

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

For This Reason I Pray

PART

1

TITLE

That We Would Know God

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:15-23



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Well, Providence family, it is great to see you. And if you are a guest with us this morning, we're thrilled that you've joined us. I hope you're excited about opening up the Bible. And so if you have one in your hand, if you want to turn with me to Ephesians chapter one. And if you don't, there's lots of Bibles in the chair right in front of you down at the bottom. And if you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have your own. And if you happen to be at home watching, we're also glad that you've joined us.

I'm going to ask you as you turned to Ephesians chapter one, a question. And it is this, if Christ looked into your life as it is today, and he saw sort of the challenges that are in front of you, the different burdens that you're facing, and if he ask you a question and the question was, what do you want me to do for you, the same question he asked a blind man one day, what would you say? Perhaps some of us would immediately respond like the blind person and ask for physical healing. He said, "I want to see. That's what's on my heart. I want to see." He didn't have to wait very long. He just said, "I want to see." And maybe some of us, some physical ailment is over us and we look and we thought, man, if the Lord would do one thing, this would be the one thing that I want. I want to be physically whole.

Maybe for others it wouldn't necessarily, the first thing that pops into our heart this morning, the heaviest burden isn't a physical illness, maybe it's just freedom over something. We feel like that there's things in our life that are really good things that are locked up and we simply can't quite get to them or we can't get away from them. And so maybe some of us, we feel utterly locked up and we long for freedom over addiction or depression or anxiety or something that just says, I just want freedom from these things, some sin pattern that we just seem we cannot break free from. We're like, God, that's the one thing. If you would do that, that's what I need today.

Others, maybe the heaviest thing that we feel this morning isn't in our life, it's for somebody else. Maybe it's a child that we have, maybe it's for a parent, maybe it's for a friend, maybe it's for a neighbor or a family member who's far from the Lord. And we think, Lord, just one thing, this is what I would long for.

It's really interesting over the years I've found that it takes me a little bit longer to properly think through when someone asks me, "What do you want me to pray about for you or for your family?" It takes me longer to answer that question that it once did. It's really the same question that Jesus is asking. He's saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" Someone else is saying, "What do you want me to ask him to do for you?" There was a point in time when I would simply say, I'd just throw something out and there are all kinds of needs, so here, just chew on this one. And the reality is, I didn't expect, either, I didn't expect for them to pray or I didn't expect for God to answer that prayer anyway, and so here, just throw something out. But I found over time that the Lord answers prayer.

And so today, I find that I take more time answering it and I begin to ask this question of myself, and it's if they actually do pray for me, and if God actually does answer that prayer, and they're asking, what do you

want, what's the one thing that I would want the Lord to actually accomplish? Sometimes it takes a little bit more time because I start to find that I'm like, okay, is this the best thing I could pray for? I mean, I could say that, but would I regret that later on because I got that, but I didn't get this?

And the beautiful thing about the Lord is he doesn't limit us to one request, nor does he ask us or expect that we intuitively know what is the best thing to ask for. No, instead what we find is that the Lord makes known what is best in his word. He gives us his spirit to confirm in our hearts what is best, to activate our desire to pray for that. And not only that, but the Holy Spirit and the word of God, he combines them together and he shows us how he inspired other believers in history to pray for what is best.

And that's what we're going to do this month, a new series, it's called, For this Reason I Pray. It really is built on the heels of what we looked at last time, which was the last sermon in the Holy Spirit series. It was called Praying in the Spirit. We looked at how do we pray in the Spirit. Now what we want to do is spend a month looking at how someone else prayed in the Spirit. What does it mean? What did they pray for? And what can we learn from these things? And in addition to studying these things, I want to ask you to participate. It's one thing to know these things, it's another thing to know them experientially and relationally what it really does mean to pray.

And so I have to say something that's a little challenging only because we ran out, but we made these 21 day prayer guides. And what we're going to do over the next month, over the next 21 days, you say, why 21, because it takes three weeks to form a habit and some of us are not in the habit of talking to God. And so one day, every single week for three weeks, what we want to do is to pray these four passages in circles as they go out from us.

