

Baptism and Membership Service of Hayden Blair, Eowyn Webb

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Date: 23 May 2021

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[0:00] Well, praise the Lord. Now what? Now what? Hayden and Eowyn need us to pray for them.

They need us to pray for them. If you are a member of Grace Fellowship Church, you just committed to pray for them. We said we would commit ourselves to them to pray for their building up in growth and grace.

They need it, and we said we would do it. They need us to pray for them. God is doing something among our young people.

We've been praying that God would save them, and he has been. He's been raising them from the dead, giving them new life, exactly what we've been asking for, and he's been doing it. Cade and Gage and Hayden and Eowyn and Riley and Molly, they need us to pray for them.

They are young Christians in an evil world. We said we would. And brothers and sisters, if we have any love in our hearts, these are our youngest.

[1:08] The fight is hard. The battle is in front of them. And if we have that love in our hearts, we need to be praying for our younger brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now, tonight, I want to tell you how. From Ephesians chapter 1. So if you have your Bibles, turn there. Ephesians chapter 1. Paul is praying for this young church in Ephesus.

They are new Christians in a hostile world. And Paul doesn't leave it a secret of how he prays. He wants them to know.

And in letting them know, he tells us how we should be praying for younger and all believers. Now, we see four things in Ephesians chapter 1.

And we're going to look at verses 15 through 23. And I'm going to read the passage. And I want you to see, as we read it together, can you pick up on the four things that Paul prays for them?

[2:12] Or four different ways that he prays. So Ephesians chapter 1, verse 15. And I'll read through verse 23. For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I've not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better.

I pray also 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 the saints, and his incomparable great power, incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

[3:46] Hayden and Eowyn need us to pray for them. They need you to pray for them. How should we pray? There's four things I saw in this passage, and we just want to take them each in turn.

And the first is, we want to give thanks. Give thanks. Before we ask anything, we have to pause, call a timeout, and say, what an amazing thing God has done.

What an amazing thing God has done. That's where we start. Psalm 89, verse 6, Who is like the Lord? Who is like the Lord?

Who is like the Lord? Give thanks for what he's done for Eowyn and Hayden. What has he done? Ephesians chapter 2, we're not going to read it all, but it explains what he did, and it really is what

we have just heard and witnessed and seen with our own eyes.

Ephesians 2, 1, it begins with, as for you, you were dead in your transgressions and your sins. You were dead. You were condemned. Eowyn and Hayden were condemned.

[4:54] In the dark. Ruined. They couldn't save themselves. They were past any sort of human intervention to save them. It's as if the doctors had called it.

It was over. There was more hope to send a doctor to the morgue to save someone there than to save we who were dead in our transgressions and sin.

But the answer is found later that God, who is rich in mercy, that's the explanation. He's rich in mercy, abundantly merciful.

He made them alive. And they were guilty. They were condemned. And I'm not talking about how they felt. They had all sorts of justifications for what they were doing and why they didn't need to feel guilty for their sin, or maybe they did.

Guilty means they were guilty in God's eyes, the only eyes that really count. God does not ask us what we think of our sin. He is his own judge and determiner, and we were inexcusably guilty in God's eyes.

[6:04] Hayden and Eowyn were by nature objects of wrath, but God saved them through sacrificing his own son in their behalf. The gospel is about what Jesus did.

It is not about what we do. For it is by grace we are saved, not by works. They couldn't make themselves innocent. We've already sung that.

With a debt too great for deeds to pay, they couldn't make themselves right with God. Something instead drastic, dramatic, divine, had to happen.

And what Ephesians tells us, what the gospel is, is that Jesus Christ came to redeem them. And that's what had to happen. He had to buy them out of the terrible condition that they were in.

He had to purchase them out of their debt and their slavery and their guilt. And he did that. And he did it by giving up his life. That is the heart of the gospel.

[7:07] That Jesus dies in the place of sinners. And he gave up his life not in some peaceful place. It wasn't some transition sleep, you know.

He fell asleep in the Lord or something like that. It was not in a peaceful way or peaceful place. His life was viciously, painfully taken from him.

Isaiah 53 tells us that behind all of the human action at the cross, it was God the Father doing something.

The Father crushed him. The Father struck him. The Father gave his son everything that Eowyn and Hayden deserved in order that they could go free.

That's the gospel. The price was paid. The full debt was paid. And so we begin by giving thanks.

[8:14] Giving thanks. That's why there's hope. That's why there's hope for anyone here. If you heard these testimonies, you saw these baptisms, and you say, you know what?

I need saved. I need rescued. Good news, there is a Savior. The story was not what Eowyn and Hayden did. The story was about what Jesus did for them.

God in Christ is presently saving sinners. And so you just come just as you are without cleaning yourself up, and you come to the Savior and throw yourself in him and upon him, and you will be saved.

God is rich in mercy. And so there's mercy for you. If there's any inclination in your heart to, I need this. I need the Lord.

I need this relationship. I need to be forgiven. Well, don't waste that impulse. Don't wait. Run. And run into his arms.

