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Prayer for the Church, Eph. 1:15-23

By Aaron Shamp

Introduction

- What do we tend to suggest when we offer prayer requests?
 - When Paul prays for the Ephesians, he doesn't mention anything about their circumstances. Instead, he prays for spiritual insight that leads to spiritual power.
 - Not that prayer for circumstances is a bad thing, but it's not primary.
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Who?

- Who are these riches for?
 - **Point:** Paul describes the two tests for knowing that you have these riches:
 - First, faith in Christ Jesus.
 - Scholars note that one of the unique points of this passage is that Paul designates Jesus as the *object* of our faith.
 - Where does your faith lie? If your faith was a deposit, where are you investing it?
 - Second, love for the saints.
 - This is a consistent theme in the New Testament. If the Spirit is in our hearts, then it shows itself in love for our fellow believers.
 - What does this mean? You don't have to have your arm twisted to spend time with them. The church becomes the core community in your family's life.
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What?

- Christians have a rich, powerful gift in the gospel. Paul describes it in three ways.

- **Point:** He prays that they might know three things:
 - First, the hope of *his* calling.
 - This refers to the beginning of our salvation. Notice that Paul says, "...what is the hope of *his* calling."
 - Second, the riches of his glorious inheritance.
 - This refers to the future of our salvation.
 - Third, his incomparable power.
 - This refers to the present. We have the power to live now. Where does that power come from?

How?

- Paul's prayer tells us that these aren't just nice things to read about, think about, or study. Instead, we can actually anticipate the receipt of this in our lives.
 - How do we get it, then?
- **Point:** Three steps to receive the answer to this prayer.
 - First, pray this prayer for yourself.
 - We have to be involved in this to receive it. Why? It's an exercise of growth in faith.
 - Second, meditate on these truths.
 - Soak in them. We take time to change, so it's okay to spend time.
 - What do you learn when you meditate? "How did I get these gifts?"
 - Third, think of Jesus praying this prayer twice.
 - Before his crucifixion, Christ prayed the same thing for us.