

WHO IS THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST?

Eph. 1:15-23

Intro: Our text tonight gives us a very unique title for God. He is called, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a similar statement in Eph. 1:3, but the best reading seems to be, "God and the Father." (The same applies to 2 Cor. 1:3 and 1 Pet. 1:3.)

Most of the time that our Lord referred to God, He called Him, Father, i.e., when referring to His own relationship to Him. He often, of course, referred to the Father as God when speaking of His relationship to men.

There are a couple of outstanding places, however, where our Lord did refer to the Father as God:

- 1) Matt. 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?"
- 2) John 20:17, speaking to Mary Magdalene, "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

GOD--a term which sets God apart from man; Deity as compared with humanity. Therefore, this expression in our text emphasizes the relationship with God had with His Son following the time of His incarnation, when the Son became a man. But it also carries with it the idea of One who is greater than man, and therefore sovereign over man. God can be, even to the minds of unregenerate men, One who can be a Guardian at times, and a Judge at other times. He can bless, or He can curse.

With this in mind we have to remember that one of the great purposes for the Bible, the Word of God, is to give us an accurate, a complete revelation of God. THIS REVELATION WAS COMPLETED WHEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST CAME TO EARTH. It is when men begin to realize what God is like, that they can see their own need, and how that need can be met.

But I do not want to talk tonight about God and His relationship to the world; I WANT TO TALK ABOUT GOD IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS CHILDREN.

I said this morning that we often get into difficulty because we do not know the ways of God; I want to point out tonight that we also get into difficulty because we do not know as much as we need to know about God Himself.

Paul in Ephesians deals with some of the most wonderful truth that you will find any place in the New Testament. Here he tells us what the Church is. Here he explains what we need in order to be able to stand in our spiritual conflict with the Devil and all spiritual wickedness. BUT HERE ALSO HE TALKS ABOUT OUR "WALK"--THE WAY YOU AND I AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD SHOULD LIVE! It is very significant that before he gets to the practical he prays about what a child of God should know about God and His ways with us.

It is in God's relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, as God, that we have the foundation we need for our own lives.

There are three petitions in the prayer. They have to do with:

- 1) The purpose of God.
- 2) The love of God.
- 3) The power of God.

If we do not understand these truths, then the results will be very sad as they show up in our "walk."

I. THE PURPOSE OF GOD: "THAT YE MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING" (v. 18).

The word, "calling," puts salvation in its right perspective. We are the people of God, not because we chose Him, but because He called us!

Romans 8 lays special emphasis on this. Cf. vv. 24-30.

See also Rom. 11:29.

When God called us, using this of the time when we came to know Him, He not only called us to do something for us then, and something for us throughout our lives, but He called us with a specific "hope" in mind--a goal, an objective, a purpose.

What was it? Romans 8:29 tells us. LET US REMEMBER THAT GOD NEVER FORGETS THIS, AND WE CANNOT FORGET IT EITHER. All of God's ways with us show that He is working all things together toward the fulfillment of that purpose. That is why it is "good."

That may be the reason why Paul drops the term, Father, about the middle of Romans 8, and uses nothing but God at the end of the chapter.

If we need any further encouragement beyond this, then reflecting back upon what "God" did during the earthly life of His Son will give us all the help we will need.

II. THE LOVE OF GOD (v. 18).

You say, "But where do you get the love of God in this verse?"

My answer: In the expression, "And what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Note that this is not our inheritance in Him, but His inheritance in us! It is not what we are going to get from Him, but what He is going to get from us!

Do you and I know anything at all about this?

What is He going to get out of us? We surely have nothing to give to Him, or bring to Him.

Yes, we do! What is it? OURSELVES!

Look at Eph. 1:3-12. The ASV translates v. 11, "In whom also we were made a heritage . . ." What has God gotten out of me? He has gotten a son! He has gotten another member in His family!

But there is this difference with God's family and our families. WE TOOK WHAT WE GOT; GOD GOT WHAT HE WANTED! We were "chosen" in Christ "before the foundation of the world." It is impossible for us to take that in, to understand all that is involved there!

Read John 17:

- 1) V. 23, "that the world may know that . . . thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Think of this!
  - 2) V. 24, "Father, I will that they also . . ."
- It is no wonder that the Psalmist says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15).

Both the Israelites in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament are called, "a peculiar people," i.e., a people for God's own possession!

IF YOU AND I KNOW "THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS," if we know what we mean to Him, we will never, never doubt His love for us. This is absolutely essential for us to know.

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). If God could say that to Judah in Jeremiah's day, He can say it anytime!

III. THE POWER OF GOD: "What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe" (v. 19a).

You and I can get discouraged because:

- 1) We do not see the reason for the experiences we go through.
- 2) Somehow we feel that God may have changed His attitude toward us, and does not love us as He once did.
- 3) Or, we may feel that we need to do something, that God helps those who help themselves!

"Exceeding greatness" means that the power of God, power which is inherent within Himself, goes far beyond anything that we will ever need Him to do for us.

Proof: the resurrection of Christ! And this goes on to the ascension! And then to His glorification over "all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come."

This is what the God of our Lord Jesus Christ has done and is going to do for Him! What do you need Him to do for you? Cf. Eph. 3:20, 21 (in context with ch. 3 ff.).

Cf. Matt. 28:18-20.

Concl: I cannot think of any truths that have more practical importance for the people of God than these that I have spoken about tonight. Much more could be said. I am sure that most of you know these truths. I have just been bringing truths to your remembrance.

But let me ask: When the trials of life hit, do you turn to the Lord claiming these great truths? Cf. Isa. 26:3.

Let me point out another thing in closing: OUR TEXT TONIGHT IS TAKEN FROM A PRAYER. If you and I had prayed with the Apostle Paul, this is an example of the way he prayed. Do you ever taken his prayers and pray them? I do not like to use prayer books when I pray, **BUT I DO LIKE TO USE THE BOOK WHEN I PRAY!** Nothing would bring greater blessing into our lives and into Central Bible Church than for us to pray this way for each other--and to see the tremendous things God would do in answer to such praying!