And so it's going to start tomorrow morning. And tomorrow morning, we're going to pray, Ephesians chapter one, we're going to pray it for ourselves. We're going to learn about it, we're going to pray about it for ourself. And then the next day, we're going to pray those same sorts of things for our family and church family. And then it goes out further to our four, to people that we're praying that they would come to faith in Christ and we're going to pray for our city and then we're going to pray for the world, and then we'll move to the next passage.

Now we made a book, and it's a beautiful book. It looks just like this. And this is the only one that I'm aware of that I have available to give away. We ran out. We've actually ran out two weeks in a row, but there's another way that you can get it. This week, we're going to have more next Sunday actual physical books, but I think people used them as like Christmas gifts, and so they just took a bunch of them. I'm not really sure how it happened, but they are, they're gone. But if you go online, pray.org, just our website, you scroll down just a little bit, you can put your name and email and we will send you, for the next 21 days, a page in this for each day in your inbox. And so you can start tomorrow, even if you don't have this book.

What we want to do today is to look at this first prayer. It's in Ephesians chapter one. And our hope, as we look at it, is that we would begin to see with eyes of hope what's possible and what's available to us, that would motivate us to pray. The first thing that he wants us to see and what Paul prays for is this idea that we would know God. That we would know God. So before we look at that, let me pray.

Father in heaven, we bow before you and ask that you would surprise us with how pleasant it is to pray. We ask, Father, that you would help us to see just how amazing Jesus' sacrifice was, to give us the privilege and the freedom to pray. And thank you for giving us your spirit to activate real and present desires in our heart to pray. And I pray that you would liberate this gift in our life. You would help us to learn to enjoy it, but not only enjoy it, but to do it in a hope, hope of believing that we will see that freedom, freedom over anxiety, freedom over addiction, freedom over cancer, freedom over pain, freedom over unbelief. We ask that you would do big things, great things in our lives this month, but most importantly, we want to know you. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.

Ephesians chapter one, starting in verse 15. It says, "For this reason, because I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you and my prayers 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, having the eyes of your heart's 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, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that 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 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. And he put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Now I know, at least for me, when I read some of these writings from the Apostle Paul and when I read his prayers, I think that's a whole lot of words that seem to stack on each other. And sometimes I think, help me, what's the subject of this sentence and what's the predicate, so I can start to figure out how am I even supposed to think about it. What I just read to you is actually one sentence, okay? The Apostle Paul had a hard time finding a period when he wrote. And I'd thank God for him, obviously. He was pretty amazing and God used him in remarkable ways, but sometimes it makes it hard to create categories with everything that I just read because there's so many adjectives and adverbs and qualifiers. You think, how am I supposed to think about that? And so what I want to do is try this morning to simplify, to teach us just a few things about prayer. And what I want to show you is just three ingredients that you find within this prayer.

And the first ingredient is the freedom to approach God, specifically in prayer. That we are free to be able to come. There's just marvelous freedom that God has given us to be able to come. Now Paul is in prison. You need to know that. He's in prison for his faith in Jesus Christ. And what that means is he's bound, he's bound up. And not only is he bound up, he's also limited. His freedoms are limited. He can't go where he wants to

go, He can't come, he can't do what he wants to do necessarily. And he's bound up. He's limited. But not only is he limited, he's excluded. He's excluded from his friends, from his relationships, from the worshiping community, he's excluded from society.

But in this prison, he is not alone. He's not alone because he is with the Lord and he's praying to the Lord and he hears some things about these people in Ephesus and it really encourages his heart. He says, for this reason, because I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints. I do not cease to give thanks for you. Remember you in my prayers. That's beautiful what he says here. He says, You know what, I hear some things about you. I hear some things about you. He says, the first thing I hear about you is this remarkable faith that you have in Jesus Christ. It's an abiding faith. It's an enduring faith, even in pain, even in difficulty, you keep looking to him. Your heart is God word. I'm thankful that you have faith in Jesus Christ. But then he says something. To me, it's even more remarkable, he says, this faith, it's so real, it's mobilizing your hands and feet to love.

