

Legislators and Staff Prayer Breakfast

Legislative Cafeteria

June 20th

Books and Bagels

June 28th

Introduction

Most people would agree that nuclear energy is the greatest developed power on this planet.

Nuclear energy provides 11% of the world's energy. Four hundred and forty four commercial nuclear reactors operate in 31 countries. At total capacity, without carbon dioxide emission, these reactors produce a total of 390,000 Megawatt electricity. How does this power compare with the power of our sun? Our Sun, informally referred to as a yellow dwarf star, is 93 million miles away from our planet's surface. The Sun is a thermonuclear fusion reaction. The Sun's mass, 330,000 times larger than earth, consists of 73% hydrogen, 25% helium and 2% smaller quantities of heavier elements, including oxygen, carbon, neon, and iron.¹ These elements combined with the massive amounts of pure hydrogen gas from space produce a reaction that in one second would provide (3.846 x10²⁶) W per second translates to 460 Septillion watts per second.² Others express this calculation in mind grasping forms such as; it would power the United States of America for 9,000,000 years; or melt a bridge of ice 2 miles wide x 1 mile thick that extends from the earth to the Sun.³

The power of the Sun is exponentially beyond the power of man's developed nuclear power. The comparison gives a mental glimpse of God's power. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky above proclaims His handiwork (Psalms 19:1 ESV)." "And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:16-18 ESV).

Our text today speaks of God's power. When a person spoke of God's power in Israel, prior to the cross, it was associated with two events, creation and the parting of the Red Sea to allow the

Israelites to walk across on dry ground. But the event describing the power of God changed after the cross. The text our study focuses on today is Ephesians 1:19-23. "And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. "

Review: Our last study pointed out the first two parts of the Ephesians 1 prayer of Paul. Paul prayed that 1) that the believer would grasp the hope of his calling; and 2) that the believer would understand the splendor of the inheritance that the hope points. In these points, God reveals to believers how precious we are to him by saying we are "his inheritance". Beyond that, God gives hope to each believer by promising us a wonderful future. The study today aims to open up the third part of Paul's prayer, that the believer would know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to those who believe." The last point of the prayer request draws us to God's power. But why? What is it about God's power that is so important for the believer to grasp? Here are three reasons taken from the context.

I. Paul wants the believer to see it is for the present!

Paul uses many words to describe this power: "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph. 1:19). So tremendous is this truth that Paul enlisted many different words from the Greek vocabulary to get his point across: *dunamis*—"power" as in dynamo and dynamite; *energeia*—"working" as in energy; *Kratos*—"mighty"; *ischus*—"power."

Ephesians 1:19 can be translated, "What is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength." Paul wants each believer to know it is present power, not future power. He is talking about divine dynamic, eternal energy, available to us!⁴ This power is to be used as the believer lives out his faith carrying out the purpose of God in his life.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun>

² Fraser Cain, Universe Today, phys.org, December 14, 2015

³ Nasa's Cosmicopia, Ask Us, Sun. helios.gsfc.nasa.gov. accessed May 30, 2017

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

II. It is the power of the Resurrection, and Ascension.

The resurrection of Christ is the most historically attested miracle in the history of the world. In 93 AD, just 60 years after the cross of Christ, Josephus, a First Century historian, presented this attestation to Rome”

About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared. - Jewish Antiquities, 18.3.3 §63

But the text takes the reader beyond the resurrection to the ascension, (see Eph. 1:21-22). You see the authority of Jesus Christ seated at the throne of God the Father is why this immeasurable power is provided. Jesus told His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...” Matt. 28:19-20.

This is the energy that gives power to live a new life, it is resurrection power. This is hope beyond any hope; for new wears out, but making something dead become new again- that is only by God’s power. It is like no other Savior can give!

III. Paul wants Bold Faith in the Ephesian Believers

The Lord is calling believers to pray, as Paul is praying, for great things! What is the greatest thing to pray for? Prayer that believers appropriate the power of God and live lives being channels of God’s power to this world! It is living out bold faith !This was the prayer of D.L. Moody, founder of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, who said:
“The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to Him. By God’s help, I aim to be that man.” The context calls the believer to his eternal calling to live a life for the praise of God’s glory! In the time this was written, that would be bold faith. The kind of faith that is needed in our time. This faith calls the believer to ask great things of God, ask God for things only God can do! Ephesians 3:20 says God’s power is immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. Would you ask God for things only He could do? That would be beyond what most ask God for, for our prayers are shallow, and mostly self-focused. What would happen if somehow we all could see beyond ourselves, our party affiliation, our race and cry out to God for the great needs of our day? What would happen? Bold faith prayed for means bold faith lived out. What does that look like? Well, first of all, it looks like compassion to people; it is not a radical demonstration of hate or terror. Bold faith has conviction to stand for and live out an absolute truth, affirming an absolute

Savior, who provides an absolute reconciliation with God. This is not popular in a time when everyone is right and the god wanted most of all is one that never tells you that you are wrong, which really is no god at all. God and truth confront. But think about it, isn’t that what you would want? You would want a God to tell you the truth of your condition, but also a God who could bring hope and healing. For example, you do not want a doctor to just tell you everything is ok. You want him to tell you the truth and give you hope for healing. The true God does that, truth is very confrontational, but it also brings hope and healing. God’s good news is the solution to every individual’s greatest need, to be at peace with their Creator.

IV. Bold Faith is needed because the Enemy is real.

Paul draws a direct correlation to Ephesians 6 in his prayer. He refers to the armor of God. The testimony of bold faith according to Hebrews 11, many times is behind the scene. In jail cells, holes in the ground, and in places not seen by many nor broadcast by media. Great faith lives in hospital rooms, battle fields, courtrooms, and chambers of government buildings. Bold faith stands on the promises of God, and declares God to be good in the midst of trouble, pestilence, disease, and in the face of evil. This unseen faith the glory of God that makes the enemies of God, the “principalities, powers and authorities, (Eph. 3:10)” quake!
Some of these first century believers from Ephesus were martyred for no other reason than they were kind, loving Christians, good citizens of Rome, but people who would not worship Caesar as god. They stood their ground that there is one God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit They also proclaimed that this God loves the world He created so that He orchestrated a plan against evil and made a provision for people to be saved. This God is a personal God who gives mercy and compassion to each person every day. It shook the heavenlies and it transformed Rome!

It was a 19th century poet, William Merrill who wrote:

**Rise up, O men of God! Have done with lesser things.
Give heart and mind and soul and strength
to serve the King of kings. Bring in the day of brotherhood
and end the night of wrong. Lift high the cross of Christ!
Tread where his feet hath trod, As brothers of the Son of
Man, Rise Up O Men of God.
So as the hymn cries out, “Rise up O Men of God be done
with lesser things.”**

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday @ 7:30am – 8:00am, LOB 414
Monday @ 12:00pm – 1:00pm, LB 2nd Flr.
Monday @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, Chapel