

The Way
Fruit of the Church: Ephesians
Lesson 33: Paul Prayed for the Ephesian Believers

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Scripture

Ephesians 1:15-23

Review (Where We've Been)

Last week we moved into the final part of The Way series, *Fruit of the Church*.

We're studying Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus.

So far, Paul wrote introductory words concerning the *spiritual blessings* we have.

"Every spiritual blessing refers to every spiritual enrichment needed for the spiritual life. Since these benefits have already been bestowed on believers, we should not ask for them but rather receive them by faith." – Bible Knowledge Commentary

What spiritual blessings have been given to us in Christ?

- God makes us holy and blameless in Christ
- God adopts and accepts believers as sons
- God redeems and forgives all believers
- God helps us understand His plans for the future
- God promises that believers will receive an inheritance with Jesus
- God seals believers with the Holy Spirit

BIG Idea

Today we will walk a little further into Paul's introduction where he reveals his heart for the future bearing of spiritual fruit.

He does this by telling them what he is praying on their behalf (intercessory prayer).

What characterizes intercessory prayer?

- Rooted in a fervency to see others change, be strengthened, or persevere
- Responsiveness to the revealed Word of God
- Dependency on God's character and glory (the prayer is for God's purposes)

Information (What You Need to Know)

Before Paul writes what he prays on their behalf, he commends them for fulfilling the greatest commandments – *loving God* and *loving others*.

Ephesians 1:15 (ESV) 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...

While a prisoner, Paul heard that the Ephesians were remaining strong in their faith and prayed that they would continue to grow in their faith.

What did Paul pray for on behalf of the Ephesian church?

▪ **Paul prayed for their continued wisdom and revelation**

Ephesians 1:17 (ESV) ...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...

✓ **Wisdom** is spiritual insight into what is true (Holy Spirit helps us discern)

✓ **Revelation** is a greater understanding of who God is (the Scriptures reveal)

“The purpose of *wisdom* and *revelation* is to know God better. This doesn't refer to abstract knowledge, but personal and intimate knowledge. It includes an awareness of God's character and will. Philosophy says, 'Know thyself,' but the Scriptures say, 'Know God through Christ.'” – Bible Knowledge Commentary

▪ **Paul prayed that they would know the blessings that are theirs in Christ**

✓ **Future hope** (Life on earth is followed by eternal life in heaven)

Ephesians 1:18 (ESV) ...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you...

✓ **God's inheritance in the saints** (God delights in those who are His eternally)

Ephesians 1:18 (ESV) ...what are the riches of His [God's] glorious inheritance in the saints...

“This indicates how precious God's people are to Him. We are what He looks forward to enjoying forever.” – ESV Study Bible

✓ **Greatness of His power**

Ephesians 1:19 (ESV) ...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...

- God works in us with the same power by which He resurrected Jesus
Romans 8:11 (ESV) If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- We need to comprehend the power of God’s Spirit within us
 “Just as Paul prayed that the Lord would help the Ephesians understand His mighty power, we should ask the Father to teach us to understand the greatness of the power of the Holy Spirit. He is working in us, enabling us to live for God. The Holy Spirit will continue to work in us until we are with Jesus in Heaven.” – Firm Foundations

Application (What You Need to Do)

Following Paul’s prayer on behalf of the Ephesians, he reminds them about the position of Christ and His church.

Paul helps the Ephesians see themselves and Christ in their proper places...

- God exalted Jesus above everyone and everything
Ephesians 1:20 (ESV) ...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...
- Jesus is the Head of the church, which is His body
Ephesians 1:22 (ESV) 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.

This ends Paul’s prayer. After demonstrating that believers have all spiritual blessings (1:3-14), Paul prayed that believers would come to know God intimately (v.17) in order that they might know three facts...

- The call of salvation that produced hope (v.18)
- The future inheritance that God has in His saints (v.18)
- The present power of God that is available to believers, which was...
 - ✓ Manifested in the past in Christ’s resurrection and Ascension
 - ✓ Will be manifested in the future in Christ’s headship over Creation
 - ✓ Is presently manifested in Christ’s headship over the church