

Sunday 3rd Nov 2019 I remember you in my prayers
Eph. 1:11-23 Luke 6:20-31

Intro:

Today is the day when we celebrate All Saints Day

On the continent it is always celebrated on 1st Nov and in some countries, such as France & Poland, it is a national holiday.

The grave yards always look amazing at this time. They are all tidied up and pots of yellow and bronze Chrysanthemums are placed on loved ones graves.

All Saints Day is a day when we remember those who have gone before us, especially those we have loved or who have made an especially positive impact on our lives.

Here at St George's we have a special service this evening, called Enfolded in Love, when we particularly remember those we love but no longer see. Do join us this evening at 6.30 if you can.

Being a 'Saint' is tough. It is not easy to be a disciple, a follower of Christ for many different reasons. And Jesus' in his words in Luke says 'Woe to you who are rich, full, laughing, who people speak well of.....' That is most of us. Jesus says woe to us!! Being a Saint is tough !

Some of those saints who we remember may have been people of faith who have prayed for us, whether we knew it or not.

In his letter to the Ephesians that Penny has just read to us, Paul has written an incredible prayer. Paul wrote 'I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.' And then goes on to write an incredible prayer.

Paul wrote this letter to the people of Ephesus, a town in modern day Turkey, to encourage them and all believers everywhere

He starts the letter with great words of encouragement and then writes a prayer for them.

A prayer that I think is as appropriate and necessary for us today as it was for those Ephesians.

Praying for someone, whether they know we are praying or not, whether they believe in the power of prayer or not, whether we love them or not, whether they love us or not!, is one of the most precious things that we can do for anyone.

Speaking to the King of kings, the Creator of our world, The One who loves us more than we can imagine, on behalf of someone else.

What a gift!!!

So, I would like us to look at the prayer from Paul to the Ephesians this morning, *****1.** to see what an amazing prayer it is, and then, hopefully, to commit to praying that prayer for someone we know.

*****2.** Ephesians 1:17-19

17 *I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, **18** so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.*

When we become Christians, when we decide to be followers of Jesus and surrender our lives to His authority, accepting His gift of love and grace, we receive the blessing of an inheritance as a son or daughter of God. We become co-heirs with Christ Jesus

Romans 8:15-17

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness[n] with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

It is important that as we grow and mature as Christians that our knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a joint heir with Christ also grows

And this is what the prayer from Paul to the Ephesians is about. *****3.**

Paul prays that God the Father would impart to those reading this letter, all the riches of the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation in order that they readers may grow in understanding and intimacy with the Father.

In this part of the prayer God the Father, God the son Jesus Christ and God the Spirit are all mentioned. The trinity of God.

Paul is praying that these believers will come to know God the trinity more than ever before and the word for know here is not just a head knowledge but a deep heart understanding.

The Greeks were all about acquiring head knowledge

But the Hebrew meaning of knowing was much more an experiential, absorbed and lived out form of knowing.

eg. standing on the edge of The Grand Canyon, giving birth to a child !

Paul wanted these early believers to have that deeper understanding of God. Not just head knowledge but a deeper heart experience that would come only through Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation

Why does Paul want this? *****4**

***18** so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.*

Paul expects that this deeper sense of knowing will do 3 things

*****5**

they may know the HOPE to which they have been called

He takes them back to the start of their faith, to their calling

As Christians they have been called to

belong to Christ and have fellowship with Him

to become saints that live holy lives

to freedom from the judgment of The Law

to peace and harmony with one another

Their calling is to a new life through which

they obey Christ
enjoy fellowship with Him and one another
they look forward to glory

Pauls prayer offers a reminder of the richness of our calling and the HOPE we receive once we have placed our faith in the one who has called us.

***6

He also prays that they will be even more enlightened about the RICHES of their glorious inheritance

This is looking forward to their future, to the final inheritance that has been guaranteed for believers through Christ and kept in heaven for believers (1 Peter 1:4)

A reminder about our being co-heirs with Christ

The reality of this is beyond our imaginative capacity but Paul prays that the believers will come to know more of the magnitude of this promise

At that time in glory we shall see Him face to face

We shall worship Him & enjoy fellowship with Him

There will be more saints there than we can imagine, too many to count from every nation, tribe and language

This part of Paul's prayer is that we may know more deeply the inheritance that awaits us in glory

Thirdly, Paul wanted the believers of Ephesus to KNOW that as well as looking back to the Hope of their calling and forward to the promised RICHES of their future inheritance, he also wanted

them to have a deeper understanding of the POWER of Christ in their lives here and now ***7

To grasp the greatness of our past calling and our future inheritance, but also His power to live as disciples each and every day.

Living our day to day lives as disciples of Christ is not easy. There are many challenges that face us each and every day, just as there were for the people of Ephesus

But the same power that raised Christ from the dead and placed Him at the right hand of God, the same power that has been given to Jesus as head of the Church and conquered death and evil.

Paul prayed that their eyes & hearts may be opened to understand to grasp the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of His great power.

That power is available to us, here and now

We need both our minds to think and understand but we also need the Holy Spirit to enlighten us

We can read the scriptures, as we were thinking last week, and study the Truth

But we also need the Spirit to reveal Truth to us

It is a both/and And this is what Paul is praying for those believers to whom he wrote

And it is the same for us

What about if we prayed this prayer for people we know

Maybe saints that have gone before us have prayed this prayer for us

What impact might it have if we prayed this regularly for someone

Think of someone you know that you could pray this prayer for ***8

Imagine them in your mind now

We are going to pray this prayer aloud and when it says 'you' *I pray that God will give YOU a spirit of...* imagine that person in your mind

Take the card away with you. Put it somewhere you wont loose it and that you will see it as a reminder and commit to pray this prayer for someone everyday if you can or at least every week from now until Christmas