



Billy Mays. Vince Offer. Ron Popeil. Do these names ring a bell? You have to be old enough to remember these TV infomercial salesman. We have used OxyClean but I was not impressed. I never bought a shamwow. I never bought anything from Ronco, but we *do* have a George Foreman grill. As annoying as they are, infomercials are still heavily used because they work. You may think you are immune from their power but statistics prove that they are very effective. And they make such incredible promises, don't they? They chop and dice and slice and cook and blend and clean and sanitize and deodorize. They will do anything your heart desires for half the price and one-third the effort. You don't even know what I'm selling and you're all ready to make a purchase, aren't you? ;-)

That's just the world of marketing. They lure you into buying their products, some of which are great products. But we've all seen far too many example of overpromising and under-delivering. When it comes to this passage in Ephesians, it is absolutely impossible to over promise and under deliver. Paul promised hope, riches and power. Doesn't that sound like something we all want, we all need? These promises are so great that Paul said you had to have wisdom, revelation and enlightened hearts just to understand them. As I said last week, I think that prayer applies to all of Scripture but especially to the promises that immediately follow it.

*15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 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, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

We covered the prayer—the first half of the passage last week, so let’s jump right into the promises.

### 1. What is the hope to which he has called you.

Hope. We all so desperately need it though it seems so elusive at times. But Paul is saying that we can know it. We can experience it. We can actually feel it. After all, hope is a feeling, is it not? It’s a feeling but it is based on certain facts.

What is “the hope to which he has called you”? We are tempted to say “heaven” because that is our final home. But heaven is merely a place, a location in time and space. Our hope is not a place but rather a person. Our hope is Jesus. Our longing is for Christ.

I love Reepicheep. If you don’t know who Reepicheep is, I’ll forgive you, but I’ll also ask you to please go home and start reading *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Reepicheep is the valiant mouse in the Lewis children’s story. One of my favorite Reepicheep parts is in the Voyage of the Dawn Treader where he befriends Eustace after he became a dragon. It’s an incredibly powerful story of forgiveness. But you’ll never see it in the movie so you have to read the book! Or at least listen to the audiobook.

Another favorite Reepicheep story is from the same book. Reep joined the voyage so that he could sail to Aslan’s country. Aslan’s country is the hope for which he had been longing. Listen to how he describes this hope.



While I can, I sail east in the Dawn Treader. When she fails me, I paddle east in my coracle. When she sinks, I shall swim east with my four paws. And when I can swim no longer, if I have not reached Aslan’s country, or shot over the edge of the world in some vast cataract, I shall sink with my nose to the sunrise.<sup>1</sup>

Peter describes this same hope. *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness* (2 Peter 3:13). But we didn’t always have this hope. In the next chapter Paul reminds us...*remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world* (Ephesians 2:12). That’s a somber word—“having no hope and without God in the world.”

But now in Christ we do have hope. But unless we remember—as Paul reminds us to do—unless we remember where we once were, we will fail to truly appreciate what we have waiting for us. The old saying about wealth is almost always true. Wealthy people who were born with a silver spoon in their mouths do not appreciate what they have as much as those who personally earned their wealth. Of course we did not earn eternal life but if don’t continually remember that we

once had no hope and were without God in the world, then the hope that we do have diminishes in our experience.

It seems crazy that our hope of seeing Christ can diminish at times, but it does. Do you find it diminishes more in times of pain or in times of blessing? Typically it's the hard times that increases our longing for the eternal. Suffering makes us thirsty for heaven, doesn't it? The absence of things hoped for can make us long for them all the more.

I mentioned C.S. Lewis before. He really understood this subject.

Our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world. . . .when the real want for Heaven is present in us, we do not recognize it. Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise. . . .If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.<sup>2</sup>

Now we should be careful here. You may find yourself with a desire that nothing in the world can satisfy because you are seeking sinful things. Sin never satisfies and always keeps you longing. But even that is God-ordained, I think. God did not ordain for you to seek after sin but he did make sin completely unsatisfying. It can never satisfy so we must eventually seek Christ. We might be seeking sinful things or we might be seeking good things and still feel an emptiness. That could very well be your thirst for Heaven—for Jesus.

