

Ephesians

Ephesians 1:19 - Resurrection power now

Paul's great desire and wish for the Ephesians was to open their eyes and hearts to the Father and his plan. Because every bit of the Father's plan was geared to them. **They were the plan.** And they knew it too, because what the Father had planned through his Son and the Holy Spirit deposit was already happening in their own lives and experience.

And with very clear signs too, like "your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints," **verse 15**. And the "wisdom and revelation" they'd received from the Holy Spirit in **verse 17**, that had enabled them to know the Father better. And know him in the most amazing way too, because "the eyes of their hearts being enlightened," **verse 18**, had given them the most extraordinary insight into how the Father viewed them.

The extraordinary insight, for instance, that **they were the Father's world**. Because they (as mere "saints") were what the Father had envisioned in his eternal plan for humans. So, not only was eternal life in the Father's family the Ephesian's hope, dream and inheritance; it was also the Father's hope, dream and inheritance.

So they themselves were now the living proof that this is what the Father had created humans in his image for, to fulfill HIS dream of a huge family he could love and father forever, just like he'd loved and fathered his own Son forever. And to Jesus, who'd known forever what that was like, this was the ultimate glory for any being with life. It was his deepest wish too, therefore, that we share in that glory. But not just for our sakes. It was also for the sake of his Father, **because this was his FATHER'S great hope, dream and inheritance too.**

In his deep love for his Father, then, Jesus totally geared his life to fulfilling whatever part his Father had **planned for him** to enable us humans to become the Father's eternal family. Which is where things might get a little sticky and not quite so "glorious" in our thinking, perhaps, because the Father also required that "**we share in Jesus' sufferings** in order that we may also share in his glory," **Romans 8:17**. Which begs the question: "Why, if the Father loves us that much did he plan for us to suffer?" And furthermore: "Why, if he loves his Son that much, did he plan for him to suffer too?"

Well, put ourselves in the Father's shoes. His dream is a family he can share every blessing in the heavenly realms with. Forever. So how can he know that we won't blow that dream to pieces, forever? Simple answer: we won't blow it to pieces because we'll be perfect. Like Jesus said in **Matthew 5:48**, the goal for us is to be "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Or as Paul phrased it in **Ephesians 1:4**, we become "holy and blameless in his sight."

And the Father made that possible by us "learning obedience through suffering," **Hebrews 5:8**. Which makes sense, because if we can stand firm in our obedience to him no matter what's thrown at us, the Father has what he needs to know about us. But what if we can't stand firm under fire, what then?

Well, the Father had a solution for that too: he'd send his Son as a human to live a life of perfect obedience and trust, to not only prove it was **possible** for a human being to be perfect, but also to **illustrate how**. And to really make both points clear he'd put Jesus through the worst possible mental agony a human could experience, but Jesus would come through with flying colours. Which would leave us with the pressing but intriguing question: "But HOW? How did Jesus succeed so well?"

Which is a bit of a lengthy introduction to Ephesians 1:19, but it's to put in place the situation we're in first. Our Father obviously cannot accept anything less from us than absolute proof of our obedience and trust in him. To open up eternity to us he cannot risk us doing an Adam and Eve, or an Israel. But we're still human, so what hope is there that we'll do any better than they did?

Well, again, a simple answer: it's because Jesus did. Jesus succeeded where they failed, and because of it, **Hebrews 5:9**, he became "the source of eternal salvation" for us. Meaning, Jesus now becomes the Father's guarantee that we won't blow it. Jesus didn't blow it, so not only did he prove a human being can be perfect, he also became **the means by which** we can be perfect too.

And what is that means? Hebrews 5:9 again: Jesus becomes "the source of eternal salvation **for all who obey him**." Oh, so the same standard exists, it's still perfect obedience, but obedience to Jesus now. But doesn't that leave us in the same dilemma? How on earth are we going to obey him perfectly too? But that's the standard our Father has set for our perfection, which leaves us with the pressing question again: "But how?"

Well, this is exactly what Paul wants to tell us, tying it in with verse 18 and his constant prayer for the Ephesians that "the eyes of their hearts be enlightened in order" - that "they may know" **verse 19** too.

