

*To the praise of his glory,
in Christ we have hope!*

UNPACKING EPH. 1:15-23

PAUL'S PATTERN OF PRAYER

Hope

Inheritance

Power



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Picture by Dennis McNutt

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INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S STUDY

Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction:

For the past 6 weeks we have endeavored to study the treasure trove of Truth found in just the first 14 verses of Ephesians 1. **Today we finish the chapter!**

- Those Truths are known as “Identity Truths”.
- In light of those Truths, the Apostle Paul notices the faith & love of the Ephesians and forms his prayer by emphasizing **Hope** , **Inheritance**, **Power**.
- Today we will take a closer look at that prayer.

A handout of those Identity Truths is available at the back counter if interested

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER & PRAISE

“For a healthy Christian life today it is of the utmost importance to follow Paul’s example and keep Christian praise and Christian prayer together. Yet many do not manage to preserve this balance. Some Christians seem to do little but pray for new spiritual blessings, apparently oblivious of the fact that God has already blessed them in Christ with every spiritual blessing. Others lay such emphasis on the undoubted truth that everything is already theirs in Christ, that they become complacent and appear to have no appetite to know or experience their Christian privileges more deeply.”



Picture by Dennis McNutt

EXAMINING OUR PRAYER MINDSET

When you pray, to whom do you address your prayer?

*Luke 11:2 (ESV) ² And he said to them, “When you pray, say:
“Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.*

Galatians 4:6 (ESV)

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

***In what ways is acknowledging the relationship, “Abba! Father”,
important when praying?***

EXAMINING OUR PRAYER MINDSET

Describe your view of God when you pray?

***As Abba Father?* – as in an intimate relationship or ...**

***As God Almighty?* – distant, demanding, and potentially dreadful**

Mark 14:36 (ESV)

³⁶ And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

What else is being communicated when using the phrase “Abba! Father?”

EXAMINING OUR PRAYER ATTITUDE

**How would you describe your attitude when praying?
Is it offered with an attitude devoid of deference to God and
replete with petitions to solve your own desires?**

Hopefully not as Janus Joplin sang: “Oh lord won’t you buy me a . . .”

Or instead, is it more like the attitude that Tim Sanford described Sunday
sermon link: <https://fbcva.org/media/s36749g/no-more-fear-living-life-with-a-living-savior-fear-of-god-we-have-a-problem>

As one choosing to fear God defined as:

“An awe, a respect and honor given, a healthy & accurate reverence for God

- A sense of deference with it.***
- Is inspired by the one being feared***
- A deep and reverential sense of accountability ”– Zodhiates***

And so, Christ became our example – Jesus ‘chose to defer’ to his Abba Father
Mark 14:36 (ESV), ³⁶ And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

THE FEAR OF GOD FREES US AND SO HE HEARS US!

Ro 8:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

“Christ’s death for us frees us from the fear of condemnation at the Great White Throne judgment (Rom. 8:1). Our abiding life frees us from the fear of shame at the judgment seat of Christ (1Jn.2:28).” *

“A Christian who loves others may have other fears, but he need not fear (dread) the judgment seat of Christ. The fact that he loves others demonstrates that his relationship with God is essentially what it should be.” *

**Tom Constable, Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Jn 4:18.*

EPHESIANS 1:15–23 (ESV) **HOPE-INHERITANCE-POWER**

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 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, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

WHAT DOES ONE DO WHEN WE NOTICE SOMEONE'S FAITH AND LOVE?

In our passage today, Paul begins in v.15 with *“For this reason, . . .”* which refers back to the previously described 12 ‘spiritual blessings’ declared in vv. 3-14. We described them as 12 of 50 Identity Truths found in Ephesians.

Those Identity Truths, when prayerfully appropriated by grace through faith (Eph.2:8-9), form the foundation of a believer’s faith & identity in Christ which results in an irrevocable eternal ‘*standing*’ or ‘*position*’ before God.

Paul noticed both the Ephesians’ faith & trust in those blessings of Christ & their love for one another; consequently, Paul began to pray accordingly . . .

Ephesians 1:15–16 (ESV)

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

EPHESIANS 1:15–23 (ESV) **PAUL'S 3-PART PRAYER**

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

This was not the only time we find that Paul noticed someone's faith and began to pray for them. (*See also Col.1:4; Phm.5; Rom.1:8*)

We often call for prayers and praises, but how often do we notice someone's faith and love for others and then pray for them?

**How important is it to pray for someone when
we notice their faith and love? Why?
Isn't it more important to pray for needs and the lost?**

If so important, then what does one pray for on their behalf?