And then he says who. He says, all the saints. Now saints in the New Testament are not super Christians. They're normal Christians who are trusting in a super savior, okay? They're normal Christians like you. They're just people. They're sinners. They're weak, they're low, they feel weak. They stumble over themselves. And yet because they recognize that they're a sinner, they admit that to God, they look to Christ Jesus and they say, I believe, I believe you came. You live without sin, you died on a cross, you were buried, you rose from the dead. I trust in you. And He takes away our sin and He gives us His righteousness. And now all of a sudden this normal person is bearing, is holding, is wrapped up in the righteousness, the perfect righteousness of Christ.

And so God calls us what He sees in us wrapped with the righteousness of Christ. And he goes, You're a saint, you're a saint. And that's amazing, but what's even more amazing, he says, you love all of them. For people who are insecure, which we all are, we tend to form groups. And when we form groups, we categorize worth on the basis of that group. So we're like, I went to this school. You didn't go to this school. I think my school is better than your school, so I'm better than you. We tend to do this with pretty much everything. But what he's saying is this, he goes, Your faith in Christ is mobilized to love, that no matter what the category, you love them, rich people and poor people and Jewish people and gentile people and male people and female people, young people and old people, educated and uneducated, and you love all of them.

This is what he says. I love this. He goes, When I hear about this, I just love to talk to God about it. I just love to thank him for what He's done in your life. Now, this is beautiful. You think about what's really happening, he's confined. He's in a cell, he's separated from everything. He's excluded, if you can think about this, from all religious rituals, from all religious buildings, from all religious priests, from all religious candles, from all religious pretensions. And yet God's spirit activates his desire to pray and suddenly he prays and he's with God in the room. And this is true of you and me. You pray and you're with God in that moment. You're not alone. It's a remarkable thing that God would give us this freedom and this freedom to come to Him at any time is

a birthright for every single person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ. He becomes our high priest. This is what Ephesians four says. "Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God." This is our priest, his name is Jesus, but he is the son of God. He stands in heaven. He says, "You come with me and I will bring you to the throne." He's the high priest, he's the mediator. Now, since this is true of us, since it's true of Him, I should say, he said how should we have believed in this respond. He says this is how. "Let us stand with confidence, draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

You need help today? Do you need help today? You can talk to the one who can help today. We have that freedom. And so let me encourage you, let me encourage you, not only if you need help, talk to Him. But let me encourage you with something else. And that is, let's be careful not to bind up our freedom to pray. It's really hard for humanity to have nice things, and one of our inclinations with the Lord is to receive a really amazing good gift and to recognize how amazing it really is and want to protect it. So to protect what we make all kinds of rules that He didn't make, but we make in order to protect that gift. And when we do that, what happens is we prohibit our very enjoyment of the gift that He gave.

Let me give you just two examples, one is prayer. We'll come to that. But let me give you another one, the day of rest. The day of rest, what a gift. Hey, you got to work. Work is hard, but you know what, I want to give you a gift, a day of rest. And what do we do with that gift? We're like, it needs rules. We need to protect that with rules, what you can do and what you can't do in order to qualify what a day of rest is. And as a result of that, we don't enjoy the gift anymore.

The first people who received this gift, they made 39 rules. And over hundreds of years, they extrapolate those rules all the way to over 600. If you go to Israel today, I'm not kidding you, this is not a joke. I was there, not recently, but so maybe it's changed in the last 10 years, I don't know. But 10 years ago, if you went to Israel, you were in the hotel that I was in, on the Sabbath, every light for every floor on the elevator was lit up perpetually all day long. You had to stop every single floor all the way down and all the way up. And the reason is because someone created a rule to protect the Sabbath that hitting your button was work. You think, oh, well, who would ever do? We all scoff? Oh, those people. Who would ever ruin a good gift? You would. And so would I.

