

2. 6. 2011

This sermon follows on the last one because in the original language, both passages are one long sentence stretching from verse 15 to 23. In the beginning of the sentence, Paul tells us that he prays constantly that the believers may become closer to God through spiritual understanding so they can better know the hope that they were called to, the riches of their glorious inheritance, and the power for those who believe. The most important thing in Paul's eyes, and in God's, is that we know God better- his character, personality, likes and dislikes.

The hope of future resurrection and riches of our future in heaven are things that cause us to look forward. But the power God gives us is for the present. In the second half of the long sentence, Paul further describes this power.

In verse 19, Paul uses four words to describe the power God gives us: "That *power* is like the *working* of his *mighty strength*." He strings these four words together to emphasize the enormity and greatness of that power. The Greek word for *power* is *dunamis*, from where we get the word "dynamite." Like dynamite, the power that God gives us is not weak and ineffective, it is incredibly explosive. The word for *working* is *energeia*, from where our word "energy" comes. The power God grants us is not potential energy; rather, it is active and working energy that produces an effect. And Paul adds *might* and *strength* as well, to impress upon us the greatness of that power. In chapter 4, Paul calls us to live a life worthy of the calling we received, but he does not expect us to do this from our own will and power. God does not leave us alone in the process of transformation, but instead gives us His power and enables us to change. He gives us what we need to live a godly life.

So why do we still struggle with sin and feel powerless in the face of temptation? I have three thoughts on this. First of all, we may not be aware that God's power is available to us. We need to learn that God has this power for us in order to get it. Secondly, we may not be asking for that power. God will not deny us if we ask. Thirdly, perhaps a part of us doesn't want that power. Maybe we don't want to give up that sin; we want to keep on satisfying the fleshly nature with that sin and will not allow God's power to get rid of it. We must examine ourselves. If we struggle and face failure in our spiritual lives, it is not God's fault, but ours. For God

freely provides what is necessary to triumph over our sin. He does not refuse us, for Scripture tells us that that is the kind of God he is.

In verses 20-23, Paul switches gears. After beginning the chapter with the 11 ways in which God has indulged us, followed by his prayer for us to know God better, he then turns his focus on Jesus. This is because after 19 verses of Paul telling us how God gives us so much, he thinks we might become self-centered and think we are so special because of what God gives us. But Paul wants to remind us that the focus should not be on us, but on Jesus, who is the truly special one. Paul writes in verse 20 that the power God gives us is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. He then goes on, in verses 20-23, to describe seven ways in which Jesus is the true focus.

First of all, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. He has the position of all authority and is not a servant but a ruler at his Father's right hand. In this expression, Paul references Psalm 110:1. Secondly, Jesus is far above all rule, authority, power and dominion. In Himself, He has authority far greater than any we know on earth or in heaven. Thirdly, Jesus has a title above all others, a name above all names. Fourthly, Jesus' authority and title last forever, in the present age and the one to come. Fifthly, God puts all things under His feet. This is reference again to Psalm 110, where the rules of the earth are put in subjugation under the feet of the Messiah. Sixthly, Jesus is also the head of the church, not by force but by virtue of His loving relationship towards the members of the Church. And finally, Jesus is God; he has the fullness of God in him. He is the all in all; no one else is like Him and nothing else matches His importance.

God is so indulgent to us that He would bless us with all spiritual blessings and give us His great power. However, Paul makes it clear, we are not special to God because of ourselves, but only because Jesus is special. As we enjoy His blessings, Paul reminds us that He alone is our Master and is the center of all.