

The Hidden Things of God - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the concept of the hidden things of God, which refer to the spiritual blessings that are available to us through our relationship with God, but are not yet fully understood or experienced.

Duration: 55:11

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4

Topics: "Church History"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker tells the story of the apostle Paul and his journey after losing everything. Paul, once a skilled speaker, finds himself reduced to making tents and relying on his own labor for survival. However, he remains faithful to God and continues to trust in His plan. The speaker then goes on to explain the role of each person of the Godhead in the blessings that believers have in Christ. The sermon emphasizes the predestination of believers and the redemption and forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Review what we covered last evening. If there are those of you who are concerned who missed the service, I would suggest you ask for a tape and that will bring it into focus. The text we're using for these sessions together is in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 7. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

I want you to turn to Ephesians. Perhaps more than any other epistle or any other book in the Bible, Ephesians gives to us the unfolding of this hidden wisdom. This, the truth hidden in the heart of God revealed, for that's the meaning of the word mystery, something previously covered and now uncovered.

It's not something mysterious, but something which is unfolded. And so it is that Ephesians should be really the epistle of mystery. I want you to notice the first verse, to whom Paul is writing.

Our purpose in considering this is the hidden things of God, that which God has revealed finally or is in the process of revealing or will reveal. So here in Ephesians, the first chapter and the first verse, Paul declares himself an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Now let me theorize the outset.

Ephesus was not a saintly town. It was not in any sense to be thought of as the Vatican of spiritual purity and holiness. In fact, the practices in Ephesus were so vile, so sensual, so immoral that we cannot even read in public gathering the inscription from some of the public monuments.

It was wholly given up to the worship of Diana of the Ephesians and it was glorification of sensuality. Now into that fetid swamp came the gospel of Jesus Christ. You recall how that on one occasion Paul met some that had been baptized and were followers of John.

He examined them, satisfied that they truly believed in Christ, and he baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. Subsequently, on another occasion in Acts, he told about his ministry in Ephesus when he said, I was with you night and day, from house to house, teaching repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it is obvious that the people in Ephesus were not the victims of easy believism.

There was something real, something genuine, something remarkable about the conversion of these people. We find it here in the first verse when he says that they are saints at Ephesus, and he didn't use that word lightly, and faithful in Christ Jesus. But in the fifteenth verse he said, when I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love unto all the saints, I ceased not to give thanks for you.

There was something remarkably genuine about the work of God in these people. But they were not only people that had been awakened by the Holy Ghost, convicted of their sin, brought to repentance, and savingly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ through the transformation of their lives. But they were also people, we find, when Paul met them, that he prayed for them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

So here are a people born of God and filled with the Spirit of God. And these are the ones to whom now he writes. Bear in mind this, that in the New Testament, all the warnings and all of the exhortations and all of the teachings are given to people that have been born again and filled with the Spirit, because that's the only kind of people you have in the New Testament.

There were not any other kinds. And so it is that to this people, Paul now is going to bring something that is beyond awakening, beyond conviction, beyond repentance, beyond faith in Christ, beyond the witness of the Spirit, and beyond being filled with the Spirit. What do you say, is there anything beyond that? Well, Paul thought so, and the Holy Spirit thought so, and the epistle to the Ephesians is given for the express purpose that we'll begin to think so.

And we should read it with that in view. So he says, as he has addressed them, grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Always it's that way, grace first, then peace, no peace apart from grace.

But because God's grace is so magnificent, so munificent, and so rich in every way, we are not surprised to see the third verse. Look at it carefully. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessing.

Where? In earth and during time. Now, is that what he said? Well, I must be reading from the reverse vision, don't you think? I've read from that many times in the past, because it seems to me that that's the way that the whole thing is organized, that all the blessing is to come horizontally to us. But Paul is now introducing us to the fact that all spiritual blessings are hidden.

These are some of the hidden things of God, hidden blessings. Which is the, where is the place of God's blessing? Look at it carefully. The place has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, in

Christ.