[9:19] And what you will find is those arms are open. And they are receiving arms. So God saves. And that's why we begin with give thanks. So how should you pray for them?

Give thanks for them. God did something amazing and remarkable on their behalf. Paul goes on. He prays for three things for these Ephesians. And this is what we want to pray for Eowyn and Hayden.

It's three things to know. We want them to know three different things. Now, we need to understand that this word know is not merely cognitive.

It's not merely about what you think. This is not about them getting a certain amount of information. That's not what kind of knowing we're talking about. You're going to see that as we go along.

This knowing is something more intimate. It's something to experience. And so he says, there's three things I want you, Ephesians, to know, to experience, to understand at the deepest part of your being.

[10:25] And that's what we want to pray for Eowyn and Hayden. That God would make them know these three things. The first one is verse 17. I keep asking.

You notice, he doesn't do it one time. He keeps asking. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better.

He prays that God would give them the spirit to know him better. Now, when God saves someone, he gives them the Holy Spirit. So why, Paul, pray for more?

Well, don't they already have the spirit? Yes, they do. But Paul prays Heavenly Father, glorious Father, more, more of the spirit, pour out more of the spirit upon them so that they can know you better.

And again, we're talking about intimate heart knowledge to know him better. Knowing God, the Father, is eternal life. Jesus said that.

[11:35] Jesus said, this is eternal life that they may know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. that's what kind of knowing we're talking about. The knowing God that is at the very heart, the essence of eternal life.

So knowing God is knowing who you are. This is why we want them to know God better. Because in knowing him, they are going to know themselves. And we want them to know who they are.

Knowing God as Father means that I am his dearly loved child. If he is the good father, then I am the child. And knowing that, not merely up here, but in your heart, that changes and that transforms everything.

Aon and Hayden need to know their adoption deep down in their hearts. That's where assurance comes from. That's where strength and trials comes from.

That's where courage comes from. That's where love comes from. That's where freedom comes from. We want them to experience these things. To be bold Christians. To be assured Christians.

[12:49] To be confident Christians. And so if that is what you want, then pray. Father, pour out your spirit so they may know you better as their father.

father. And in knowing him as their father, they're going to know themselves as the child, the children of God. Besides that, they'll know themselves as saints.

Saints in the Bible is not the graduate degree of being a Christian. Saints is the enlistment papers. It's what you become when you become a Christian. A saint is a called out one, a holy one.

And in knowing their God who is holy, they themselves will see, oh, I've been called to belong to him. I've been called to live for him.

And then so if they know him, what does that mean? They're going to fight sin. They're going to find joy in hard times. They're going to find peace in trials.

[13:51] They're going to experience hope in the battle. Their faith will grow to the degree that they know their God. and it is their faith that overcomes the world.

And so in weakness, in trial, in persecution, they will find refuge. They will find strength. To know God is the fruition of what Eowyn and Hayden were created for.

This is what they were created for, to know him. him. He made them body and soul to know him, to have a relationship with him. And they'll find, as they experience that, they will experience purpose and meaning in their lives.

They will taste and see that the Lord is good. And they will live their lives in a way that's pleasing to him. So if God answers this prayer to know him better, it's going to be life changing.

It's going to be life alternating. It's going to be altering. It's going to be sanctifying. It's going to be empowering. It's going to be encouraging. And so it changes everything for Eowyn and Hayden.

[15:10] And so we want to pray for them. And along with them, we want to pray for Cade and Gage and Molly and Riley that God might pour out his spirit upon them so that they might know him better.

Members of Grace Fellowship Church, can you commit to praying for your fellow believers? I want them to know you better. I want to know you better. Second request, pray that they might have hope.

That's verse 18. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened. You notice that is in the passive enlightened. They're not going to be the ones lighting themselves up. The Holy Spirit, again, is going to enlighten them that they may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Again, this is something that the Holy Spirit does. The Spirit enlightens the heart. And so, Father, give your spirit, give more of your spirit. Holy Spirit, have more freedom in their lives so that they know the hope to which they were called.

You can't help but notice as you read Paul's epistles just how important hope is to the Christian life. Paul again and again reminds us that the Christian life is future oriented.

[16:33] It's future oriented. It's not going to make any sense if you cut off the future. If you just confine the Christian life, your life, to the present, to the here and the now, it will not make any sense.

So we want them to experience this hope, life-giving hope, hope that gets them through difficult times. The world is going to press in on them, and it already is, and it's going to collapse in on them, and it's going to make it seem like this is all there is.

this is all there is. And if they give into that, they're going to give into paralyzing despair, paralyzing fear, paralyzing inaction.

But God is saying, look up, look up, look forward, look out, look up, child, look at what I have planned for you. You notice he calls it an inheritance? It's called an inheritance because this is something that the father gives.

It's something out of his riches and his wealth, and this is what the father gives you, and this is what he stores up for you. And chapter two, verse seven, if you have your Bibles, you can look down and see what it says that God raised us up in Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

[17:56] Why? In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Our inheritance inheritance is what is the kindness. It's the full extent of God's kindness. It's the full depth of his kindness, of his riches.

