

Hearts Flooded with Light

Ephesians 1:18^a

Ephesians 1:15-18 (v. 18 for today)

- We will only look at ½ of this verse today and the concept of **our hearts being enlightened**

Last night and the sound in the dark...

- You may hear noises or see shadows at night that terrify you, but if you saw and heard the same thing during the day, you wouldn't even flinch
- We imagine some evil to be lurking there because there is this **common, innate** human **understanding** of the **symbolic** nature of darkness
- Kids do not have to be taught to fear the dark
- Light and darkness are universal symbols for good and evil

In Scripture, light is understood as coming from God (Cf. creation and spiritual) and God Himself is, in His glory, portrayed to be light (Light of the world—who enlightens)

Paul uses the verb **enlighten** here (trans. **flooded with light**) to represent the action of light dispelling darkness

Here in the sense of **enlighten**—**to give greater knowledge or understanding**

- He wants them to have a greater understanding of the hope they have in Christ (**next week**)

Why does Paul see this as a matter of prayer?

- He had already prayed for them to have **spiritual wisdom and insight** so that they might **grow in their epignosis of God** (v. 17) (**last week**)
- Certainly **epignosis** would include understanding their hope in Christ—right? (Wouldn't that be enlightenment?)
- So why this prayer: "**I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light...**"
 - Is it mere redundancy?
 - I don't think so

We need God to **flood our hearts with light** because **they get darkened** from time to time

They were *initially darkened* by the results of the Fall—by sin and the resultant sin nature

- We were created to dwell in God's presence (light)—**but sin brought darkness & darkened understanding**

Look how Scripture describes humanity apart from Christ:

- **See: Romans 1:16-23**
 - **Their minds became dark and confused** (v. 21)
 - NASB = **their foolish hearts were darkened**
 - Cf. Ephesians 4:18-19
Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity
- Sin brought **darkness and darkened hearts** and **understanding** to humanity

Jesus brought light (to rescue us from darkness—it's power and penalty)

- Cf. John 1 and 3
- John 12:46

I have come as a **light to shine in this dark world**, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain **in the dark**.

We—having been rescued—work to see others rescued

- Acts 26:18

I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, **so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God**. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me

There is a battle between light and darkness

- 2 Corinthians 4:3-7
 - 3 If the Good News [the Gospel] we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing.
 - 4 **Satan**, who is the god of this world, has **blinded** the minds of those who don't believe. They are **unable to see the glorious light** of the Good News. They **don't understand** this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.
 - 5 You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake.
 - 6 For God, who said, "**Let there be light in the darkness**," **has made this light shine in our hearts** so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - 7 We now have **this light shining in our hearts**, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.
- When God causes us to be born again, He **enlightens** us to see the truth of the Gospel
- The lights go on **in our hearts** (v. 6)
 - We put our faith in Jesus and we are rescued from the power of darkness
 - Colossians 1:13
 - For he has **rescued us from the domain** [authority] **of darkness** and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son
 - 1 Peter 2:9
 - ... God called you **out of the darkness** and **into His marvelous light**.
- These ideas of dark/light are carried out to eternal destinations
 - Without Christ = **outer darkness**
 - With Christ = Revelation 22:3-5
 - 3 No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him.
 - 4 And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads.
 - 5 And there will be **no night there**—no need for lamps or sun—**for the Lord God will shine** on them...

But dark and light are not just in play before we are saved and at the final destination—they are very much in play throughout the life of the Christian

When we follow Jesus (practice being disciples), we walk in and experience light

- John 8:12

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "**I am the light of the world**. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

What happens as we dabble with sin is that **our understanding is darkened**

- If sin first brought darkness and darkened hearts to humanity—it still has this effect
- And although we—having been rescued—are no longer under sins ultimate power or penalty
- **When we dabble in darkness, we still experience somewhat of a darkening of our hearts**
 - This is why Paul was praying for the Ephesians to have their **hearts flooded with light** and this is why we need this prayer
 - **Because we dabble with darkness**
 - We are no longer under its power but we often engage it in play

When we are rescued from darkness there comes *both* a **new you** and a **new way of being**

The new you

- Colossians 1:12-14 (NASB)
 - 12** Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the **saints in light**.
 - 13** For he delivered us from the **domain** [authority] **of darkness** and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
 - 14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 - Our identity is now that of “**saints in light**”

A new way of being

- Ephesians 5:8-9
 - 8** For once **you were full of darkness**, but **now you have light from the Lord**. So live as people of light!
 - 9** For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.
- Because of what Jesus has done for us because of the love of God, we are different people—**we must live in a different way**
- Here again we see that **Gospel indicative/imperative** concept
 - An indicative being a statement of fact
 - An imperative being a direct command
 - Statement of fact: **You were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord**
 - Direct command: **So live as people of light**
- There is also an **enabling by grace**
 - **For this light within you produces what is good and right and true** (Eph 5:9)
 - What God has done for you in Christ is producing good things in you right now
 - Where there was once an authority of darkness at work in us and we were “**obeying the devil, the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God**” (Eph 2:22)
 - Now “**God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him**” (Philippians 2:13)

Now, if **God’s light** [truth and presence] **within you produces what is good and right and true**

- It is understood that darkness produces what is **bad** and **wrong** and **false**
- And these things can—and do—influence us
- 1 Corinthians 15:33-34^a
 - Don’t be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals. Think carefully about what is right and stop sinning.**

The fact that Paul is praying for their **hearts to be enlightened (flooded...)** teaches us 2 things

1. Enlightenment is a matter of divine intervention

- We need to be rescued from darkness
- It is not a matter of **grit** or **ingenuity**
- It is a matter of **grace** and **intervention**

2. Enlightenment is a matter of continuance

- We need to be continually rescued from darkness and continually walk in obedience
- Though we have been rescued from the power and penalty of darkness—we still **dabble in darkness**
- And this darkness (the realm of Satan and evil) is portrayed in Scripture as possessing real (not figurative) power
 - This power attempts to exert influence over us even though we are “**saints in light**”
 - Cf. Temptation
 - It’s not only that when we sin we incur guilt, **but we actually let in some darkness**—and it’s power
 - **This darkness (and it’s results) obscures the truths of the Gospel and what we have in Christ**
 - Cf. “**the hope of His calling**” or “**the confident hope he has given to us**”

So, how do we overcome this invasive darkness? How can we move toward having our **hearts flooded with light**?

Again, **light** is a **matter of divine intervention**

- We need God to rescue us—But that does not mean that we are entirely passive
- God uses **means**
 - **The Word of God**
 - **The teaching of the Word**
 - **Correct doctrine**
 - **Prayer**
 - **Obedience**
- Psalm 19:8^b
The **commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes**
 - The **means** is the word of God—God's commands
- Psalm 119:30
The **teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand.**
 - The **means** here is the teaching of the word of God
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26
24 A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people.
25 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth.
26 Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.
 - The **means** here is the faithful, witnessing Christian—correct doctrine
- Ephesians 1:18
I **pray that your hearts will be flooded with light**
 - The **means** here is prayer

In each of these it is God who does **the rescuing of enlightenment**, but He uses **means**—the **commands** of the Lord, the **Word of God**, the **teaching** of the Word of God, careful Christians **persuasion and doctrine**, and **prayer**

- So we give ourselves to these things as the means God uses to (Himself) enlighten us
- We give careful attention to: **Obedience, reading, sermons, doctrine, and prayer**
- These things **illuminate** or **enlighten** us
- Their opposites make us vulnerable to darkness

Ephesians 5:6-17