

Open the Eyes of My Heart (Part 5)

Ephesians 1:18-20

Pastor Edward Cheng

October 13, 2019

This week some of us have started to catch colds. Our susceptibility to illness and inability to combat that which attacks us reminds us of how weak we are. This weakness is not just physical but spiritual. In our hearts we struggle with pride, jealousy, lust, greed, and judgmentalism. Though our spirits have been born again through Jesus, we struggle against our unregenerate flesh. We long for Jesus to complete His work in us.

Last time we learned that Paul prays for believers to know God more. The knowledge of God is food for our souls. The more we know Him, the more we become like Him. Specifically, Paul prays that we may know the hope to which we are called. This hope is the return of Jesus, who will give us the resurrection of the body and renew all creation. We will no longer suffer from physical sickness and ailments. We will no longer suffer from mental illness and cognitive impairment. And we will no longer have to struggle with sin. At the present all we can obtain is temporary relief from our symptoms, but Jesus will bring permanent healing. The second thing Paul wants us to know is that we are God's inheritance. He treasures us as His own. We are His choice, His pleasure. Finally, Paul wants us to know the incomparably great power for those who believe. This is resurrection power, the same power that brought Jesus back from the dead.

In Ephesians 1:18-19 Paul describes this power using 4 words: power, working, might, and strength. The word "power" is *dunamis*, from which we get the word dynamite. I learned the power of dynamite as a child playing with M-80 fireworks, which are the equivalent of 1/8 stick of dynamite. When we set them off in the gutter while standing on top of the manhole cover, the explosion was powerful enough to lift us up. This is like the massive power available to us through Jesus. The word "working" is *energeia*, meaning energy. It is the power that enables action. And the word "mighty" is *kratos* meaning the divine personification of strength. This power is incomparably great. This power brought Jesus from the grave. It is the power to give victory over sin and death. It is the power that can help us overcome our sin today.

Yet we so often still struggle. Do you experience this power? Sometimes I envy those in charismatic churches, who seem to experience this power all the time. Why don't we experience this power sometimes? First, perhaps we are unaware that this power is available to us. Maybe we don't realize just how powerful Jesus can be in our lives and that this power can overcome

anything. Second, perhaps we don't ask for this power. Maybe you don't realize you need this power, so you don't ask. If you can't be honest with anyone else, at least be honest with God. He already knows your struggles, so just admit you need help and ask God. Finally, perhaps you don't want this power. Maybe you are afraid of what this power will do, you are afraid of giving up your sin, which often is enjoyable temporarily. This is about your will. If you find yourself in this situation, ask God to change your attitude towards sin. This too can be done with the resurrection power of Jesus. Without this power, we don't stand a chance. We struggle constantly with our flesh, and Satan knows what our weaknesses are and how to make us stumble. We often recover from one sin only to fall into another, just like when one disease is cured it is only a matter of time before others will emerge. As long as we are in this world, we will never be able to overcome ourselves on our own. We stand firm in faith, hoping for Jesus' return, when He will give us the final victory. But meanwhile we have access to His power through the Holy Spirit, to achieve victory in each of our daily battles with sin. And it is also by this power that we persevere in faith. This power binds us and seals us in Jesus. It works in us to change us, as long as we seek, ask for, and submit to this power that will one day raise us from the dead into eternal life.