“Hosanna (Praise is Rising)” with Paul Baloche

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAaQ5EEXidc>

“Lord, I Give You My Heart” with Hillsong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHMjhz8aHTw>

“The Power of Your Love” with Hillsong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHMjhz8aHTw>

“I Give It All/On My Knees” with William McDowell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWGNZS-5BRU>

“House of Prayer” with Eddie James

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKPREBY7rng>

“I Need You” with Eddie James

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wg_xbWdJTU4>

“It Ain’t Over” by Maurette Brown Clark

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ok0eVURGQE>

“He Has His Hands On You” with Marvin Sapp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1WQLipTwRQ>

“Don’t Count Me Out” with Marvin Sapp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fp2VRdj_HtI>

“Rescue” with Eddie James

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M00XpItzlEM>

(live) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAfyQbSIFaw>

“Revealed” with James Fortune

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heCK1PEZF1g>

**Praying to Know the Hope of God’s Calling For Our Lives**

*Ephesians 1-3*

 This week’s *Ephesians 1-3* Bible Study encourages us to pray that we *may know what is the hope of his calling, Ephesians 1:18.*

 We would turn our lives around and live at our bests if we knew the hope of God’s calling for our lives. As *Ephesians 3:12* said, we wouldlive with faith and confidence in the Lord. We would live with boldness and know that God was there for us. I wonder if the college student using heavy drugs at Occidental College knew that God hoped he, Barack Obama, would be the President of the United States some day. I wonder what we would do if we knew God’s hopes for our lives during rejection.

 Here is the key to this whole Bible Study for Paul. If we can accept and see the painful truths about what is happening in our lives, we can turn to God and believe in God to do the awesome work that God does for people going through these tragic circumstances.

 We all need to admit that we have been dead and dying in our sins. We have been dead and actively moving towards the creation of more dying. *[W]e all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, Ephesians 2:3.*

In these deaths, we can acknowledge where we have been and the power of God to rescue us from the dead. *Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 2:5-6.*

 God will raise us from the dead to walk in good works that God has prepared for us. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Ephesians 2:10.* God has good works for us to walk in, and I pray that we would know the hope of God’s calling to us.

 All of us have been dead and all of us come before God without anything sufficient to offer God. None of us have done anything good enough for God to exchange His favor to us for our deeds. In this sense we are all Gentiles and all uncircumcised. None of us have the lifestyles that entirely please God.

 *11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands: 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

 *13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, Ephesians 2:11-13a.* Jesus brought us to God where we can join the fellowship of other Christians to together form a collective household that God can inhabit. We, who were not good enough to be at peace with God, are now God’s instruments. We bring nothing of good use to God, but God can use us in community with Jesus and other believers.

 We *19 are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets: Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, Ephesians 2:19-21.*

What does God hope for us to become? I pray that we would know the hope of God’s calling. I pray that we would know how we can fit into God’s kingdom, with other people of God, and into God’s work in our lives.

 We who were once dead and insufficient for God can also find the strength to be prisoners of Jesus Christ. This is a unique place to be. This prison in Jesus is a place where we seek Jesus to make sense of our lives in service to Him.

 Paul persecuted and killed Christians. Paul did much in arrogant opposition to God’s Will for his life. The same Jesus who dropped the scales from Paul’s blindness to his sins told Paul to deliver the same message of radical mercy to the Gentiles. Paul, the recipient of unparalleled mercy could, as a prisoner of Jesus, deliver the message of unparalleled mercy to the Gentiles.

Paul put emphasis on the fact that he, the least of all the apostles, carried a message that had not been revealed to anyone in previous ages. If we would yield our lives to Jesus, and be Jesus’ prisoners, Jesus will also speak to us in ways that God has not spoken to anyone before. Oh, I pray that we would know the hope of God’s calling for our lives!

May we pray to know the works that God has already created for us to walk in. May we pray to know how we fit into God’s Beloved Community of believers so that God might use our lives. May we pray how Jesus wants to use every bit of our lives, particularly our failures.

*14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ…* that we *18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God, Ephesians 3:14,18-19.*

Our lives can be that wonderful! I know that God hopes so!

Tobias Pinckney, 10/1/16, Powered to Witness University

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