Well, what can we have here on earth? Apart from the fact that it's while we're here that we do understand what it is to abide in the heavenly. There are many things that we can have without ever experiencing the spiritual blessing. Why we can have the soulish blessing.

Tremendous joy and delight at sunrise and sunset and beautiful views and rainbows and music and poetry and great art. All of these things have enriched my soul. I was in a meeting down in South Carolina and I went to the service.

There weren't as many people there as the pastor said that the night before, they'd had an all-night sing. I don't think you out here know what an all-night sing is, but that's when they get six or seven or eight quartets that come and they actually sing all night long, break up about five or six on Sunday morning. Well, the hostess where I had lunch that day said, well, I didn't get to the service today, preacher.

I was at the all-night sing last night and I didn't wake up. I just woke up in time to get our dinner today. But she said, I want you to know that I got a great blessing out of that night of singing.

Oh, I said, how did you, you want me to know it? How do you know it? How do you know you've got a great blessing? Well, she said, I just enjoyed seeing Parson so-and-so sitting up there, a pat on the floor with a song and everyone was just a feeling so good as we were singing through the hours of the night. And I didn't for a moment discount it or try to throw any cold water on it. She'd only had one thing.

She described soulish blessings, not spiritual blessings. Her soul had been blessed. And that happens to us and that's what we can expect.

But where the tragedy comes in when people don't distinguish between soulish blessings and spiritual blessings. They can't tell the difference. That's, that's pathetic.

Because they just might make a mistake and go through all of their lives and never have experienced spiritual blessings. They may have been satisfied and addicted to soulish blessing. So there is a difference.

You see, man is body, soul, and spirit. And the soul is the union of the spirit with the body. And it's that relationship we have to the world around us and all that's in it.

But the spiritual blessings are that, is that part of us that relates to the heavenly blessings of God, to the Holy Spirit and what he is doing. We must distinguish between the two. So the place of God's blessing is hidden.

It might be inside the church in the time of service or worship, but it isn't necessarily there. If truth comes to enlighten the mind and the heart responds to that truth and it presses out beyond the mental and the emotional and the soulish, there can be spiritual blessings. But he said he's blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly.

And what we're talking about then are the hidden things of God. And the spiritual blessings, therefore, are hidden. I have not seen nor heard, neither has it entered into the mind of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him.

But God has revealed them unto us by his spirit. The natural man receiveth not the things that are of God. And how easy it is for us as pastors, with our need for congregations that are going to stand with us and support our work, to make concessions, concessions that will make blessing available to the people who don't have spiritual discernment.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for their foolishness unto him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. So the place of God's blessing is hidden. It's in the heavenlies, in Christ.

Now it's important for us to understand the author of God's blessings. Obviously it's God. But the next verses, verses four through fourteen, tell us the part that each person of the Godhead had in the blessings that are ours in Christ.

For in the fourth verse, that according as he, as God, hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Now what did that say? It said this, before the world was, God the Father purposed to have children. He as Father wanted children.

From eternity past his great heart of love had yearned and longed for someone like himself to whom he could reveal himself and with whom he could share all that he is. So in the fullness of time he made someone in his image, in his likeness, and understanding what that child of his would need, God purposed to provide everything that was necessary for his children to be all that he wanted them to be. That's what we're told, that the author of blessings is God the Father before the world was made, who knew everything you were going to need, and he purposed to provide everything that would be necessary for you to be all that he wants you to be.

Now that gives some scope to the blessings that we're talking about, these hidden things of God. They were in the mind of the Father before the world was. Now in the fullness of time the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, came into the world to provide everything that the Father had purposed.

Notice now in the sixth verse, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory. So let me bring that to you in a fewer words. The God the Father purpose to provide everything we needed to be all that he wanted us to be.

Now God the Son, by his poured out life, provided for us all that the Father had purposed. No more, no less. Everything that the Lord Jesus accomplished by his death on the cross had been purposed by the Father.

