

Intro:

## 1. Remember the *Nearness* of God

- a. Woven in and out of this passage (vv15-23) is the promise of v14: the “down payment” of our inheritance (the presence of God) in the Holy Spirit
  - i. His presence, just a taste of its fullness, in the sealing Holy Spirit is what drives Paul’s faithful prayers
  - ii. Since God is with us, He will accomplish His purpose of opening our heart’s eyes
- b. God of Relationship (v17)
  - i. “God of our Lord Jesus Christ”
  - ii. Perfect relationship/knowledge, Perfect intimacy
  - iii. Rooted in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His cross!
    1. I am a heritage b/c of Jesus!
    2. I am chosen b/c of God’s severe kindness!
    3. I am redeemed b/c JESUS DIED FOR ME!
    4. GRATEFUL, HUMBLE, LOVING WORSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST!!!
- c. Father of glory (v17)
  - i. No human can see His glory now (Ex 33:20; and 1 Tim 6:16)
    1. Do we see and really grasp the tremendous “differentness” of God? The REALITY that He is GLORIOUS and MAJESTIC like no other?!! (I lose sight of this all the time!)
    2. Or, do we make Him out to be like us, defining Him by our understanding, rather than having Him reveal Himself to us in His mysterious holiness.
      - a. “God’s Love” – do we define His love like our love? Is this adequate or accurate? God’s love is different than ours. How does He reveal His love?
        - i. Through suffering, violence, and pain for others
        - ii. In rest in His glory and peace in His sovereign grace
      - b. “God’s Wisdom” – do we think, or assume, that God’s wisdom is like ours? How does He reveal His wisdom?
        - i. Valley of Vision – where the way up is the way down, the least is the greatest, the greatest is the servant, the cross precedes the crown
      - c. Let God’s revelation of Himself determine and define and reveal to us Who He is and what He has done. Trust nothing else.
        - i. Our culture has determined our worldview more than we know, and this extends to our understanding of God’s nature and work.
        - ii. Bring your understanding of God to the mat and wrestle with His revelation of Himself. You will be blown away (Matt 9, wineskins).
    - ii. Psalm 17:15, satisfied by seeing your likeness in righteousness
    - iii. Promise of seeing Jesus as He is (1 John 3:2)
    - iv. We have been given this foretaste of seeing the glory of God face to face
  - d. Greatness of His power (v19)
    - i. The Father’s election, The Son’s Redemption, and the Spirit’s seal are in His strength
    - ii. Secure, loved, graced, known by God (sealed)
    - iii. His Power is shown most in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus (v19-21)
  - e. The Spirit makes the blessings of God stick (silver chloride on photo paper)
    - i. He has given us a foretaste of this inheritance, fulfillment in the Holy Spirit.
      1. No one can see God’s glory on this earth, but that is what we’re in for and we’ve been given a foretaste now
    - ii. It’s incomplete, but it’s real
    - iii. Do we *know* His presence? Do we taste this fullness? Do we feel and live as sons and daughters of God or are we content to live as orphans: with a peace and joy beyond understanding, but slowly dying because we live as spiritual paupers?
  - f. WHAT HAVE YOU SETTLED FOR?

## 2. Run After Jesus to Know Him

- a. SEEK JESUS!!
  - i. 1 John 3:2-3
  - ii. Our hope of seeing Him face to face *purifies us*, changes our hearts and our lives now
  - iii. This experience of hope, the presence and intimacy of the Holy Spirit, is what alters our lives
  - iv. Clinging to Jesus
    1. Jacob's wrestling as the case in point (Gen 32)
- b. Seek Him as He Has Revealed Himself
  - i. The Word of God is God's ONLY revelation of Himself that is trustworthy
    1. Don't listen to Obi Wan, never trust your feelings
    2. Trust only God's revelation of Himself
  - ii. The Word of God, the Bible, is God's revelation of Himself
    1. John 17:17
    2. Psalm 119, part. v169
    3. 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21
    4. Rom 16:25-27
  - iii. In it and through it He has shown Who He is that we might know Him
    1. Ps 25:4
    2. Ex 33:13
- c. Seek Him Through Prayer
  - i. Jacob's wrestling with God comes right after his humble prayer (vv9-12) for help
    1. Jacob didn't need instructions and regulation, Jacob needed to be with the Lord
    2. Moses didn't need more regulations and guidelines, to know what to do, Moses needed to be with the Lord (Ex. 33)
    3. Isaiah didn't need power and training through guidelines and well-designed plans, He needed to see the Lord's majesty and power and that is more than enough (Is. 6)
  - ii. God reveals, enlightens, heart knowledge

Why pray, if God loves us and knows all we need before we pray? "What if he knows prayer to be the thing we need first and most? What if the main object in God's idea of prayer be the supplying of our great, our endless need—the need of himself? What if the good of all our smaller and lower needs lies in this, that they help drive us to God? Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other needs; prayer is the beginning of that communion.

