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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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HOW TO ENJOY GOD'S PARTY

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 9
EPHESIANS 1:17-18

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

EPHESIANS 1:17-18 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,"

God wants to share his happiness with every person in the world. In the eternal life conference in eternity past, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit made a decision that they would create man and bring him to the earth so they could share with him their perfect happiness. God set up a wonderful plan and invited man to come to the party, and at that party, man was offered salvation, eternal life, and perfect happiness. Some chose to come to the party and some chose not to come, so we have believers at the party and unbelievers who chose not to accept God's invitation to the party. Now those who chose to come to the party could enjoy God's perfect happiness, but it depended on two things. First, is knowledge of doctrine, and second is the filling of the Holy Spirit. Now you can come to the party and be a wallflower or a legalist and ignore Bible doctrine. Or you can get with the plan, take in doctrine daily, stay in fellowship and grow in inner happiness. Then when you go from this earth, you move into eternity and receive a new life minus the old sin nature and perfect happiness becomes your permanent and abiding possession.

1 PETER 1:4-5 "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Whether we have this perfect happiness now depends on our willingness to follow God's plan for us in time. And this means knowledge of doctrine.

Now Paul offered this prayer for all the saints of that time and for the saints of future generations. We need to study this 17th verse again carefully, for it is the link between God's provision in eternity past and man's enjoyment in time.

EPHESIANS 1:17 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:" "That" introduces a purpose clause. "The God" presents God as the author of the plan. Now God is described in two ways here. He is described as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and as the Father of Glory. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned here because he is the means by which we accept God's invitation to come to the party. No one can come to the party but through faith in him. Once we come to the party through Christ, we are in the party forever. Now the perfect happiness of God is available for us every day, even here in the Devil's world, and then it will be available throughout all eternity. In the second place, God is described as the God of Glory, and this refers to his perfect character. Then one day when we pass into eternity and drop off the old sin nature, we will share this perfect glory and character forever.

The next words concerning God are "that God may give." This is an aorist, active, optative of "didomai", and it means he gives with no strings attached. He doesn't give on the basis of our merit, but on the basis of his character. God never says, "Now look what I've done for you, you really ought to be a good little boy." God never gives to us just so he can get something back from us. He gives on the basis of his perfect love and his perfect character, and never on the basis of what we merit or deserve. I love to see people who give with no strings attached. When we give in grace, we give and never look back. We give because we love and we never say to God, "Now look what I've done for you." The aorist tense of this verb "give" means that in eternity past God decided to give us his all, his salvation, his character, his happiness and in the end his perfect "new heaven and new earth", which he is preparing for all those who come to the party.

The active voice of this verb "give" means that he himself is the giver and it doesn't depend on anyone else.

The optative mood of this verb "give" expresses that it is God's desire to give this perfect happiness to every single one who comes to the party. "Unto you" means that God wants to share this happiness with every believer, and it is the dative of advantage, so it is to our advantage to receive this provision from God. Please remember this dative of advantage here, because in verse 18 we will switch to the accusative case and we call this an "anacoluthon" which means a radical change so the meaning can be given special emphasis. We use punctuation to give special emphasis, but in Greek they used syntax like this to give special emphasis. There never was a time when the Trinity didn't have perfect happiness and they wanted to share this happiness with everyone at the party. That is why we have these words "may give."

Now once we are at the party, we find that it is to last for a long time, in fact, it is to last forever. So in order to orient to the new environment we find at God's party, we have to learn doctrine.

The first phase of the party involves the believer in time, but the last phase of the party is eternity, and in eternity we will be perfect. So the thing we face now is this--how can we so orient to the plan of God that we will be able to share all his glorious perfect happiness? How can we appropriate this happiness? Now it is one thing to go to the party, and it is quite another thing to have a good time at the party. So the rest of this verse tells us about the link between the perfect happiness of God and the believer. We have two words here which describe this link. But for a clearer meaning, let's take the word revelation before we take the word wisdom.

Revelation is from "apo kalupsis." The word "kalupsis" means hidden, and "apo" is from the ultimate source. So it means here that happiness is hidden from man and it has to be revealed from the ultimate source which is God. We get into the party by having faith in Jesus Christ, and once we are on the inside God starts giving us from his ultimate source from his unlimited supply of happiness. And this happiness is fully outlined and described and explained in Bible doctrine.