Why? So that he might have a people that would be to the praise of the glory of his grace. That's why he said in Romans the eighth chapter, we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose, for whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be

conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. So God the Son provided by his poured out life, his shed blood, everything that the Father purposed.

They're all paid for, provided, they're made available by his poured out life. But we don't stop there, because in the twelfth verse, thirteenth verse, in whom he also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory. Now look at it in perspective.

God the Father purposed our salvation. God the Son provided our salvation. And God the Holy Spirit is now working to accomplish in us and perfect in us all that the Father purposed and all that the Son provided.

Why? That we should be to the praise of the glory of the Father who purposed our salvation. That we should be to the praise of the glory of the Son who provided our salvation. That we should be to the praise of the glory of the Holy Spirit who is going to accomplish in us what the Father purposed and what the Son provided.

That's what you have. And so he is telling this church at campuses, and us as well, that our spiritual blessings are in the heavenlies and those spiritual blessings which came out of the heart of the Father provided by the blood of the Son and will be accomplished in us by the work of the Holy Ghost. Well I think that's quite wonderful.

To me that makes, I begin to think maybe that's worth an amen or a hallelujah or something else that's long out of style in most places. Because it incites me to think that God the Father knew everything I was going to need and God the Son paid for, provided everything I was going to need and God the Holy Spirit wants to make effective in me all that the Father purposed and all that the Son provided. I think that's what, those are hidden blessings.

You don't find them on the weekly bulletin, no. That, that's hidden, that's in the heart of God. Well how hidden is it? Verses 15 to 20 in the first chapter give to us the revelation of God's blessing.

They're in the heavenlies, they're from the heart of the Father by the blood of the Son through the power of the Spirit. But how do we find out about it? I, what I've told you is fine, I'm sure you also will, great, a big deal. Unless I know what they are, what good is it going to do me? Well I agree with that, I think your thinking is online and correct.

So notice what he said to the people at Ephesus. Now remember, the people at Ephesus weren't Jews with a history of Judaism. They weren't skilled in the Old Testament.

They'd been worshiping at the shrine of Diana, the Ephesians. Their education was very limited. And so he's not talking to a theologically trained people.

I remember speaking on Ephesians one time and someone said, well that's very deep. I said yes, but the Ephesians were much smarter than the believers are today. They didn't think it was deep, they just thought it was truth.

And they received it as truth. Now this is not deep, this is truth. This is truth.

But remember what he said, let's go back again. Let's go back again to 1 Corinthians chapter 2. We gotta keep things straight here. For we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

And again, the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for their foolishness to it. So to whom is this revelation going to come? Well listen to Paul as he writes, continues writing this letter to the Ephesians. Wherefore, when I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love unto all the saints, I ceased not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, will give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of your understanding may be opened, that you may know.

Well these people knew a lot, don't underestimate them. They knew that Jesus Christ was God come in the flesh. They knew that they were sinners, they'd been convicted of their crimes before God.

They knew that they repented. They knew that they had savingly received Christ. They knew they were born again.

They knew they were filled with the spirit. They knew they were new creations in Christ. There was an awful lot they knew.

But Paul is saying to them, listen dear dear Ephesian brethren in Christ, I'm praying for you that the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, will give unto you the Holy Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of your understanding may be opened, that you may know what you don't know yet. Do you understand? They knew a lot, but there was a lot still hidden that they hadn't seen yet. And it was those hidden blessings that Paul was so anxious for them to have revealed unto them.

And so it is that we find here that today now we're so content with what we know that we lose all interest in what we don't know. A teenage girl came to an acquaintance of mine and she said, you don't know what you don't know. And he thought that was profound for a teenager.

I guess none of us would be answering that. You don't know what you don't know. And this is true of a great many believers.

They don't know what they don't know. It's what they don't know that they need to know that we're talking about. How easy it is for us to become content with a part instead of claiming the whole.

I remember years ago during the Second World War, a story came out about a man from Montana that decided that he was going to quit farming. Well, he'd already sold his farm. Yeah, he was going to go to Spokane and help President Roosevelt.