We do it all the time. We take something that God has given us, we're like, let's wrap it up with rules to protect it. And in protecting it, we limit our ability to enjoy it. And so think about prayer. He gives us access into the throne room of God where we find grace and receive help in time of need. And what do we do with it? It needs rules. We lock it up. We lock it up with rules to get in and we lock it up with expectations in order to get out. We start saying, "This is how to pray. You want to ask God, first, you got to adore Him, and then you got to confess your sin and then you got to thank Him and then you can ask Him for what you want." And then once people get in, they leave in four or five minutes. You're like, You didn't pray, the expectation is at least an hour. You did not pray, get back in there. You got to go back and pray. And yet, it's beautiful what

God does. In His kindness towards us, Jesus comes to the earth and He teaches us to pray. And He frames His entire lesson on prayer by pointing us to a loving father whose arms are always open and to kids who were confident, confident not in their own performance, but in the love of those arms that are always open and they come messy and weary and unpretentious. Don't create so many rules or any rules that you cannot enjoy talking to your creator. And if you want to make a bunch of rules, then keep them to yourself so you don't spoil it for the rest of us.

The second thing I want you to see as to the ingredient here, not only do we see this freedom to approach God, but we also see this appeal to know God. Now, Paul cared deeply for these people and he knew that they were experiencing a lot of really big, heavy things. Every prayer that we're going to study was written from a jail cell. He had a lot going on, and yet he also knew that they had a lot going on. They were under emperors who hated them. There were unfair tax rules and laws placed upon them. They faced poverty, they faced sickness, they faced disease, all kinds of things. And I have no doubt, personally, although Paul never records it, that at some point in time he prayed, "God, help these people with their finances and help these people with their physical ailments." But what's amazing is that in all of Paul's letters, when he actually tells us what he was praying for them, or more specifically, and when he tells them what he in jail was praying for them, the best. He never once prays for their circumstances.

Never saying, I'm just praying for a more just tax structure and for a different emperor and for an antidote for all of the sickness that you're facing and a new job. He doesn't pray for those things. Instead, what he does is he goes right after the spiritual jugular. He says, There are other things, but they're not best. I want to pray for the best for you and the best, he says, I want you to know God. Notice what he says, verse 17. "That the Father of glory may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Now, in chapter one verse 13 and 14, he tells us that we, and when they put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and sealed with the Holy Spirit. He's already affirmed, that's a reality in their lives.

The next time we hear this, he's praying that the God the Father, it says would give the Spirit and say, "Wait a minute, what's he praying for then?" He's not praying that they would trust Christ and be saved from their sin, he believes they already are. He's not praying that God would send the Spirit to them the first time because he says the Holy Spirit is already in you. Instead, what he means is this. He's saying, "I'm praying that the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of wisdom and revelation, who has all wisdom and who can reveal God to humanity, would give you wisdom and revelation so that you can know God more fully." Now, the word know or knowledge is a really important word. If we walk out of here and say, "Okay, I'm supposed to know like 10 attributes of God, and then all of a sudden it's going to unlock the engine of the whole Christian life." We all know there's a difference between knowing about something and knowing something, right? For example, we know this is a cake. We know this is the cake. Most of us have seen a cake. Maybe some of us have eaten a cake. We look at that and we go, "That's a cake." But we know this cake differently than this little girl knows this cake. We know of it and she knows it.



And so in verse 17 when he says, “I am praying that the spirit of knowledge and wisdom would help you in the knowledge of Him, to know Him”, he’s not simply talking merely about factual intellectual knowledge, but of relational experience that you would experience. It’s one thing to know God is love, it’s another thing to feel His love. And this idea of knowing in the Bible, you see this in many different ways, that if you don’t understand the depth of the word knowledge or knowing, it can be confusing to you. All of us, we go, “You know what, I know of a man and I know of a woman”, but that is very different, and we all know that that’s very different from knowing your wife or knowing your husband.

