6-2-2019 Message – Pray, Believe, and Live Like It

 Ephesians 1: 18 – 20 *18 "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called— His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance.*

 *19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.*

 We pray, we communicate with God to deepen our faith in Him, our love for Him which compels us to live like we know His resurrection power is ours.

 Paul wrote this letter to encourage and strengthen the believers in Ephesus in their Christian faith by explaining the nature and purpose of the church, the body of Christ.

 Paul wrote in chapter 4: 3 – 4 *3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.*

 He describes what the Church should look like in character and how to live what they know to be true. Paul also challenges believers then and now to function as the united living body of Christ on earth.

 The image of the body shows the church’s unity. Each member is involved with all the others as they go about doing Christ’s work on earth. We should not attempt to work, serve, or worship merely on our own. We need the entire body, we are responsible for, and accountable to each other.

 Something to remember, Paul is imprisoned in Rome for proclaiming the Gospel at the time he wrote this letter.

 In our passage this morning... Paul writes to tell the Church at Ephesus that he has been praying they would be aware of the exceptional and immeasurable greatness of the power which is theirs and ours through the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

 Paul shares with us three powerful things we can do to show ourselves as the united body of Christ. The first is:

**1. Pray**

 *18 "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called— His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance.*

 The NIV version is "*18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people.*

 Open the eyes of our hearts sounds like a great title for a song.

 The hope we have is not a vague feeling that the future will be positive, but it is complete assurance of certain victory through God. This complete certainty comes to us through the Holy Spirit working in and through us.

 Paul prayed for the believers to know God better for their hearts to be illuminated with His.

 How do you get to know someone? By reading biographical information or historical data about them?

 That might help you know a lot about that person, but it won’t help you to actually know them. If you want to get to know someone, you have to spend time with that person; there is no shortcut.

 The same holds true with God. Reading the Bible, great works of theology, and devotional material is wonderful, but there is no substitute for knowing God personally.

 What about you? Do you really know God, or do you just know about Him?

 The difference is in spending time with Him. Study Jesus’ life in the Gospels to see what He was like on earth two thousand years ago and get to know Him in prayer now.

 Paul was a prayer warrior, just as Jesus stayed connected to the Father in frequent and fervent prayer, Paul new the importance of being plugged in to the power of God through prayer.

 Lillian spoke, last week about being plugged in, connected to the power source, Christ.

 In our Sunday School lesson last week this is what Paul prayed in Ephesians chapter 6: 18 – 20, just after teaching about the Armor of God.

 *18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

 *19 And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.*

 *20 I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s Ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for Him, as I should.*

 I would ask you to pray with me, prayers for our church family that we may become committed members of God's Family, participants in the family business, add these to the prayer list in your bulletin as a reminder;

 God help me to be 100% sold out surrendered to you in **EVERY** area of my life.

 God help me to love people the way you do.

 God help our new family members and those of us who have known you for a while.

 God help all of us to see with “New Eyes” the richness of our hope that we have in You.

 God help us to realize the greatness of what You have done in our lives.

 God help us not to forget that You took that which was dead and gave us new life.

 If you will pray these prayers and believe that God will bring it about in your lives, the resurrection power of God can be turned loose in your life and it will affect everything you do, and everyone you meet.

 Paul is calling us to believe in the power we have received.

**2. Believe**

*19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe Him.*

 Do you believe that what the Word of God says is True?

 That this same resurrection power is at our disposal today. We need to know what God can do in our lives **if** we allow Him to release His awesome resurrection power in us.

 Do you remember, being dead in sin... lost to this world before God extended His Grace... and you found Christ.

 This is how Paul describes it to His listeners in Ephesians 2:1 – 3 *1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”*

 There may have been a time in your life, when you belonged to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, belonged to the spirit of who is now at work in those who choose to be disobedient.

 We have all struggled with things in our lives before we surrendered to Christ Jesus as Lord.

 You were lost and on the way to Hell.... forever. Not only lost, but under the influence and control of Satan himself.

 If left in that position, you were marked as an object of God’s Holy wrath come judgement day.

 Do you remember the day when you were set Free?

 Do you remember the day when God’s Resurrection Power moved you from death to life in an instant, the day when His Power washed your sins away into the abyss?

 Today can be the day your eyes are opened to the reality of God’s Resurrection power to defeat sin, to defeat Satan, to defeat all that comes against us as children of God.

 God wants to work His mighty strength in you... He wants to show the power of the resurrection, through your life... are you allowing His power, His Son Jesus to shine brightly in your life?

 Paul is calling you to live like you do.

**3. Live Like It**

*This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.*

 There is no reason to live in slavery, in chains to anything when you have the Resurrection Power of God in your life... don’t live below the blessings that God wants to give you... open the eyes of your heart and know the Hope that you have in God.

In my studying I came across an illustration attributed to Martin Luther,  a 16th century, German professor of [theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_theology), composer, priest, monk, and a central figure in the [Protestant Reformation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation).

 He was once so depressed over a prolonged time that one day his wife came downstairs wearing all black. Martin Luther said, “Who died?” She said, “God has.” He said, “God hasn’t died.” To which she replied, “Well, live like it and act like it.”

 It’s through the resurrection power of God being unleashed within you and me that gives us the ability to live the mission of God, to love others as Christ loves us, unconditionally and make disciples who make disciples.

 We are a Holiness Church that holds high the standard of God’s Word and the life that He has called us to Live in unity.

 Resurrection power enables all of us to live victoriously, as Galatians 2:20 says, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

 We want people to know that God not only calls us to Holy Living, but He gives us the Power and the strength to live Holy Lives when we give God 100% of our lives, in every area.

 So today let's take hold of the Power that God has given through the resurrected Christ who lives in all who believe. Everything you need, you can find in Christ.

 In closing I want to share a Jesus film story.

 There was a Good Friday service in Dampara Baptist Church, Chittagong, Bangladesh the service was packed. Little children sat on the floor in the aisles and across the front of the church. Rows of people stood in the back, craning their necks to see the crucifixion scene. Weeping and gasps of unbelief could be heard in the shocked hush as Jesus was crucified.

 As these people from Bangladesh watched, they were feeling the agony of Jesus’ pain and the disappointment of the disciples. In that emotional moment, one young boy in the crowded church suddenly cried out, “Do not be afraid. He gets up again! I saw it before.” A small boy’s encouraging cry gave new hope to the viewers of the film. “He is risen!” is the cry that gives new hope to all of us.

 Does the risen Savior, who has been raised with Resurrection Power live in you today? If so, live like it, and act like it.