He was going to get a job at a factory and he was going to help President Roosevelt win this war. So somebody showed him where to go and he got a badge and he went to work. He was there about nine or ten months and a letter came to the White House.

Dear Mr. Roosevelt, I sold my farm in Montana and I moved to Spokane. And when this war broke out, I decided I was going to go to work the best I could and help you win it. And I've been working there now for ten months and I've used up all my savings.

It's expensive to live here in Spokane and I just have to tell you that I'm sorry but I got to go back to Montana. I got a little piece of ground and I can grow some food there because I can't stay here anymore. Well, it caught someone's attention in the White House and they had someone go investigate him.

He had truly done as he said. But you see, in all of his life, he'd never had to use a check. And so he's been getting these.

Someone said, well, haven't you been getting money from your company? No, I haven't had a dime. Well, haven't they been giving you? Yeah, about every couple of weeks I get one of those thank you notes from the President for helping him in his war. But I just got them all home in a book.

I thought my kids would be interested to see him sometime and I don't want to take him back with me. And here were checks that he'd been getting every two weeks since he started to work for thousands of dollars. But you see, the eyes of his understanding had never been opened to understand the use, value, and function of a check.

And he was hungry because he didn't care enough to ask somebody, what are these for? He assumed that because he thought they were thank you notes, that's all they were. He was impoverished by his voluntary ignorance. And that's what Paul is saying to the church at Ephesus.

You've got much. You've been awakened, you've been convicted, you've been brought to life in Christ. You've given evidence of the genuineness of the work of God in your heart.

You've been filled with the Spirit. But you have thought that's all there was. Little boy was put to bed at night.

An hour or so after he'd been put to bed, mother heard a thump on the floor, went up and he was crying and he'd fallen out of bed. She said, what's the matter? Oh, he said, mommy, I went to sleep too close to where I got in. And when I rolled over, I fell out.

There's a lot of God's dear children that go to sleep so close to where they get in, that they simply do not ever understand the blessings that God has prepared for them that love him. And so Paul very patiently writes to this church at Ephesus, and he's saying, listen, I'm praying for you that the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, will give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Now, these are smart people.

I just believe they were. And I believe they were so smart that when they found out how Paul was praying for them, they started to pray for themselves the same way. Well, at least if they didn't, they weren't as smart as I give them credit for being.

Because if I can find out how God is praying for me, I just know how I better pray for myself. When I find out how the Lord Jesus and his unchangeable priesthood is interceding for me, I know how I better pray for myself. And I just believe that from the time they got this letter, those dear believers up in Ephesus were saying, Heavenly Father, open the eyes of our understanding that we may know the things that thou has prepared for them that love thee.

They started to pray the way Paul was praying for them. Because you see, there are some things God does. God sent someone to live life before you, and he didn't ask you about that.

God sent someone to intercede for you, and he didn't ask you about that. And you didn't have to pray for that. And God sent someone to witness for you, and you didn't have to ask for that.

And God awakened you, and you didn't ask for that. And he convicted you, and you didn't ask for that. And he brought you the repentance and quickened repentance in your heart.

You may have had to ask for that. Some people do. They recognize you didn't have repentant heart.

And the red word says he's been exalted to give repentance and remission of sins still to Israel. And they said, Oh God, my heart's so obsolete and hard. Give me a repentant heart.

He's heard. And then they asked him to forgive them and pardon them as they savingly embraced prayer. So there were some things God did without our asking.

But there are some things he'll do only when we do ask. And this is one of them. He is not going to force you.

He's not going to force you to be quiet and to be still and to ask him to reveal to you those things he's prepared for the end of life. He's going to exhort you. He's going to entreat you.

He's going to encourage you. But he won't make you. He's not going to force you to do it.

There are some things that God only does because we ask him to do it. Now, the hidden things of God, these spiritual blessings that are in the heavenly, that the Father purposed and the Son provided and the Holy Spirit is waiting to make real in our lives, are not shown to us until we ask God to show them. That's just that simple.