And then if you don’t know that, all of a sudden you read the Old Testament in particular and you’re like, okay, so does something clearly happening with knowing that’s deeper than simply factual because Adam knew his wife Eve and she had a baby. So more is going on than, hey, I know her name. When he uses this word, the knowledge of Him, he’s not interested in that. We simply know about God, that we know of God, that we know true things about him, but that we experience Him relationally. We know His love, we know His peace, and therefore it’s beautiful that before praying that we would know and enjoy the riches of His gifts, which is the third point we’ll get to in just a moment. He prays that we would know the richest of God Himself.

This is perhaps the most important thing that can happen over the next 21 days at Providence, is the people who know all kinds of things and who can define the love of God, would one day feel His love. And so let me encourage you to ask God this month to deepen our relationship, your relationship with Him. I know that if Jesus said, “Hey, what do you want me to do for you?” A lot of us would probably answer with something like, “I want justice.” Maybe you were mistreated or someone is mistreated so deeply. “I want justice. That’s that’s the biggest burden of my heart. I need justice.” Maybe some of you would say, “I just need peace. I need peace over this anxiety.”

Or maybe someone else might say, “I just need wisdom. I got a big decision that seems like it’s going to affect a lot of people. It’s going to affect a lot of things and I don’t know what to do. Right now, the biggest thing, I just need wisdom.” And how much better would it be that instead of simply giving you justice and peace and wisdom, that He would give you the ability to experience a relationship with the source and standard of justice and the prince of peace and the wonderful counselor who dispenses wisdom in our time of need. So let me encourage you, emphatically and humbly, to ask God to know Him more fully. You find this in the Bible and it’s in stunning ways. There’s a guy named Moses. He sees the most remarkable things of what God is doing. He’s written the attributes of God. God said, “This is who I am. Tell the people.” He writes it down, This is truth. There’s it’s sound theology. And then he looks at God. He goes, “Would you show me your glory? I want to know you.” The Apostle Paul, he’s praying all this. “God, would you help these people to have a knowledge of who you are?” The same guy, in the Book of Philippians, you know what He prays? “God, I just want to know you. I want to know you.”

So let me ask you to ask Him. God, I want to know you. Would you help me know you? And then place your-



self where the Holy Spirit is helping people to see and to discuss and to admire Him. You're doing that right now. You've positioned yourself in a place where we're thinking about God, where the Holy Spirit is helping people learn more about God, know God, know His peace and keep pushing yourself in that way. The last thing I want you to see is to the ingredient, we looked at a freedom to approach God and appeal to know God. And then the last part, which is really from verse 18 to 23 is an appeal to experience the riches God has given. Now, it's going to be really important you understand that nowhere does he say, I hope that you will get these things. What he says here is, "I hope that you will know experientially what you have already received." Let me say it this way. Let's just say that you're four or five years old, you're an orphan and you live in a terrible orphanage. It's cold, when it's cold. It's hot, when it's hot. And you're lonely. And it's not a good orphanage. If there is a good one, this is not it. You want to be adopted, you want a home, you want to be loved.

And one day, a man and his wife, they come in and they put you in a room with them and you just talk and you're so surprised at how kind they are and how warm and how merciful. And they come the next day and then the next day. Days turn into a week and they keep coming and your heart goes out to them and their heart goes out to you. And one day, to your surprise, they sit you down and they say, "It's so good to see you and we want to adopt you. Would you become our son or daughter?" Now, what do you say in that moment? What's your net worth? What am I coming into in this agreement? What's your big cause? What are you guys for? What's your mission statement for your family? What is your plans for my future? No, a four year old is never going to say that. You know why, because a four year old who's an orphan in a bad orphanage has more immediate needs.

