

EPHESIANS 1:15-23:

Knowing God

Introduction:

- Last week we see Paul open his letter to the Ephesians by praising an absolutely sovereign, triune God. This week Paul prays for the Ephesian church.

I. Paul prays that we would know God

- ❖ Ephesians 1:17—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,*

The Significance of Knowing God

- James Montgomery Boice was once asked “What do you think is the greatest lack among evangelical Christians in America?” He responded, “...the greatest need of the evangelical church today is for professing Christians really to know God.”¹
- I not only think that this is the most pressing need in American Christians today, I think it is perhaps one of the most if not the most important prayers in all of scripture
- ❖ Philippians 3:7-10—*But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead*
- ❖ John 17:3—*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*

Knowing about God

- Many today equate knowing about God to knowing God. This is not necessarily true.
- Chandler Bio illustration
- This illustration should point out two things to us. (1) There is a real difference between knowing God and merely knowing about him. (2) It is so incredibly easy to become content with merely knowing about God without even noticing that we have done so. We can have all of the “God apps”, “God books”, and “God information” without ever really knowing God.

Really Knowing God²

1. Personal Information

- despite the fact that information alone is not enough to know God, knowing information (doctrine, theology) about God is still a vital component to knowing God.

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary*, p.34

² J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p.34-35.

EPHESIANS 1:15-23:

Knowing God

- Information about God is important to us because we utilize that information in our pursuit of God. For example, this is Steve Simkins. If you didn't know Steve and I asked you to pick him up at the airport. You would want to know what he looks like right? If I described him as a 6'6," bald, black, male, in a black pinstripe suit, carrying a sneaker...would you be able to spot the actual Steve? Likewise, if our information about God is limited or incorrect, we are unable to recognize and come to know God.

2. Personal Interaction

- this means there is actual, personal contact made on a regular basis
- **Bible Study**--not just reading the bible, but digging in. Diligently studying scripture so that we can find Him in His revealed word.
 - ❖ Jeremiah 29:13-14--*You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord...*
- **Prayer**--not just handing God a "to-do" list, but coming to Him in prayer to commune with Him
 - ❖ Jeremiah 29:12--*Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you*
 - ❖ James 4:8--*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you*
- **Worship**--not just singing songs, but really responding to all that God is with all that we are and have.
 - ❖ Psalm 22:3--*Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel*

3. Personal Intimacy

- ❖ Ephesians 1:18-- **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
- this means the your mind, will, and emotions become personally involved
- Your mind dwells upon the things of God
- Your will desires and choose the things of God rather than the things of this world
- Your love the things of God

II. Paul prays that we would know what God has done for us

- ❖ Ephesians 1:18--*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,*



What is our hope

- We will always be loved (Psalm 136)
- We will never be forsaken (Hebrews 13:5)
- We will be perpetually made more and more like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18)

these last to parts of Paul's prayer are simply the first point in action. Paul prays God I want them to KNOW you God. I want them to know what you have done for them, I want them to know how immeasurably powerful you are and that your mighty power which could/should destroy them works on their behalf!

EPHESIANS 1:15-23:

Knowing God

- We will one day stand before God and hear Him declare us righteous, not because we have earned it for ourselves but because Jesus earned it for Himself and the love of the Father has compelled Him to impute that righteousness to those who place their faith in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:19)



What is this glorious inheritance?

- We will one day enjoy a perfect resurrection body that does not decay (Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 15:35-49)
- We will one day enjoy a perfected soul that does not sin because all desire for sin has been obliterated by the overwhelming desire to ever linger in the presence of God. (Matthew 13:43)
- We will one day enjoy a heart that knows no sorrow because God's glorious presence is the epitome of delight (Psalm 16:11)
- We will one day enjoy complete unadulterated fellowship with God almighty (2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23)
- We will one day bask in the immeasurable splendor of God's glory (Hebrews 11:13-16)
- We will one day have God and have him fully, forever!!!!
- **None of this is merited!!!! All of this is God choosing to lavish infinite love on unworthy recipients.**

III. Paul prays that we would know God's great power

- ❖ Ephesians 1:19-23--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



God's power is immeasurably great

- ❖ Job chapters 38-41



God's power works on our behalf

- ❖ Ephesians 1:19--and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power **toward us who believe**

Closing Application:



Does every one remember the sermon 3 weeks ago? The Ephesians introduction from Acts 19? Does everyone remember how on fire that church was? Does everyone remember how the Ephesians Christians devastated the idol economy? Does anyone wish that God was working in a similar way in our church today? If so, it is important to note that the fire of Acts 19 is the result of God answering this prayer of Paul's. That the people of God would really, truly KNOW GOD!