How many of you know John Eumarian? For some of you, he was your pastor many years ago. For others, you were in one of his Bible studies. Still others know several people who were in one of his countless studies. Even past his ninetieth birthday, he was still driving around town in his Buick and calling people to a higher faith in Christ. Soon after I moved to Viroqua, I got a phone call from John welcoming me to the area and inviting me to the pastor's prayer breakfast. John always got us started in our discussion with a Bible verse or article that he brought with him. His health was failing so badly that he had to move in with his daughter in Illinois. I have been told that he doesn't leave the house anymore and sleeps most of the time. It's likely that his days on earth are few. But that is exactly what John wants. He tells people that he is eagerly awaiting his "promotion." He just wants to close his eyes in death and awake next to his Savior. John is longing for that which he hopes.

But we don't tend to long with that same intensity. Instead, we are like collectors walking through our lives and collecting stuff. Some collect wealth and stuff. Others collect experiences. YOLO seems to have died out but I never liked it much. YOLO—you only live once. That's an excuse for doing something exciting or new or possibly even dumb.

I'm not even convinced that believers should have a bucket list. A bucket list is a collection—usually a collection of experiences. This summer we are going to the Grand Canyon for the first time. I have long wanted to see this natural wonder and am grateful that we'll get to experience it. If I had a bucket list, seeing the Grand Canyon would be on it. But I also knew that if I never

got to see it, that would be fine. After all, we are headed to a new heaven and a new earth. I agree with Randy Alcorn who believes that we will get to travel on the new earth. We will see things and experiences beauty like we could never do here. Now you might be thinking, “I thought you said heaven was only about Jesus?” I never said heaven was only about Jesus. Jesus is central. Jesus would be enough but he has chosen to give us so much more. So if our plans fall through and I don’t get to the Grand Canyon in this life, I’ll see something better in the next life. Actually. My ideal vacation would have been to have hiked up a 14,000 foot peak in Colorado and then go to the Grand Canyon and hike to the canyon floor. That really sounds amazing. So I would not say having a bucket list is wrong, but don’t let it rule you. Don’t let it enamor you because believers don’t live only once. A believer can have a reasonable bucket list if you want but there is no YOLO. We don’t live once and this life is a speck in time compared to eternity. And it’s that one truth that ought to change how we live today. I don’t need to be a collector of things and experiences. I can live with loss and pain now as all will be restored later. The woman in a wheelchair can be content now as she knows that she will run and jump later. A believer with a poor earthly father now can rest in the fact he will have a forever perfect father. A man who struggles to make ends meet for his family now will never want in eternity.

This is the hope to which we have been called. Do you long for it? I love that we sang A Mighty Fortress this morning.

Let goods and kindred go  
This mortal life also  
The body they may kill  
God’s truth abideth still  
His kingdom is forever.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

## 2. What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

There is one word here that I never noticed before this past week. Look at the text again and see if something stands out to you. “What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.” Anything stand out to you? It’s just one word. How about the word “his”? His glorious inheritance. This is not our inheritance. It it’s not our inheritance, then whose is it? Look at these three phrases in parallel to one another.

what is the hope to which **he** has called you

what are the riches of **his** glorious inheritance in the saints

what is the immeasurable greatness of **his** power toward us who believe

So whose inheritance is it? It’s is God’s inheritance. Back up to verse 17. *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.* God the Father is the subject. Furthermore, the whole Trinity is active here. Did you notice that? “...the **God** of our Lord **Jesus Christ**, the **Father** of glory, may give you the **Spirit** of wisdom...” So this is the Father’s inheritance. So what in the world does that mean?

We are so used to seeing the word inheritance that belongs to us that I missed this. I thought it was just another way of restating the first phrase—the hope to which he has called you. There are numerous Scriptures that speak of inheriting the kingdom of God and of our inheritance.

Acts 20:32—And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Galatians 3:8—For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Not only that, but Paul used the word twice right before this.

**11** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...

**13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

So in verses 11 and 14, the inheritance was our inheritance but then in verse 17, Paul did a little sleight of hand here and assigned the inheritance to the Father—“the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.” Back to the Old testament we go.

Deut 4:20—*But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day.*

1 Kings 8:51—*for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace*

Isa 19:24-25—*In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.”*

Jeremiah 51:19—*The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts is his name.*

What is the Father’s inheritance? We are the Father’s inheritance. It belongs to him but we are his inheritance. God’s people are the Father’s inheritance. I appreciate what FF Bruce said about this truth.