When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we have immediate needs. Typically and maybe some of you, this is where you're at right now. You come in and you're like, I have an immediate need. I have the sin problem. I have a guilt problem. I cannot get rid of it. I'm thinking maybe this is the place." And I've just told you, you can put your faith in trust in Jesus Christ who loved you enough to die for that sin that you committed. And He will forgive you of that sin. He will take that guilt from you and give you His righteousness. You're like, "That's an immediate need." Some of us, we come to Christ and that's our immediate need. Others, we grow up and all of a sudden we see people die and we're reminded we're going to die. And then someone tells us there's this place called heaven and hell and one sounds really good and one doesn't.

We're like, "I don't want to go to one. I want to go to the other. How do I do that?" It's an immediate need. We have these immediate needs when we first come to faith in Christ, but here's the cool thing is that when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, He not only forgives you and gives you His righteousness, but the Bible says He adopts you into His family and suddenly you become an heir, essentially connected part of all of the resources, mission, causes, purposes of this family.

You have them even though you don't know them. And as you grow, you learn more about them. And this is precisely what he is saying. He's saying, "I'm praying that God would open up your eyes." Notice what he says.

“Having the eyes of your heart’s enlightened.” Right now they’re dark. He’s not saying they’re lost. He’s saying that in your living room the lights are off and God has placed all kinds of blessings around the entire room and you can’t see them so you don’t enjoy them. That you may know what is the hope to which He’s called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power. He’s praying the Spirit turns the lights on so that we can feel and know what we already have. Some of us, we drive our life, the Christian life, and it’s like driving a Ferrari and no one’s told us that there’s more than the first gear. It still can move around. First gear is pretty quick. But we’ve been told about all this capacity that’s engaged, that’s involved, we don’t know how to activate it. Paul is saying, after I pray that you know Him, I am praying that you know everything that He’s given you. And he talks about three things. Let’s talk about each one of them real quick. First, the hope to which you were called. The hope to which He has called you, I should say. The hope to which He’s called you. He wants us to something about our calling because when we understand our calling, it produces hope within us. It’s interesting, the same person, the Apostle Paul, he writes about our calling in another place.

In First Corinthians chapter one, he says this, “Consider your calling.” If you consider it’s going to produce the hope. That hope is going to propel you to do certain things. “Consider your calling. God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. And God chose what is weak in the world to the shame the strong, and God chose what is low and despised in the world so that no human being might boast in the presence of the Lord.” If you know this is true, it’s going to sprout hope in your heart. And let me show you how and why it does so.

First of all, this hope buoys us in days of sin and weakness. You know why, because we are reminded that if God called us to himself into a relationship with Christ when we were foolish, weak, low, and despised that now as Christians, when we behave in ways that are foolish, weak, low, and despicable, we know that we won’t be expelled. If He welcomes us and calls us in this state, then when we behave in it even foolishly for a time, it gives us hope that He’s not going to kick us out of the family.

The second thing this does is that when we have this hope, it propels us to create strategies of reform to make things right. When you’re hopeless, you don’t make strategies. You just sit on the edge of your bed and wait for it to happen. When there’s hope, when you’re like, “Wait a minute, God has said things could happen. He said they will happen, therefore they will happen. Even if I’ve not had my best week.” I’m basing my hope on who He is, that He’s called me to this. Buoy strategies. And then the third thing it does is it reminds us that nobody is more lost than we were lost when God saved us and therefore we have hope for other people.

If you’ve ever looked at the news, if you looked at a celebrity, you looked at somebody and you didn’t necessarily like him and you say, it’ll be a miracle if that person ever came to faith in Christ. We forget that it was a miracle that we came to faith in Christ. And so he says, “There’s this thing that is so powerful called hope that’s generated when we understand how God called us to Himself.” The second thing he wants us to see and experience is what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. You notice that it’s his inheritance.

Back in verse 11, he says, "In him, we have obtained an inheritance." But notice here it says, "What are the riches of His glorious inheritance?" This is what He inherits. This is what Jesus gets. There's actually something that Christ Himself looks at it and He says, "This is my treasured possession, my inheritance." And who is it? What is it? It's the saints. It's the church. It's the people that He's purchased with His own blood.