You must ask God to open the eyes of your understanding and to teach you and to show you these hidden blessings that are yours because of your being adopted into the family of God and placed as a child under the care of your Father. You have to ask Him. He's not going to make you.

There have been times we have, my wife and I, have raised six children or we think we have and then there are times we're not sure we have yet. They say, I read somewhere that being a parent never suits you. You're always a parent and my son says you have to get on with the child too so don't forget that part.

So, the fact is that we raised, we probably have, six children and we have, at times, we wanted to take them and share with them. But I have learned with my children that if they want to talk more badly than I want to talk and I force them to listen, they don't hear. So, through the years we developed this, I developed the way, if I had something however important it was and they were busting to get out what they had, I'd let them go ahead and maybe the time ran out and I never told them.

But I just knew that if I were to hush them down and say, now you listen to me, I was just wasting time because they were so full of what they wanted to say that there wasn't any way in the world they could hear what I wanted them to hear. And our Heavenly Father is just like that. And we're so often so full of our own program and our own plans and our own interests and our own activities and all the things we've got on our plate.

We haven't time to say, oh God, I'm going to be still before you, I'm going to be quiet before you and I'm just going to wait on you. Open the eyes of my understanding that I may know that which you've prepared for them that love you. I am so happy with what I have, but Lord, I'm going to be so embarrassed if I see

you and discover that you have much more for me than I've experienced.

And I was too preoccupied and busy to even ask you what they were. No, you're going to have to ask him. Now, what is it that he wants us to see? Well, there are three things that are given there quickly.

First, he wants us to know the hope of his calling. Secondly, he wants us to know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And thirdly, he wants us to know the greatness of his power toward us who believe.

Hope of his calling. Every book I've read on Ephesians dealing with that verse tells me that he's talking about the hope to which we're called. But he didn't say the hope of our calling, it said the hope of his calling.

You see, the Lord Jesus had a call. Did he not? The call in the heart from eternity past, as a father, God wanted children, as brother, elder brother, he wanted brethren, as bridegroom, he wanted a bride. And there was this yearning, longing in the heart of God for someone like himself, whom he could love and with whom he could share all that he is.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth his son. Can you see the Lord Jesus, as it were, take off the diadem of his glory and set it by the robes of his majesty and lay them down, the scepter of his power and say, Father, I'm ready to answer the call. And the next minute, the eternal son is joined to one cell in the body of Mary.

And nine months later, he is born, Emmanuel, God come into play. Very God of very God, very man of very man. In him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead Father.

He answered the call to come into the world, that he might redeem men. But what was the hope he had, the expectation that he had, the reasonable grounds of expectation that he had. If he answered that call, it was to lead him to the cross and to the tomb.

He had reasonable grounds to believe that some would be redeemed. He said, all the fathers given me shall come unto me. He knew there would be those who would be redeemed, but he also had expectation that everyone that would be redeemed by his blood would recognize that he had an interest in them, if you could by your salvation, by your own works.

How in the living world do you think you could satisfactorily serve God by your own works? Forgiveness deals with the past, deals with the sins that have been committed. When you're pardoned, the transgressions committed, and now you're forgiven. The very energy, the very stuff, the very personality that wasn't able to earn salvation.

Do you think now you can turn around and use that same human energy and strength to serve God acceptably? Paul thought so when he was converted. He was a great speaker and orator. And when he got to Damascus and his sight restored, he decided that what he needed to do was to take these long briefs he had condemning the Christians and turn them around and read them from the bottom up and preach Christ.

And the same energy with which he pursued the Christians, he now wanted to serve the Lord. Well, God had a time, didn't he? They turned on Paul. The believers turned on him.

Unbelievers, everyone turned on him. Did you see him? I was in the house there where he had stayed. And strangely enough, in one of the closets was a little manhole that went to a tunnel that went to the main tunnel under the street called Straight.

He was in one of the few houses in Damascus, still there, was when I was there, that had that tunnel that went to the main tunnel under the street. And so Paul is, there's no train service, there's no plane service and the buses don't run on weekends, but you better go. You're in trouble.

