Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – September 15, 2019

**The Mystery and Majesty**

**of**

**Jesus Christ**

*How God’s Glory and Promises Find Fulfillment in His Son*

Exploring Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians

***Prayer: We ask God for insight into His blessings in Christ.***

***Ephesians 1:15-23***

 We’ve read Paul’s praise to God for His blessings to us in Christ, which are complete in every way (Ephesians 1:3-14): We have been eternally chosen to be holy and blameless adopted children of God, recipients of and witnesses to His grace, with our sins freely forgiven.

 So, what can be added? What can be given to a person who has everything? Only the knowledge of these blessings and how they work!

 The mystery of God now revealed in the gospel becomes effective ONLY as its blessings are known, believed, and applied. Just as money in a checking account does nothing until a check is written, neither do God’s promises and blessings while we are ignorant of them or fail to apply them because of fear or doubt. 1 Cor. 10:1-14; Heb. 4:1, 2

 So Paul’s prayer for us is that through the Spirit’s operation, we will know God, and be clear about our destiny, identity, and the power with which God has made us His inheritance.

 The blessings of God are neither automatic nor mechanical. They are living and relational realities that must be received as gifts and experienced (put into practice) in real time, real life circumstances.

***How does prayer relate to the blessings of “the Mystery”?***

***God’s blessings thrive in the faith and constant prayers of His people.***

 We pray gratefully, taking no blessing for granted. vv. 15, 16

***God’s blessings occur as promises kept by God who can be known.***

We pray first for wisdom and insight to know the Giver. v. 17

 We pray for an unhindered view of our destiny in Christ. v. 18a

 We pray for realization of our being God’s inheritance. v. 18b

 We pray for assurance of God’s power on our behalf. v. 19a

***God’s blessings are secured by His wise use of His limitless power.***

 We pray in the light of God’s resurrection power. vv. 19a, 20

 We pray because of God’s power to subdue all powers. v. 21

 We pray because of the absolute authority God gives Jesus. v. 22

 We pray because of our intimate connection to Him as our Head, who empowers the fullness of His Body. v. 23

***What do Paul’s prayer requests teach us about God’s blessings?***

 1. Apart from God’s wisdom, we can misjudge our destiny.

 2. Apart from God’s enlightenment, we can forget we are His.

 3. Apart from God’s power, we are helpless.

 4. Apart from trusting God’s promises, we can lose hope and begin to live as those who don’t know God.

 5. God has a plan to fill the universe with the fullness of Christ, and we are included in His plan and its blessings. 1 Cor. 2:6-16

**Why it matters. . .**

*Why does our heart need eyes (v. 18)? What clouds spiritual vision? Jer. 17:9*

*How would you describe the hope to which God has called us (v. 18)?*

*Given God’s great power, why do we sometimes feel helpless? Matthew 8:26*

*How might knowing we are God’s inheritance change us? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20*

*How does Paul’s prayer request list match our own? James 4:1-3*