

Intro. – Eph. 1:15-23

Illus. Friday Night Lights – In 2006, a man by the name of Coach Eric Taylor stood before his Dillon Panther football team and made a statement before their first game of the season. This statement would go on to become a theme that they would often repeat and draw strength from as they chased a State Championship.

For those that are *Friday Night Lights* fans, say the theme with me...and by the way, this is the title of our message today: **Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Can't Lose.**

Oh, man...makes me want to run out of a locker room! I LOVED Friday Night Lights.

True story. You've heard me tell you how much of a football nut I was in high school. The book, *Friday Night Lights* came out when I was a sophomore in high school, and I remember I couldn't get my hands on it fast enough, and as I read it, I could NOT put it down!

Crazy what you remember, but I was so fascinated by the story, that in geometry class, I had that book covering up the *Friday Night Lights* book, and Mrs. Lodge – she was a tough teacher! I got lost in the book and the next thing I know Mrs. Lodge was standing over my shoulder as I was reading *Friday Night Lights* tucked inside my geometry book.

Needless to say, she wasn't too happy! This theme though...SO GOOD!

- Clear eyes – speaks of focus and discernment on what's most important.
- Full hearts – speaks of passion and love for the game and commitment

When you have clear eyes and full hearts, you can't lose.

When I read the Apostle Paul here in Eph. 1:15-23, you could almost sum it up in the words of Coach Taylor: "Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Can't Lose."

Let's look at it. This is actually a prayer Paul prays. And what he is going to pray is for the Ephesian believers and by extension us today to have clear eyes to see ALL that we have "in Christ" and because of Christ that was unpacked last week in (v. 3-14).

We'll see a review of it again today as well as an additional truth that that he wants us to see clearly on. IF we can see clearly and God answers these three prayer requests of Paul, we WILL have full hearts and can't lose in life. Let's get after it.

Eph. 1:15-16 – "For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers..."

Remember, it's been 7 or so years give or take since Paul has been with the believers in Ephesus. Timothy, his son in the faith is the lead elder of sorts and has no doubt given Paul a report of how this church is doing, and Paul is deeply encouraged by it.

He has not ceased to pray for them and give thanks, and look at WHAT he has heard about them! This is quite a testimony for a church to have! Paul has heard of their faith and their love.

This should be a testimony of every church that is faithfully following Jesus. Our faith in Christ should be increasing as well as our love toward our brothers and sisters in our faith family!

As we grow vertically, in faith in Christ, we should also be growing horizontally in our love for others. These two things go hand in hand! This is what is happening in the church in Ephesus and Paul upon hearing about it can't help but give thanks to God in prayer!

Now, let's just pause and ask ourselves a question of application right here. I wonder what we are known for as a church?! If someone came and spent some time with us in order to report back what was taking place at Champion Forest, what would be said?

Let it be a desire of ours, CF to be known for our faith and love. When people look at us...think about us...they say:

- that's a church full of believers increasing in their faith in God - look at what they are believing God for...trying to achieve for his glory...
- that's a group of people that are growing in their love for one another - look at how they meet needs...care for one another...

Let this be our testimony, CF. Faith in God and a love for one another. Paul...he is giving thanks and praise to God because this is what he is hearing about the church in Ephesus....and it's not just light prayer – this is passionate prayer – “he does not cease to give thanks and remember them in his prayer”.

This is passionate praying on behalf of Paul. And then, he lets them in on exactly what he is praying for them. And he prays for them to have clear eyes concerning three specific requests.

First, he prays that the Ephesian believers and by extension us...that we would have clear eyes to see:

1. Our Hope

Eph. 1:17-18a – “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you...”

What Paul prays for first is that we would have clear eyes...that the (v. 18) eyes of our hearts would be enlightened that we may know what is the hope to which he has called you.

Now, the opening of our eyes – especially the “eyes of our heart” is something that only the Spirit of God can do. This is why he asks the Father to give the Ephesian believers THE Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

- ONLY the Holy Spirit can make the blind see!
- ONLY the Holy Spirit can give wisdom and revelation!
- ONLY the Holy Spirit can remove the veil and open the eyes of our heart!

And what Paul desires is that God by his Spirit would help these believers to see the hope to which he has called them.

Now, what is this hope? It references back to (v. 12) – which refers to ALL that we have “in Christ”. We are the first to “hope” in him because of the salvation we have “in him”.

Just recall the spiritual blessings from last week that we have when we are “in Christ”. We said we were “immeasurably blessed” (v. 3-14):

1. **We are chosen**
2. **We are adopted**
3. **We are redeemed**
4. **We are enlightened**
5. **We have an inheritance**
6. **We have been sealed**

Go back and listen to the message if you missed it. The HOPE of our calling is summed up in our salvation – “who we are” and all that we have “in Christ”, and Paul prays asking God to help us to see clearly and be fully aware of this hope.

It seems part of what is motivating Paul to pray this, is a fear that we could have these blessings...we could have this hope “in Christ” – like it’s ours from strictly a fact standpoint, but at the same time we could NOT fully “know” or experience to its fullest what it means to have this hope.

That’s part of why Paul is writing them in the first place. He wants them to wake up to what is theirs “in Christ”. That word “know” that Paul uses here is a word that means to “perceive, pay attention to, be aware of”.