George MacDonald, *Liberating Ministry From The Success Syndrome*

1. God's answer to Jacob was not merely deliverance from Esau, but rather His answer to Jacob was His own presence and promise. He made His presence and His faithfulness REAL to Jacob, so that he would not fear though he were weak.
  - a. This is incredibly gracious of God, for Jacob still feared Esau greatly and was having trouble functionally believing God's promise to bless him and be good to him.
  - b. This is just like God's grace to condescend to us in Jesus Christ and take on our fears and infirmities to the point of death, even death on a cross. So that we, too, would KNOW His covenant promise is completely trustworthy.
- iii. Note that Paul's reason for thanking God in prayer is BECAUSE of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer
- iv. We're so stuck in a "doing" paradigm that we don't know how to simply "be" in His presence, to gaze upon Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word. We want to know rules, guidelines, regulations, what to do! And God wants us to know HIM!!
  1. Go after God, not things from God
  2. The greater our view of how MAJESTICALLY GLORIOUS AND BEAUTIFUL God is, the greater is our desire for Him and His desires, the greater our trust of Him and His Word, the greater our rest in His powerful and gracious hands.

- v. We have been given the down payment of the Holy Spirit, His presence within us, so slow down and draw near to Him, meditate upon how God has revealed Who He is in His Word, in order to see Him as He truly is.
- d. Seek Him Humbly
  - i. Jesus is the Most Important and Powerful Person that exists! (vv.20-22)
    - 1. Seek Him to worship Him humbly, prostrate in heart and submissive in attitude.
    - 2. Seek Him as the LORD over ALL things, including you. He is our Master for whom we live and breathe and have our being.
  - ii. To see the Lord is to be broken in our pursuit of Him (see Jacob)
    - 1. It is in our weakness that we are strong (1 Cor 1:26-29; 2 Cor 12:10)
    - 2. It is in our repentance that we find the joy of salvation (Ps 51:12-17)
  - iii. Puritan Prayer: Valley of Vision by Arthur Bennet

Lord, you have brought me to the valley of vision  
 Where I live in the depths, but see You in the heights  
 Hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Your glory  
 Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up  
 That to be low is to be high  
 That the broken heart is the healed heart  
 That the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit  
 That the repenting soul is the victorious soul  
 That to have nothing is to possess all  
 That to bear the cross is to wear the crown  
 That to give is to receive  
 That the valley is the place of vision

- e. Seek Him for the heart
  - i. Pray for your heart, not merely for externals
  - ii. Challenge your heart
  - iii. Adoration and Confession
- f. Seek Him intelligently
  - i. never without reason, but yet beyond reason
    - 1. The great prayers in Scripture are rooted in the revealed grandeur of God (Neh 1:4-11; Dan 9:4-20; 1 Sam 2:1-10)
    - 2. Paul is praying for *knowledge*
      - a. One cannot truly believe what one does not know (not necessarily fully comprehend, but knows how God has revealed Himself to be)
      - b. Not merely a mystical feeling, but a confrontation with the Spirit through truth of His Word
      - c. The Spirit reaches the heart through the mind.
    - 3. Here is where our wrestling with each other primarily takes place, in understanding the Word of God, that is how God has revealed Himself to us.
      - a. After wrestling with knowledge of the Word
      - b. Pray together
      - c. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not on “issues” alone
  - ii. Reflect on the Truth of God’s Promises in the Gospel
    - 1. Read and Meditate, Pray and Contemplate
    - 2. Study the promises until it explodes from your heart and breaks through your world
    - 3. Three things which give us hope:
      - a. The Father’s Election
      - b. The Son’s Redemption
      - c. The Spirit’s Seal

## Conclusion:

Are you experiencing the hope of the presence of God in your life? You may know of heaven, but do you know the person of Jesus Christ? Does your heart center itself on Him? Are you with Him every day, adoring Him and loving the intimacy that comes through His Spirit? If you want to be like Jesus, to know Him more, to love Him more, to proclaim Him more, then we must be changed by the Holy Spirit from the inside out as He makes God's Word, the Bible, become our foundation. Wrestle with Him! Let Him wrestle with you! Seek to know Him as He has revealed Himself, through His Word! Here He shows Himself as He truly is, and it is in our wrestling to know and understand Him together, humbly, that we are forever changed by His powerful Spirit working within us. It is in His revelation of Himself that we find our proper place, humble, broken, weak, and servants of the Most High. It is here that we also experience hope and this dependant hope will change the way we feel, the way we think, the way we react to others, the way that we live. We rest from our struggle to impress God and others. We rest from defending our own righteousness and rest in the work of Jesus and in the presence of the Prince of Peace. We can repent without trepidation, give without receiving, love without return, work without reward, reconcile without revenge, and build relationships without requirements, all because we have an ultimate hope, an infinite future, and a glorious eternity in the very presence of the Almighty God, in whose presence we have found a glimpse of the REAL, where there is complete joy. Not because we are more virtuous than others, but solely because of His kind and gracious heart shown toward us in Jesus Christ. Place your hope in the unfailing and truly gracious One, Jesus the Bringer and Sustainer of our hope. Go to Him today! Let Him wrestle with your heart and your heart's weaknesses. Let Him tear down your strengths and build up His within you. Let Him be what He already is, the LORD, the Chief of His church.