesus were obsessed with power and glory. And yet Paul is saying, *I hope you wake up to, first, the power of God, but then to the power of God in you...*

What if you and I saw not with our eyes, but if God awakened the eyes of our heart to know how powerful He is?

What would that do to fear? Addictions? Worries? Pains and problems and doubts?

Paul says the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave lives in us. Too many Christians aren't in the game... they are watching others live out faith, pray, awaken to God's love.

Remember what Jesus says to His disciples...

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

The disciples had been watching Jesus do all the Jesus stuff. Then He says, *Your turn. I'm giving you power.*

Think about this: Jesus probably traveled the distance of a small state, like New Jersey or Maryland... that's how far the gospel had gone through Him at the time of this Scripture... yet He has the audacity to say, *Hey, it's going to spread to the very ends of the earth...*

How? Because I'm going to open the eyes of some people's hearts to help them understand what they are and whose they are...

I'm going to help people understand the Bible isn't a history book; it's a blueprint for life in Christ.

Can I say something with a little edge?

Why are you stuck in bitterness? Why are you so judgmental? Why are you trapped in worry? Why are you so angry? Why are you trapped in lust?

It's because you're looking with the eyes of your head...

And you know what would happen if you awakened to this truth?

You have this resource in front of you...

Power to say no to temptation and yes to God.

Power to not lash out in anger.

Power to have that difficult conversation in truth and love.

And suddenly, my eyes of my head had seen these verses, but the eyes of my heart were opened... and I began to see I was going to get through because of His power, not my plans...