

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1:15-23 - UNDERSTANDING THE RICHES AND POWER OF CHRIST

What have we learned so far? We have a heavenly Father who blesses us (vs 3); we have a heavenly Father who is purposeful, eternal and sovereign (vs 4, 5); we have a heavenly Father who is lovingly gracious and forgiving (vs 6-8); we have a heavenly Father who is powerful and promise keeping (vs 9, 10); we have a heavenly Father who is relational (vs 11, 12); and we have a heavenly Father who guarantees our eternal destination (vs 13, 14). We echo Paul's words to the Romans, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" Rom.11:33.

We've learned that the Lord Jesus Christ makes our spiritual blessings possible for all that the Father does is through the Son ("in Christ and in Him"). Jesus is the living head of all believers - His "called out ones", the Church.

Now Paul continues his praise of God as he turns his attention to the Ephesian believers (and through him, God to us).

Who is praying for you?

- I. PAUL'S PRIORITY - vs. 15, 16 - "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:"
 - A. "after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints" Hadn't Paul been in Ephesus for 3 years? Didn't he already know of their faith and love? Remember, he hadn't been there for about four years. There were new believers added. He had been given updates. Plus, if this was a circular letter, there were congregations in other churches that he never visited.
Note: "faith" and "love" are the two foundational signs of a true, healthy and vibrant church. The believers are grounded in the truth and hope of faith, and as a result, they demonstrate a true and vibrant love for others.
 - B. "do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers"
 1. The loving pastor - true to his calling, jealous for his flocks, caring no matter how burdensome
 - a. 20:17-38 (specifically vs.19,27,29,31, and 36)
 - b. I Peter 5:2-4
 - c. Testimony of every epistle, particularly II Corinthians 2:4; 11:2; 12:15
 2. The praying pastor - knew its power, knew many personally, and knew its needs
 - a. Acts 6:3,4

- b. Romans 1:9; Colossians 1:9; I Thessalonians 3:10; II Timothy 1:3
- c. John Calvin, “. . . those who intend their labor to be profitable to the edifying of the church, and those who have true zeal, must not only give themselves to teaching, but also, at the same time, pray God to work with them by his power and grace. For it often happens that we simply beat the air . . . because we do not pray God to further the doctrine that we preach.” And John Owen, “He that is more frequent in his pulpit to his people than he is in his closet for his people, is but a sorry watchman.”
- 3. The thankful pastor - Paul always enjoins prayer with thanksgiving, as should we
- 4. The model pastor - encouraged others to pray in all things, for all things, especially the saints
 - a. Ephesians 6:18, 19
 - b. Philippians 4:6, 7 - We can all improve in redeeming the time

- II. PAUL’S FIRST PETITION - vs. 17,18a - “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened . . .”
 The Scripture is just words without the Holy Spirit’s illumination. Spiritual death prevents a true and heartfelt understanding. God gives us a new heart and a new mind to receive, believe and understand His word. Matt. 5:17
- A. “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” - the source
 - B. “may give to you” - freely and graciously
 - C. “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” - of necessity (all growing in knowledge)
 - D. “in the knowledge of Him” - what kind of knowledge? Intellectual only? No, but intellectual and experiential. Greek: epignosko, ‘knowing full well.’
 Thomas Goodwin, “there is a real knowledge that brings down the things into a man’s heart . . . all [earthly] knowledge falls short of spiritual knowledge, which changes the heart . . . faith turns them all into realities . . .” “The eminent thing in a Christian is to desire more knowledge of God and of Christ especially.”- Head vs. heart.
 - E. “the eyes of your understanding being enlightened” - a Rabbinical saying meaning the eyes of your heart or mind. When the Holy Spirit gives us a “spirit of wisdom and revelation,” the eyes of our understanding are opened, giving us discernment into the things of God.

My own experience: An immediate trust in God's Word, even though I didn't understand most of it; and an appetite to devour all of it.

- III. PAUL'S SECOND PETITION - vs. 18b - "that you may know what is the hope of His calling,"
- A. "that you may know" - A different Greek word, implying a complete extent, where *epiginosko* implies a progressive learning; so, a full assurance of that hope
 - B. "the hope of His calling" - God has chosen us, called us, given us new hearts and desires, has given us "exceeding great and precious promises," and will soon take us to be with Him. We've experienced His amazing grace. John MacArthur, "Only when we know who we really are can we live like who we [really] are." Paul wants to ingrain this knowledge into the Ephesians (and us) so we will not only love God more, but please Him more.
- IV. PAUL'S THIRD PETITION - vs. 18c - "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,"
- A. "the riches of the glory" - John 14:1-3; Romans 8:18
 - B. "of His inheritance in the saints" - II Tim. 4:7,8 - Note: "in the saints" Glory isn't all about "me." It will include the great and innumerable cast of characters who have and will believe.
- V. PAUL'S FOURTH PETITION - vs. 19-23 - "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him to *be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."
- A. "the exceeding greatness of his power" - Jer. 13:23; Rom. 8:3; Ephesians 2:1 - Not a mere atomic bomb type of power, but an infinite moving of heaven and earth.
 - B. "toward us who believe," - You and me
 - C. "according to the working of His mighty power" - Paul uses three words denoting power and might: "dunamis," "ischus," and "kratos" - We were powerless. He is the Creator.

- D. “which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead” - [The same life-giving power](#)
- E. “and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*” - [A place of majesty, glory and rule](#)
- F. “far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named,” - [We need not fear the gods of this world](#)
- G. “not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”
- H. “And He put all *things* under His feet,” - [Infinitely inclusive](#)
- I. “and gave Him to *be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body,” - [The only supreme Shepherd of the flock, not the Pope nor any pastor](#)
- J. “the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” - [Christ is omnipresent, hears every prayer, knows our smallest need, and will be close on our final day in this world.](#)

VI. APPLICATION

- A. Prayer is reflected in love -
- B. Spiritual growth in both knowledge and character are vital -
- C. We serve a mighty God who loves us greatly and forever -

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