



Ephesians

Part 6

Ephesians 1:15-18
Week of April 11, 2021

Before Connect Group

- Ephesians 1:15-23
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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For this reason, because I have 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 in 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 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, 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.

Ephesians 1:15-23, ESV

Sermon Notes

The wisdom and revelation of knowledge come from the Word of God read through the open eyes of your hearts!

As we move into vs. 15 of chapter 1, we are entering the content of Paul's continual prayer over the Ephesians. Though the statements in this prayer may not seem ground breaking to some of us, there is a whole host of powerful implication within. There is powerful identity and encouragement in what is to follow.

You Are A Member of The Body of Christ

- Your faith in Jesus and Your love for all the Saints
 - When you heard the Word of truth, Gospel of your salvation, and believed.
 - Paul is no longer talking to strangers, he is talking to brothers and sisters. This is the power of the adoption through Christ. Though you have always felt like you do not belong, you now do. Though you like what you experience, you are often convinced you are not welcome or included, but you are.
 - *Ephesians 2:11-13 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*
- This is the very definition of the Church! Every time the church is mentioned in the Bible it is referring to the multitude of adopted children, the believers. It is not referring to a place or a location. It is not referring to a ministry or hosted event. These are all products of the "church", but they are not the Church
 - In our culture Authentic can mean just the way that you are. That is actually the opposite of the Biblical definition. The Biblical definition is You, transformed and changed to be nothing of yourself, but wholly devoted to Christ, offering yourself to the Body of Christ.
 - This means your gifts, your talents, your labor, your hope, your mentorship, your discipleship, your time, etc are all for the sake of building up the Body! (Eph. 4)
- "Giving Thanks For You"
 - Luke 15 Jesus says that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than 99 righteous who need no repentance.
 - There is a celebration that happens in the heavens and on earth (as we will be doing a little later today) for those who have committed their hearts to Christ.
 - Thankfulness is the primary expression when engaging a believer.
 - This is how Paul began many of His letters.
 - *Philippians 1:3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,*
 - *Colossians 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,*
 - *1 Thessalonians 1:2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,*
 - But possibly the most powerful is the ongoing thankfulness Paul has for even those with whom he has some struggle and conflict.
 - *1 Corinthians 1:4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,*
 - When we submit to the cultural perspective that Church is an organization, we can

easily hate a Church. We can easily reject and walk away from an organization, but what if we could see that the Church is a gathering of redeemed people who need Christ daily, who need conviction daily, who need one another as they labor to become more like Christ. There is no other approach to the gathering of redeemed hearts than Thankfulness!

- Ephesians 1:17-18
- This is the content of the prayer that Paul is praying over the Ephesians without ceasing. This is also the prayer that I have been praying over this congregation for weeks. I think it is powerful, and very insightful, to hear Paul's heart toward those who he now considers brothers and sisters in Christ.
- In the first 14 verses of this text, Paul, with beauty and precision expressed the true goal of your conversion and faith. To be to the Praise of His Glory!
 - There is no higher calling, there is no greater joy, there can be no higher fulfillment and pleasure.
 - Today there will be ? People who will be baptized before this congregation, and they will be proclaiming that they have laid themselves down and they are now living for God's Glory alone.
 - This prayer that Paul prays is fully attached to his desire to see God fully glorified in your life. That is also my heart as I pray this over you.

That The Lord Will Draw You Unto Himself In Discovery and Wonder of Knowing Him

- If you are being baptized then this is not the final destination, but the starting point. If you have been in the faith for decades, you are still running.
- It is significant that Paul is praying this over believers.
- Many would take the base information of this prayer and agree that this needs to be prayed over unbelievers. That they might come to "know" him and have their "eyes" opened to the truth.
- But he is praying this over you and over me. He is praying that those who he has "heard of their faith in the Lord and their love for the saints", would receive a "spirit of wisdom and revelation".
- When we apply this to believers we start thinking in terms of special gifts of power, and though this is not untrue, it does not accurately grab onto the intent.
- Paul here wants those who know Christ to have an ongoing unfolding understanding and discovery of the hope, inheritance, and power that is freely given to us in Christ!
 - *18b - hope to which he has called you*
 - *18c - riches of his glorious inheritance*
 - *19 - immeasurable greatness of his power toward us.*

That This Wisdom and Knowledge Would Gather All Of Your Affections To Worship Him

- In Jewish thought, this idea of "know him" is also used to describe more than just gathered information. It is the consumption of affection.
- "The eyes of your heart"
- *Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*
- *Matthew 13:13-17 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." For this people's heart has grown dull, and with*

their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them." But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

- You have been blessed to see the Glory of God in Christ Jesus.
- The reason Paul prays this over the Ephesian church, and over you today, is because the ongoing battle of your life will be the blindness of this world.
- The blindness that comes through human philosophy
- All the intelligence in the world is often simply used to justify evil rather than draw unto praise to the glory of His grace.
- *Romans 1:20-23 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*
- The wisdom and revelation of knowledge come from the Word of God read through the open eyes of your hearts!

Those who are being baptized today, this is my prayer and hope for your journey. Those of you who have been in the faith for decades, this is my prayer and hope for your continued growth. For those of you who have yet to have the eyes of your hearts open, this is my prayer for you. That you would come to know Him today.

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- How would you describe the process of adoption into the faith? Why is this understanding so essential to our relationship with Jesus Christ? What implications does this hold?
- What is the difference between knowing as a form of knowledge and knowing as a form of intimacy?
- In what ways does intimacy and knowledge of God lead to our worship of Him? What makes God worthy of our worship?
- What does it mean to use the "eyes of your heart?" How does this combat the blindness we have to the world?
- How is a life transformed by a willingness to wonder and awe at God? How does this soul stirring affect our worship of God?

Challenge For The Week

God draws us into deeper relationship with Him and eagerly desires that we would know Him more and experience intimacy with Him for His glory.

- Where do you struggle to believe the truth and implications of the Gospel in your life? Take some time this week to consider the impact of the Gospel in your life.
- Who do you know who is needing to take their first steps in faith? Pray for this person this week and share your testimony with them this week.