And friends, these are the richest. Meaning when we contemplate that we are a part of His inheritance and that He actually considers us an inheritance and He's not bummed about it. It's like, "That's all I get?" "No." He's like, "Yes." What it does is when we count these riches, it reminds us that we are accepted and it motivates in us a desire to be holy because we're His. And the third thing he talks about that he wants them and us to know is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe. Now, this is the longest thing that he describes, and I'm going to give the shortest attention to it.

Paul knows that it cannot be measured, because it's immeasurable. How much power has He given us over sin? It's immeasurable. How much power has He given us over anxiety? It's immeasurable. And he knows he can't measure it, so instead of measuring it, he compares it. That's why the very next words are, according to. That means it accords with. It's like this. This is the power that you have. It's like the working of His great power that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

Now, I know you don't feel you have this power. That's because the lights are turned off. Not only that, he goes on and he says, "According to the power that seated Him at the right hand in the heavenly places." And then he goes on and he goes, "It's according to the power to put all things under His feet and gave Him head over all things." It's immeasurable power that is available to everything that God has called us to do. And so let me finish with one more application, and it's this. Let's pray for God to show us what we have.

Many of us in the room this morning can adequately define God's blessings, we just don't feel them. Our theology is sound, our life is not mixed with scandal. And yet, this morning we feel no desire to sing and there's no song in our heart. We can define His love, we can define His power. We can record for other people if they ask the attributes of God. And truth be told, we just don't care. We want to care, but all this seems like fiction somewhere between Lord of the Rings and Avengers. Let's just catalog it up there. Power like Jesus' resurrection. We just don't experience it. And the fact is, I don't know if we ever will. I don't know if any human being ever gets to the place where they experience everything that is already available to us in all of its forms. But this I know, if we pray to know God and if we pray to experience what He has made available, we will know more and experience more next month than we did last month. I don't know how you know when you got it all, I just know there's more than what we have.

And what's interesting in John 17, let me close here, is this. This is not the only person who prayed these kinds of prayers for us, for Jesus. The night that He was betrayed, He goes out into the garden and He begins praying. You can read this in John 17, that He begins praying many of the identical things that Paul was saying.

I pray that you would know these things. Jesus was praying before He goes to the cross. "God, I want them to know these things. I want them to experience these things." The amazing thing is this, is that for Jesus to pray those blessings for us, He had to pray the curses upon Himself. The only way for Jesus to pray that we would understand our calling and what it means to be His inheritance and to experience His power, He had to pray, not God, let me be called but reject me in this moment and instead of let me be the inheritance, cast me away in this moment. And instead of, I want to know your power, he says, "Break me with your power." And He went to a cross and He died for our sin. He was buried in a grave. He rose from the dead. And He says, "If you will put your faith and trust in me, you'll receive a hope of calling. You'll be able to experience the riches of being a part of His inheritance and you will be able to experience power that cannot be measured." I believe it's true and I want to pray like it is, and I invite you to join me. So let me pray.

Father in heaven, as we come before you, I pray for those who do not have a relationship with you, you would incline their hearts right now to call out to you in faith and say, I believe in Christ. I admit that I'm a sinner. I believe in Christ. I confess Him as Lord, which you save and forgive them of their sin. Adopt them into your family. And for those of us who have put our faith in trust in Jesus Christ, we come to you as we begin this month of intentional praying together towards the greatest things that we see can be prayed for. We say to you, we want to know you and we want to know the things that you have made available for us. Not theoretical, we want to know them experiential. We want to know them.

So for those of you with Providence who know Christ, just tell Him right now. Just pray to Him right now. God, I want to know you. I want to know you. No matter what I know of you, no matter how deep my relationship is with you, I want to know you more. Please, Jesus, do that in our lives. We sing to you, Christ is the one and only, the one who makes it all possible. Thank you for dying for us. Thank you for praying as you did. Thank you for drinking that cup of wrath that we should have absorbed. Thank you that you died for us, you rose again. We know you have no rival, you have no equal. So we sing to you in faith now and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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