1 Cor. 2:16 says that the Bible is the mind of Christ - "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." And Hebrews 3:7 says the Bible is the voice of the Holy Spirit. "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,"

So the mind of Christ and the voice of the Holy Spirit reveal the happiness of God to us in Bible doctrine. Once we learn this revelation we have wisdom.

So we are not happy just because we are Christians, but we become happy Christians when we allow this link to operate in our lives. Bible doctrine in the mind applied to daily living links us to unlimited happiness. So it is a great party, and in order for us to enjoy the party, we must know and live by Bible doctrine. Now there are many wallflowers who never enter into the activities of the party, so they never do get with Bible doctrine, so they miss the happiness. Then we have party "poopers" who are legalists and religionists. They are born again, but they stay miserable all their lives for they never learn to live by Bible doctrine.

"In the sphere of knowledge" and the word for knowledge is "epignosis." It means a full knowledge of God through knowing doctrine, so here is the basis for the edification complex. You know it and you apply it to your daily living and that is "epignosis." Once you have "epignosis" you become spiritually mature and this brings perfect happiness.

So when God says to you, as he often does just as a good host will often do, "Are you having a good time at the party?" And you say, "Yes, I am, and I have learned from experience that the extent of my happiness at this party is measured by the extent of my knowledge of thy truth."

Are you prepared for your problems? For your future? For the daily uncertainties that come? For some sudden catastrophe or calamity? Well, there is one way to be prepared for all these things, and that is Bible truth stored away in your mind. So God has revealed all this truth, has given us the ability to take it in, and has given us the ability to stabilize and live triumphantly.

EPHESIANS 1:18 "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,"

Now we have come to the "anacoluthen."

We now change from the dative case to the accusative case and this is the way the Greeks had by Greek syntax to give great emphasis to something. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." The word "eyes" is in the accusative case, and the words "your understanding" form an accusative participle. So here in verse 18 we have a grammatical break. This anacoluthen is given here to show us just how important it is that we learn Bible doctrine.

Eyes here emphasize the way we learn through sight. This is why we need to focus our eyes on the Word of God. "The eyes of your understanding" come from the word "kardia" and that word is not understanding but rather is the word "heart." We get the word cardiac and cardiogram from this word. So this word "understanding" doesn't refer to your physical heart for the word "cardiac" was the word the Greeks used for thinking. The only way your physical heart is connected with thinking is that it pumps the blood through your body so you can stay alive and then you are able to think. So this expression means "The eyes of your mind, the eyes of your thinking." So we take doctrine into our thinking.

"Being enlightened" is an accusative, plural perfect passive participle from "photizo." There has to be a light turned on in your soul and the truth from the word of God hits your mind and turns on a light in your soul. The light goes on in your self-consciousness, in your mentality, in your volition, in your conscience and in your emotion.

Now there are four ways you can be a party "pooper."

1. Ignorance of Bible Doctrine.
You are at the party, but you don't know the answers to life, so you are miserable.
2. Sincerity. Sincerity is so often a facade for stupidity. These poor sincere souls always miss the happiness at the party.
3. Emotionalism. This means that you judge everything by the way you feel. If you feel good, you are saved. If you feel bad, you are lost. If you feel good, then you are in fellowship, and if you feel bad, then you must be out of fellowship.
4. Legalism. This is the fourth way to be a party "pooper." You have a "do it yourself kit" and you are always disoriented to the plan of God and the grace of God.

Now most all of you listening to this message have been saved, you have accepted God's invitation to come to the party.

Are you enjoying the party?

Are you a wallflower at the party?

Are you a legalist at the party?

Before the verse ends he adds one more thing. He says, "That ye may know" and the word here is not the same word as he used for know in verse 17. The word here is "oida" and this word means inherent knowledge, and this means a knowledge that has become a part of you.

"What is the hope" and this refers to our hope in eternity when we will live with God forever.

"Of his calling" and this refers to eternity past, when the plan of redemption was worked out in the eternal life conference. So in eternity past God planned for our perfect happiness in time and throughout all eternity.

The phrase "the riches of his glory" is a descriptive term showing what God has provided for you while you live on this earth.

So we are at the party--why not get with it and inhale all the glorious truth of Bible doctrine he has provided and begin here and now to experience his perfect happiness!