It's God's gift. It's God's provision. It's incomparable. It means you can't compare it to anything. It's beyond all comparison. It's riches.

It's kindness. And this is what God has in front of Hayden and Eowyn. Never ending pleasures and joys at his right hand.

That's what's in front of them. But that is not going to help them in the Christian life unless they have hope, unless they see it and understand it.

[19:02] The spirit needs to convince them that glory. Paul says in 2 Corinthians an eternal weight of glory is in front of them, is waiting for them.

Now that's the only way they're going to make it to the end. With the world darkening around them, with the world closing in with persecution and with opposition, with enemies within that will frustrate them at every turn, with enemies without, who will persecute them whenever they have a chance, the only way they are going to survive and thrive is if God powerfully by his spirit speaks into their heart and says, child, there's hope.

Your best things are in front of you. Hold on. Hold on. You can't even imagine what I have for you. 2.7 says it's going to unfold.

unfold. He's going to unfold it. He's going to open it up and give it to us, not year by year, but ages upon ages upon ages that will never exhaust because this inheritance is as rich and as deep and as good as God himself.

So, brothers and sisters, we want to pray that the spirit would make them know, would really make them know the hope that God has called them too. The only alternative for them is paralyzing despair.

[20:37] So, we have to ask, what do we want for these young believers? Paralyzed despair or courageous hope? We want hope, so we have to pray for it.

So, pray for hope. The final and the last prayer is that they might know his incomparably great power for us who believe. It's verse 18 again.

We want to know him. We want to know hope. Verse 19, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. The power is like the working of his mighty strength.

So, know him, know hope, know power. What do we, again, what do we want for Hayden and Eowyn, for all these young believers? We want them to know that it's not just them versus the world.

It's not just them against their flesh. They are not alone. They are not powerless. We want them to know and to believe and to experience the power of God for all who believe.

[21 : 46] Paul says this is the very same power. It's the very same power that was unleashed in death destroying fashion when God raised his son from the dead.

God gave him new life and put him all the way to the highest place and seated him at the highest place of the whole universe when he raised him from the dead. It's the same power that he manifested when he went into their dead dark souls and raised them from new life.

That power has not left them. That power has not been exhausted. God still has it. He raised them from the dead. love has won.

Death has lost. And we want them to taste and experience the power of God in their lives. Power to kill sin.

Power to save them from their enemies. Power to calm their fears. Power to give them courage.

Power to live a supernatural life. We want to see that in them.

[22 : 55] And we want to see them flourish and thrive. We want to see them be like pillars in the house of the Lord, like vines in the garden of God to bear much fruit.

We want to see them, and I'll be very personal, we want to see them surpass us in every way. But how will they do it?

Unless they experience the power of God. And so brothers and sisters, pray that they might know the power of God. The Holy Spirit might so work it in them.

He is at work in them, both to will and to act according to his good purpose. So, you said you would pray for them. Here's how you pray.

You give thanks for them. God unleashed amazing grace in their lives. You pray that they might know God. You pray that they might know hope.

[23 : 57] You pray that they might know power. Experience it in their lives. That's how Paul prayed for the Ephesians. That's how we want to pray for our brothers and sisters.

And so let's pray for them right now. Join with me. Before we close, let's pray for these new believers. Heavenly Father, glorious Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we come in his name to you and we do come into your courts with thanksgiving and praise.

There's no God like you. There's no one who can save but you. so we give you thanks.

And we would fall down and confess that salvation belongs to the Lord. And so you get all the glory and all the praise. We do though come bearing Eowyn and Hayden and Cade and Gage and Riley and Molly, all of our young believers.

We come bringing them in our hands and upon our heart and we want to see you give them more of the Holy Spirit.

[25 : 21] That they might know you better. That in the everyday parts of their lives and the difficulties and the successes and through the word of God, through the preaching of the word, through communion and fellowship with one another, through all of these things that they might know you better.

We heard this morning that Paul's driving passion after 30 years of being a believer was I want to know Christ. Give them that same passion that they want to know you.

Make them to know the hope to which you've called them. If it was hope for just this life, that's no hope at all. but you have called them to resurrection life, eternal life, heavenly life, the kingdom of God, glorious riches and inheritance that makes the pleasures of this world seem insignificant. again. But if they don't see it, if they don't appreciate it, then it won't do them any good.

So please make them know that hope and to know power, to know it in their lives to kill sin, to exercise self-control, to put on the full armor of God and to join you in what you are doing in the world.

[26 : 57] We want to see them courageous and bold. We want to see them growing and thriving and that will only happen if you help them, if you give them that power.

So please, Holy Spirit, unleash even greater amounts of power into their lives. And we will see it and we will praise you and they will become the kinds of Christians that light up the world, that do great exploits for you.

And we pray that you would make them to be that in our world. Bless them. Bless our fellowship with each other. I pray all of this in Jesus name. Amen.