EPHESIANS 1:17–19 (ESV)

PAUL'S SUPPLICATION

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 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, according to the working of his great might

List the particular things that Paul prayed for on behalf of the Ephesians.

Why do you think they need the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation?

How important is “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened”?

What do you think Paul meant by “*know what is the hope to which he has called you*”?

Why is knowing “what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, “ important? Whose inheritance is it?

Why is knowing “what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might” important?

EPHESIANS 1:20–23 (ESV) **HOPE-INHERITANCE-POWER**

¹⁹ . . .according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Why do you think it was important for Paul to speak so much about “the working of his great might “ in verses 20-23?

What other important tenets do you see in this passage?

PRAYER TENETS

Hope

“Hope has to do with future certainties such as salvation (*1Th 5:8*), resurrection (*1Co 15:52–55*), and eternal life (*Ti 3:4-7*)” *

Inheritance

“This refers not to what believers receive (that is, what God bestows), but to what God receives: His own people. Thus, Paul’s prayer was for believers to know the astonishingly great value God places on them.” * (*Jam. 1:12*)

Power

“It is incomparable and able to bring believers to glory...” * (*Col. 1:16*)

*Gerald W. Peterman, “Ephesians,” in The Moody Bible Commentary, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1848.

Believers' Future Inheritance

What all believers will inherit	What faithful believers will additionally inherit
Entrance into God's kingdom (John 3:3, 5 ; 1 Cor. 6:9 ; Gal. 5:21 ; Eph. 5:5)	Abundant eternal life (James 1:12 ; Rev. 2:10)
Eternal life (John 3:16 , 36 ; et al.)	Reigning with Christ (Luke 19:17, 19 ; 2 Tim. 2:12 ; Rev. 2:26–27)
Acceptance by God (Rom. 5:1 ; 8:31–39)	Praise from God (Matt. 25:21, 23 ; Luke 19:17 ; John 12:26 ; 2 Tim. 4:8 ; 1 Pet. 1:7 ; 5:4)
No condemnation (Rom. 5:9 ; 8:1 ; 1 Thess. 1:10)	Intimacy with Christ (John 15:14)
Resurrection or translation (1 Cor. 15:53–57 ; 1 Thess. 4:13–17)	Various rewards (Matt. 5:12, 46 ; 6:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18 ; 10:41–42 ; 16:27 ; Mark 9:41 ; Luke 6:23, 35 ; 1 Cor. 3:8, 14 ; 9:16–18, 25, 27 ; 2 Cor. 5:9–11 ; Phil. 4:1 ; Col. 3:24 ; 1 Thess. 2:19 ; 1 Tim. 4:14 ; 5:18 ; 2 Tim. 2:5 ; 4:8 ; Heb. 11:6 ; 1 Pet. 5:4 ; 2 John 8 ; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 28 ; 3:5, 11, 12, 21 ; 11:18 ; 22:12)
Glorification (1 Pet. 1:9)	

PRAYER TENETS

Knowledge of God:

Warren Wiersbe had this to say about knowing God:

“To know God personally is salvation (*John 17:3*). To know Him increasingly is sanctification (*Phil 3:10*). To know Him perfectly is glorification (*1 Cor. 13:9–12*).” *

A spirit of wisdom and of revelation: “Paul asked God to give the Ephesians a spirit of wisdom and of revelation. The spirit in view probably refers to an attitude, rather than to the Holy Spirit, wisdom and revelation being the description of that attitude (*cf. 1 Cor. 4:21*). They had already received the Holy Spirit. These attitudes become ours through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to us however (*cf. Isa. 11:2*).” *

*Tom Constable, Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003), Eph 1:17.

PRAYER TENETS

Paul describes the 4-fold power of Christ *Jn1:16 ; Col.3:11*

1. Above all rule, authority, power, dominions *Col.1:16; 2:10; 1 Cor.15:24*

2. Above every name *Php.2:9-11*

3. All things are under his feet *Ps 8:6; 1Co 15:27; Heb 2:6–9*

4. He is head over all of the church *Col. 1:18; 2:10,19; 1 Cor. 11:3;12:27*

The author of Hebrews seems to capture the essence of Paul's prayer in the benediction from Hebrews 13:20–21 (ESV)

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord

Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,

²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

UPGRADING THE FOCUS OF OUR PRAYERS

- **Why not meditate and pray Paul's prayer for yourself and any others God seems to bring across your path?**
- **Try praying Eph.1:17-23 for yourself and follow where God leads you!**

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 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, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

- **Share what you learn with someone!**