Because verse 19 explains HOW we can become perfect in the Father's eyes: it's because our eyes are opened to **"his incomparably great power for us who believe."** Paul so desperately wanted the Ephesians to realize they had **"the working of the Father's mighty strength"** on their side when their obedience and trust were being tested to their limits.

And who could fail to be perfect with that kind of power at work in them? No wonder Paul begged the Father to sink it deep into their **hearts** that this was the kind of Father they had and they truly were his world, because he was willing to pull out all the stops of his mighty power to help them come through with flying colours too. No way was he going to let his children fail or fall victim to human weakness. They were his inheritance, everything he'd planned for, so like any human father, no sacrifice or support would be too great or too much to see his children succeed.

And as proof he provided the example of his **firstborn Son**, who faced the mighty forces of evil, and alone too, as far as any support from humans, and through it all he stood firm. Why? Because when Jesus was near to breaking point he cried out to his Father to help him obey, and the Father always came through. Jesus was **"heard"** every time because of his **"reverent submission"** to his Father's will (Hebrews 5:7).

And what a picture that gives us of the kind of children the Father is creating to become his family. No wonder he looks forward to receiving us as his inheritance, because **"conformed to the image of his Son"** he has a bunch of incredible beings as tough as his beloved Son, tempered like hardened steel in the harshest of climates too, where evil for us also rules, deceives and uses every tactic to get us to disobey and not trust - but through it all we stood firm as well.

That was the goal, that like Jesus who was matured and perfected through his **"learning obedience through suffering,"** so are we. But also like Jesus, we learn **what power we have** as well. And it's a completely unique power too, unlike anything found in creation or in us. No energy or human powers come even close to it, because as Paul goes on to say in **verse 20**, it's the **"working of the Father's mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms."

This is **resurrection power**, that can change a dead human body into a living one again, that also lifted Jesus' human body off the surface of this planet into the heavenly realms. No such power exists in the human realm. And yet we've got it, and we experience it in two ways too, just like Jesus did.

Because Jesus not only experienced his dead physical body being brought back to life again, he also experienced his Father's resurrection power **during his lifetime** too, while he was still alive. We see that in **Hebrews 5:7**, when "During the days of Jesus' life on earth," he cried out to his Father in desperation to "save him from death."

So there's a "death" we can experience in this life now, while we're still alive, which Paul himself experienced when - "under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure" in **2 Corinthians 1:8** - "we despaired of life itself." It was a death worse than death, because not only was he conscious at the time it was happening, it struck deep in his heart too (verse 9), where despair hits hardest. But as Paul explained in **verse 9**, it happened to him to teach him "to rely on God **who raises the dead.**"

What got Paul through with flying colours was the Father's resurrection power. It "saved him from death," just like it did Jesus, when he too had no power of his own, or anybody else's, to see him through. And no power of his own to be perfect in his obedience and trust either. Nothing less than the Father's resurrection power can make us perfect, therefore. Which explains why, right after we believe, we receive the Holy Spirit from the Father (Ephesians 1:13), because it's through the Spirit that the Father has his resurrection power **living in us.**

Paul made that clear in **Romans 8:11**, that "if the Spirit of him (the Father) who raised Jesus from the dead **is living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit." And that's not life in the future he's talking about, it's life in our mortal bodies **right now.** It's about "**putting to death the misdeeds of the body,**" **verse 13**, the body we're living in right now.

So when the Father "searches our hearts," **verse 27**, what he sees is "the mind of the Spirit" whacking away in our mind and heart putting to death anything short of the perfection our Father requires of us. And do we ever need the Spirit doing that for us, because we don't even know what imperfections we've got, and certainly not as our Father sees them either. But the Father provided us with a power like no other, that groans on our behalf to bring us to that perfection that will enable us to stand firm forever "in accordance with God's will."

Which explains Paul's statement in **2 Corinthians 4:11**, that "we who are alive are always being given over to death." We're dying to what's killing us, so we can live forever - and experience our life forever right now too.