And so I see Paul as he slides down that manhole and he starts crawling down there on his hands and knees and he gets to the bigger tunnel under the main street called Straight. And it came up in a manhole in the tower at the gate. And so Paul comes up into the gatehouse and then he goes on up into the tower because there was no door right there.

And he says, listen, boys, I got to leave town there after me. And somebody saw a wash basket for clothes and some rope. And they said, well, you get in here, we'll let you down.

So here's Paul being let down hand by hand outside the gate of Damascus. And when he gets up, he says, now which way, Lord? You know, I'm from Tarsus and I got a lot of friends there, members of some of the best clubs in Tarsus. Sorry, that's not the way.

Well, I could go south back to Jerusalem. No. I could go north.

No. Well, Lord, that's only one way, isn't it? He said, that's right. East.

Well, all that's out there is sand. Yeah, there's a few people out there. Well, where do you get food? That's going to be a problem, Paul.

I guess you're going to have to work for it. And so we see Paul trudging out east into the sand dunes. And he comes to a Bedouin family there with their camels and black camel hair tents.

And he goes up to the man there standing with a sword drawn. And he says, I'm just a poor, wandering Pharisee. And and I've been, what do you want, man? Well, I want a job.

I got to eat. Well, what do you know? Well, I'm an awful good lawyer and I can talk well. My wife does all that in this house.

I'm sorry. Well, what else can you do? Well, I had an apprenticeship in making tents. Oh, good.

You go over and join the slave girls there and start making tents. And they would braid the camel hair into about 10 inch wide strips. And then they would sew them together.

And three years later, he lost his membership in the American Express Club. He just lost all of his credit cards. Everything's gone.

And the Lord speaks to him and says, Paul, are you about ready? Well, Lord, what was your strength when you came here, Paul? Well, I told him I was a pretty good speaker. What about now? But I got a good chalice on my thumb for pushing that needle through the camel hair. I'm a good tent maker.

Well, just remember that you'll have to use it again a little later. He said, I guess you're ready. He had to spend three years in unlearning.

To come to the end of himself before he was ready to serve the Lord. So that when he would write to the church at Corinth, he would say, I was with you in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of spirit and power.

Paul had been stripped. You discover, don't you, the meaning of this? You discover this, that you can't serve God in the energy and strength with which you served yourself and you served the devil. You won't use it.

Oh, everything done by the flesh is going to perish in the flesh. That's why Paul, 35 years after he wrote to the book of the church at Rome and he said, I'm knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ. He writes to the church of Galatia and he says, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live. Liveth in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

You see, that's the hope of his calling. That everyone redeemed by his blood would recognize they couldn't serve God in the energy of their own personality and would count it their reasonable service to present their bodies a living sacrifice and invite the Lord Jesus Christ to live in them. That's the hope of his calling.

The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints is that he's going to use us to the end of bringing men out of death into life and the greatness of his power to us who believe. He wants us to know that the power that's going to enable us to serve him is not dedicated personality. I hear and read and see so much about unleash the great powers within you.

Well, I don't know really a great deal about what they're talking, but I'll tell you this, the power that was in the apostle Paul was not more of Paul. It was Christ living in him. And the only kind of power I'm interested in is that same power that the Lord Jesus Christ, when he left heaven's glory, his destination was my heart to live in me, his life.

Now, that's a hidden life. That's a hidden blessing. You don't see that.

You looked and you saw Paul, but hidden inside of Paul was the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I've told many of you heard, perhaps some of the tapes you've heard me refer to the daughter of William Booth, the founder of Salvation Army, who, when she was old enough, asked her father if she could serve the Lord with her sister and brother-in-law of the was given the opportunity of becoming the evangelist in the women's prisons in France.

There was one prison in France, in Paris, to which the worst women criminals were sent. And that was the one that she visited most frequently. She'd been there many times until then.

She discovered that there was one cell block that she had not been privileged to see. Learning about it, she insisted that they let her go. They said, we can't do that.

