

## **WE ARE THE CHURCH, pt 1 by Carl McMurray**

*16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ...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 ... Eph. 1:16-18.*

In the passage above Paul prays for the Ephesians, that they might have their eyes opened to see, 1) the hope they had been called to; 2) the riches of HIS inheritance in the saints; and 3) the power that is available to us. That second fact that the apostle wanted those Christians to see and understand catches my attention. It speaks not of OUR inheritance, but of the fact that we are HIS inheritance. He looks at his church as if it is a glorious pile of riches that God is going to receive. Amazing!

In this life we are concerned from time to time about our career, our family, the weather, repairs to house or automobile, or even sickness and loss. In other words we have a tendency to habitually think about ourselves, by ourselves, living our own lives, isolated except on the most shallow levels, from others. The Ephesians were people like us somewhat and I believe Paul is reminding them (and therefore us) that they needed to open their eyes and see themselves differently. They needed to see themselves the way that God saw them.

If you had a little known relative pass away and you found out that uncountable millions were coming your way in the inheritance, where would your attention be? Would you not be riveted on that inheritance? Concerned about it? Immensely interested in the progress it was making in your direction? If you have chosen to enter covenant relations with Jesus by putting your faith in him, and being baptized to wear his name, that is the Lord's interest in YOU!

It is important for the Christian to see that he or she is never alone in their life. God has chosen (Eph. 1:4) everyone who comes to Christ to be adopted as sons (Eph. 1:5). He has redeemed us (Eph. 1:7) with the blood of his Son, forgiven us, and offered to bless us with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3) in the heavens. And he made that choice to predestine penitent believers into a blessed, forgiven, worldwide congregation or assembly or church, before he ever laid the foundations for the world (Eph. 1:4-5). What privilege, what power, what blessing is ours. The devil has devised counterfeit churches to deceive men and woo them away from saving truth, but the contradictions and confusions expose them for what they are. Believing, baptized Christians are living stones being built together into a spiritual house for the Lord. Child of God, the apostle Paul is saying, never hang your head. We are not the church, WE ARE THE CHURCH!!!