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**Go and make disciples!**

E-Devotional 3

*Ephesians 1:18 (ESV),*

*having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*

In today's reading, we see a change from the importance of having a personal encounter with God to the hope we have laid up for us in heaven. Paul was effectively praying here that the understanding of the believers at Ephesus would be enlightened so that they could comprehend what God had promised them in heaven. One translation speaks of this as the eyes of the heart being opened or enlightened. When the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ shines on someone they are changed.

There were in the days of the early church and even now many different types of persecutions of Christians. The reason it was important for a Christian to know the hope that was laid up for them in heaven was because it helped them better endure the hardship of persecution and in many cases even the loss of their life. The early church gladly gave up their lives in light of the hope that was laid up for them in heaven. This brings us to a very tough question to ask ourselves. Do you believe so much in what Jesus promised us about our heavenly home that you no longer fear death?

We have many occurrences and passages in the Bible that speak of keeping our minds on the hope that we have. In other words, Paul was praying that the believers in spite of persecution would be fully confident of the promise laid up for them in heaven. We have a great example in Acts 7 about a young man named Stephen, who while being stoned to death gazed up into heaven and declared, "I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56). Now, Stephen literally saw Jesus we read. However, if we were to ask ourselves if we truly believe this, what would the answer be?

I have to tell you, I love a challenge. I would love for myself as well as my family in Christ to have our hearts opened in such a way so as to see Jesus and the

promise He has for us in heaven so that when trouble comes we can rejoice and not be afraid because we are confident that what He promised is sure to come to pass. Hey, maybe we don't literally see Jesus standing, but I tell you, I fully believe we can see Him with our hearts.

The greatest takeaway today is that we pray for ourselves and each other to have such a bold faith in what God has promised that we are virtually fearless in our witness here on earth for Christ. Go and tell about the One who died for you without fear because you have a promise from the Father.

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