That God should set such a high value on a community of sinners, rescued from perdition and still bearing too many traces of their former state, might well seem incredible were it not made clear that he sees them in Christ, as from the beginning he chose them in Christ. As a consequence, then, Paul prays that his readers might appreciate the extraordinary value which God places on them. He views them as in his beloved Son and estimates them accordingly. And this is true of all who are ‘in Christ’. Let us, therefore, as Christians

realize that God purposes ‘to accomplish his gracious plan through [us] ... as the first fruits of the reconciled universe of the future’<sup>3</sup>

In many ways this is the opposite of, or we could say the complement to, the first phrase. The hope to which he has called us means that *our* inheritance is Jesus. But now we learn that the Father’s inheritance is you and me. He is our inheritance and we are his inheritance. And this truth is stated in the most beautiful way—*what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints*. How is it that God can consider you and I to be a “glorious inheritance”? I don’t feel like a glorious inheritance.

This looks forward to chapter five where the husband and wife relationship is described. *25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

You see, it’s not us as individuals but as the universal body of believers who are the bride of Christ. It’s not us as individuals but as the universal body of Christ who are the Father’s inheritance. However, as an individual believer, you fully participate in being the bride of Christ and inheritance of the Father.

This is lofty language but what practical difference does it make in my life? It’s a little easier to make applications of the first phrase—what is the hope to which he has called you. We will live forever in joy and love so it helps us endure the pain and sorrow today. But how do we apply the truth that we are the Father’s inheritance?

For that, let me remind you of the structure of the book of Ephesians. I said last week that in general, chapters 1-3 have to do with doctrine and chapters 4-6 are application of the doctrine. It can also be stated like this. The doctrine is seeing who you are in Christ and the application is being who you are in Christ. The challenge will be to make sure we are making applications as we work through the doctrine. And as we get to the application chapters, we will need to make sure we continually ground all of them back in the doctrine of chapters 1-3.

So you are the Father’s inheritance. So what? Think about a six year-old girl whose parents bought a beautiful dress for Easter Sunday. Let’s call her Larissa. Resurrection Sunday arrives and mom helps Larissa put on her new dress for the first time. She has matching shoes to go with her dress. Mom brushes her long hair and spends a good twenty minutes braiding it into some new hair creation she watched on Youtube. It’s really fancy with combs and ribbons. Mom and daughter look in the mirror. Mom brushes a wisp of hair from her daughter’s face and mom says, “Let go show daddy.”

#### STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS

Doctrine      CHAPTERS 1-3

**SEE what you are IN CHRIST**

Application      CHAPTERS 4-6

**BE what you are IN CHRIST**

Larissa walks down the hallway to where dad is sitting in the kitchen and with a huge smile says, “Daddy, look at my new dress.” Dad was checking his email on his phone so he glances up for a second and says, “Oh, that’s nice honey.” No he doesn’t! Dad drops his phone, runs over to his daughter and with an equally enormous smile says, “Oh honey, you look so beautiful! I love what mommy did with your hair. Look how the ribbon matches your pretty blue eyes.” Dad just gushes over his daughter for the longest time. Maybe dad and daughter dance in the living room for a minute or two.

How does little Larissa feel right then? She feels so pretty, doesn’t she? She feels so special. It’s not the dress or her braided hair that makes her feel special. If dad had only glanced up from his phone for a second, I guarantee you she would care less about her dress and braided hair. It was her daddy’s love and sweet words that made her feel special. Larissa knows that her mom loves her but the love of her daddy is just a little different. That love just sinks deep into her heart that day. When she’s eighteen, Larissa may not remember this very moment but her daddy’s love will stay with her.

On the resurrection Sunday when they head off to church in the minivan, how is Larissa going to behave? I mean she’s still a six year old girl and may get cranky later in the day, but all through the morning and into the afternoon, she’s still going to feel special. She’s still going to be wearing the approval of her daddy on her face and in her heart. That day, Larissa is going to be who she already is—a special little girl loved by her daddy.

Christian, you have the approval of your Father so much that he calls us “the riches of his glorious inheritance.” That is who you are and who you are is meant to impact how you live. You can be who you already are.

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<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (New York: Scholastic, 1952), 24.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 119.

<sup>3</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Oct 23, 1984, p. 271.