

Praying for You

Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction

I can know information about someone on social media, but that doesn't mean I have a relationship with that person. You can know a lot of information about God, but that doesn't mean you know him. You can go to Antioch and not know God. Knowing God is 1:1 personal relationship.

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.

Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus because of their faith in the Lord and love toward all the saints. The **greatest commandment** is to love God and neighbor. Paul had a fruitful ministry in Ephesus and built meaningful relationships. At the time of writing, **Paul had been away for years, but he still prayed for the saints.**

Paul invites us into his prayer closet and shows us "how" he prayed for the saints. His prayer request is that the saints would know God. He is "not speaking of salvation" because he is writing to a faithful church with a godly reputation. **He is praying that the saints would know God in a deeper, more intimate way (v. 17).**

The *atheist* claims that God doesn't exist. Therefore, they believe there is no God to know. The *agnostic* claims that God exists, but that nothing can be known of God. A Christian believes that you can have a personal relationship with God.

Outline: Three ways that faithful saints can know God deeper

1. Know the hope to which he has called you
2. Know the riches of his glorious inheritance
3. Know the immeasurable greatness of his power

Know the hope to which he has called you

The word church in the Greek is **ἐκκλησία**. This is a combination of two Gr. words: ἐκ (out) and καλέω (call). The word church literally means "called out." God called us out of the darkness of this world into his marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).

John Stott was an English theologian who *Time Magazine* ranked as one of the most influential people in the world. He wrote this- "God called us to Christ and holiness, to freedom and peace, to suffering and glory. More simply, it was a call to an altogether new life in which we know, love, obey and serve Christ, enjoy fellowship with him and each other, and look beyond our present suffering to the glory which will one day be revealed." – John Stott

Take a moment this week to **write out your calling as a Christian**. This is not a calling in regards to spiritual gifts, but the calling that God has given all Christians through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray and ask the Lord for continual wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him and that your life will align to your calling.

Know the riches of his glorious inheritance

Paul *previously wrote* about the **riches of our inheritance**. The riches of his grace which he lavished upon us (v. 8). In him we have obtained an inheritance (v. 11). The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance (v. 14).

Ephesus boasted the temple of Diana- one of the seven wonders of the world. Archeologists have discovered the library of Celsus and a massive theatre capable

of holding 24,000 spectators. **Modern-day Ephesus is a little known city** (pron. Sadjuk) in the Izmir province of Turkey. The wealth of this world is fleeting, but the riches of our glorious inheritance in heaven are unfading (1 Pet. 1:4).

Question: How often do you think about Heaven? What are your thoughts?

Riches of Heaven in Revelation

1. We will live with God in heaven (Rev. 21:3)
2. There is no crying or pain in heaven (Rev. 21:4)
3. The radiance of heaven is like a jewel, clear as crystal (Rev. 21:11)
4. The length, width and height of heaven are 1,380 miles (Rev. 21:16)
5. The beautiful wall of heaven is 216 feet tall (Rev. 21:17)
6. The city is pure gold like clear glass (Rev. 21:18)
7. The city does not need a sun or moon (Rev. 21:23)
8. There is no night in heaven (Rev. 21:25)
9. The river of life flows through the middle of the city (Rev. 22:1-2)
10. The tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit, one for each month (Rev. 22:2)
11. There is no sin (Rev. 22:3)
12. We will see God's face (Rev. 22:4)

The riches of heaven **do not compare** with the wealth of this world. Make every effort to set your mind on the coordinates of your eternal home.

Know the immeasurable greatness of his power

I recently completed an eight-week spiritual challenge that ended on Labor Day. I took Jesus up on his invitation and promise in **Mt. 11:28-30** which says, "Come to me and I will give you rest." During this time, the Lord revealed to me that I need to **shift my mindset on trials**. Rather than viewing trials as a burden, he showed me that trials are an opportunity to rely on God, serve others and grow spiritually.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am

content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.
For when I am weak, then I am strong.

When Jesus was **crucified in weakness** (2 Cor. 13:4), God performed the most amazing miracle of all time- He raised Jesus from the dead. **Paul was in prison**, under house arrest, when he wrote this letter to the Ephesians. When we are weak, God does his best work.

“Dear brothers and sisters, go home and never ask the Lord to make you strong in yourselves, never ask him to make you anybody or anything, but be content to be nothing and nobody. Next ask that his power may have room in you, and that those who come near you may see what God can do by nothings and nobodies. Live with this desire, to glorify God.” - Charles Spurgeon

Jesus has been exalted to the highest position in the universe- seated at the right hand of the Father. Paul is assuring the Ephesians that Jesus is greater than the famous goddess Diana or the raging emperor Nero. **There is no name back then, now, or in the future that compares with Jesus (v. 21)!**

Philippians 2:9-11

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is the head over all things, most importantly, the church which is his body.