This HOPE that is ours “in Christ” is something that needs to be at the forefront of our mind...it’s something we’re constantly paying attention to! This is what Paul is praying for here!

He wants the Spirit of God – this is what he is asking the Lord...that the Spirit would make us fully aware...to help us see clearly the hope that is ours “in Christ”.

Illus.

We’ll see WHY this is so important in just a moment. Let’s look at the second request Paul makes of the Lord. He wants us to see clearly our hope. Next, he asks that we would see clearly:

2. Our Inheritance

Eph. 1:18 – “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...”

Now, scholars debate this inheritance – is it a reference to (v. 14) – speaking more of what we have “in Christ” and because of Christ OR is it a reference to believers themselves being God’s inheritance, meaning we not only get an inheritance (i.e., we are co-heirs with Christ) but we are his inheritance.

Both are equally beautiful to think about, but I’m going to lean toward Paul speaking of inheritance in the same vein as last week.

Have you heard the statement, “Some people are so heavenly minded, they are no earthly good?”

That idea would be foreign to Paul. It seems this is what he wants us thinking on and seeing more clearly than anything else...it’s what is ours “in Christ”. He wants our minds and the “eyes of our heart” which

really just means the “inner man” looking on...being aware of...fixated on...seeing clearly that which is above!

It's interesting, many see the book of Colossians and Ephesians as parallel books. They were written around the same time and carry some of the same themes. Many feel like when Paul was writing one, he was pulling content from the other.

Listen to what he writes to the believers in Colossae around the same time as he was writing to the believers in Ephesus.

Col. 3:1-2 – “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

Paul knows the battlefield for our life is in the mind, and he wants these believers seeing clearly – and you can only see these things with the eyes of your heart - our hope and our inheritance. These are the things that are above!

What is Christ's is mine...we are co-heirs! Paul desperately wants us to see this because he knows the more heavenly-minded we are the more earthly good we will do!

So...Paul prays that we would see clearly our hope...our inheritance...and then thirdly, he prays we would see clearly and be fully aware of:

3. Our Power

Eph. 1:19-23 – “and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

Illus. Easter - We are just seven weeks away from Easter. We were meeting as a team this past week talking about the service and the worship and creative team were sharing some possibilities of what the Easter service is going to look like...as you know we try to punch it up a little bit on Easter – make it super special.

And as they were telling me what they were doing, and I was so excited about hearing their plans, I thought about the message I am going to preach on Easter. And while I don't know specifically the direction, I'm going that day; I can tell you that the resurrection will be at the center!

Well, it's the resurrection that is at the center of this third and final prayer request Paul mentions that he is asking God by his Spirit to awaken in these believers...he wants them to know and be fully aware and see clearly the power they have in Christ.

Notice: the power that raised Christ from the dead (v. 20) and seated him far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name there is and ever is to come – that resurrection power is at work IN those who believe!

We talked about being immeasurably blessed last week...well, it's immeasurably empowered this week!

Now, I just want you to put all of this together and the application that comes from it just blows me away! This should get you going this week.

Let's answer why this is important and how it any of this helps me Monday through Friday.

Think about what we have said up this point! Paul has moved from praising God for all these spiritual blessings that we have "in Christ" (v. 3-14) to praying in (v. 15-23) that we would fully know, be aware of, perceive, keep at the forefront of our mind these blessings.

Really, our hope...our inheritance...our power...ALL that we have talked about today is a nice summary of what we have "in Christ" (all that we talked about last week).

- Why is Paul so adamant....
- Why is this at the top of Paul's prayer concerns...

That we would see clearly all that is ours "in Christ". Namely our hope, our inheritance and our power?

Because Paul KNOWS that if we ever fully wrap our mind and heart around these things...if God answers his prayer and allows the Spirit of God to help us see clearly our hope, our inheritance, and our power...then we will have full hearts and never lose as Christians.

Allow me to work it out practically for you. Think of what comes against us on a daily basis: fears, recurring sin, guilt, negative emotional baggage.

"Spirit, help us to see clearly today."

- You have a fear? What stands up against that fear?

It's the Spirit of God enlightening you to the fact that you have a hope that even death can't take away!

- You have a habitual sin that keeps dragging you down? You have a sin that you just don't feel like you can say "no" to? What's the answer?

It's the Spirit of God enlightening you to the fact that you have a resurrection power in you! Don't tell me you can't say "no" to that sin when the resurrected power of Christ lives in you!

- You don't feel loved? You don't feel like God could ever forgive you or use you? Maybe you were abused as a child or neglected and just feel condemned. What are you to do?

You pray like Paul and ask the Spirit of God to enlighten you and allow you to see with the eyes of your heart that if you are "in Christ" ALL that is his is yours and because you are "in him" there is no condemnation...because you are "in him" you have (past tense) obtained an inheritance that the Spirit has sealed for you until you acquire possession of it one day.

I could go on and on. You need confidence? You need strength? You need a perspective to persevere? Where does all this come from?

It comes from God answering this prayer that Paul prays that the eyes of our heart would be open to seeing our hope, our inheritance and our power.

Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose.

So, here is how I want to close...I want to close praying for exactly what Paul prayed here...that the Spirit of God would open the eyes of our heart.

And we're going to pray this in a song. D is going to lead us in this prayer. Would you stand across this room as we pray.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.