These are the worst women prisoners in all of France. And a woman as reclined and cultured as you are has no business being down among these vicious people. I'm going.

And she had the letters and the authority to go. So she went. She saw that down the end of this corridor to her right, at the last cell, there was a board, a board wall between the last cell and the next one in.

And she said, what's that wall of boards for? I said, well, the one on the other side is such a horrible specimen, hardly human, that the other women can't stand to look at her. And we agreed and we put the wall up so they wouldn't have to see her face. Well, Miss Booth stood there and she began to preach.

Preach the love of Christ and the grace of God and marvel of his poured out life, availing to wash away sin and to bring pardon and forgiveness. And in the midst of what she was saying about our wonderful Lord, from behind that board, a fierce screeching, screaming, swearing, cursing, the vilest of words, flowed like a torrent. Finally, the woman was exhausted.

But the sum of what she said was this. You're a liar. There isn't any God.

If there was a God, he wouldn't be like you say he is. Nobody loves me. Everyone hates me.

Look at these boards. They don't even want to look at me. Without moving where she was, Miss Booth said, there is a God.

I know him. He sent me here to tell you that he loves you and that he wants to meet you and save you, make you a new person. Oh, and again, another torrent of cursing.

And finally, the woman said, listen, you say you love me and that God loves me. I can remember one person who loved me, my mother. She died just before I was five years old.

But I can remember her lips coming down and kissing my forehead and my eyelids. And I can hear her voice. And she said, darling, I love you.

You tell you say God loves me. I'll tell you what. You come and you kiss me the way my mother kissed me and I'll believe you.

And the matron said, you can't do that, Miss Booth. Use that board that you can. No, no, you can't do that.

Oh, yes, I can. That's why I'm here. And so this woman, godly, gracious, clean, refined woman, slowly walked down the corridor.

And when she got there, there was that leery face, warped and twisted and marred with viciousness, pressed against the bars and saying, you think you can kiss this? Without hesitation, Miss Booth walked over. She put her hands through the bars. She took the woman's back of her head in her hand.

She later lifts on her forehead and on her eyelids. And God loves you. The warm tears dripped down her eyes and under the woman's face.

And in a moment, that woman's head slipped out of her hand as the woman's knees found the straw in the floor. It's true. There is a God and he loves me.

Because only God could cause you to kiss me the way my mother did. Listen, Miss Booth is just as refined and cultured and sensitive to uncleanness and viciousness as any of you. But you see, the one in her, the Lord Jesus Christ, was able to love that woman through her.

That's what the hidden mystery is. I will live in them. I will dwell in them.

I will walk in them. That's why he wants us to know the greatness of his power, to us for to believe. This isn't measured in buildings, in basilicas, in glass organs, in colored glass windows.

This wisdom is from above. It's hidden. It's when the Lord Jesus Christ takes up his abode in the light.

The hidden thing, the place of blessing in the heavenly, the author of blessing, the father, the son, the Holy Spirit, the revelation of blessing by the Holy Ghost to the end that Christ should be free to live his life in us. Heavenly Father, it's so easy for us to have our soul satisfied and think that the needs of our spirits have been met. Teach us to distinguish between the soul and the spirit, not to denigrate the soul.

You gave it to us, and the ability to enjoy all that you've made. But Father, help us to recognize that we are not just body, soul, and spirit. We have spirits as well, and that spiritual blessings are given to us by God the Holy Spirit to our spirit.

For the part of a man that knows the things of a man is the spirit of man that is in him. And so, Father, we would ask that tonight, as we rejoice in all that thou has done for us, marvel at the reach of thy grace to us, that we're going to satisfy thy heart by asking thee to open the eyes of our understanding, to enable us to see in a new, fresh way that which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Breathe upon us, breath of God.

We're no better than our hunger. Oh, spare us from ever outliving our hunger for thee, and stir our hearts tonight with a deep desire to be all that you would have us be, and experience all that you've provided in your love, that our lives can bring the greatest possible glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us stand, shall we, for the benediction.

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