

# Ephesians: Grace Changes Everything

## *Part 3. Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom*

As we continue our journey through the book of Ephesians, we come to a passage that reveals Paul's heartfelt prayer for the believers in Ephesus. In Ephesians 1:15-23, Paul prays for the church to receive spiritual wisdom and revelation, to know God better, and to understand the hope and power available to them in Christ.

**Ephesians 1:15-23** *"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*

In this passage, Paul expresses his gratitude for the Ephesian believers and prays that they may grow in their knowledge of God, understand the hope of their calling, and experience the greatness of God's power. We will break down this passage into three main sections: Paul's thanksgiving and prayer (15-17), the enlightenment of the heart (18-19), and the exaltation of Christ (20-23).

### **1. Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:15-17)**

Paul begins this section by expressing his gratitude for the faith and love of the Ephesian believers. He then outlines his specific prayer for them, asking God to grant them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

#### *Thanksgiving for Faith and Love*

*"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers."* Paul is deeply thankful for the faith and love of the Ephesians. Their faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all God's people are evidence of their genuine conversion and commitment to Christ. Paul's gratitude is a reminder of the importance of recognizing and celebrating the faith and love in our own community. When we see others living out their faith and loving others, it should prompt us to give thanks and encourage them in their walk with Christ.

#### *Prayer for the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*

*"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better."* Paul's prayer is that the believers may receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God better. This prayer emphasizes the need for spiritual growth and a deeper relationship with God.

The Spirit of wisdom and revelation is essential for understanding the depths of God's character and His plans for our lives. Wisdom allows us to apply God's truth to our daily lives, while revelation provides insight into the mysteries of God. Together, they enable us to know God more intimately and to live in alignment with His will.

## **2. The Enlightenment of the Heart (1:18-19)**

Paul continues his prayer by asking that the eyes of the believers' hearts may be enlightened. He wants them to grasp three specific truths: the hope of their calling, the riches of God's glorious inheritance, and the greatness of His power.

### *Knowing the Hope of Our Calling*

*"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you."* Paul prays for the enlightenment of the heart so that believers may understand the hope of their calling. This hope is rooted in God's promises and in His eternal plan for us.

The hope of our calling includes our future inheritance, eternal life, and the assurance of being with Christ forever. Understanding this hope gives us a sense of purpose and direction, motivating us to live faithfully and confidently in the present.

### *Understanding the Riches of God's Glorious Inheritance*

*"The riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people."* Paul wants the believers to grasp the incredible value and richness of God's inheritance in them. This inheritance is not only what we receive from God but also how God views us as His treasured possession. Recognizing that we are God's inheritance gives us a profound sense of worth and significance. It reminds us that we are deeply loved and valued by God, chosen to be His people and to share in His glory.

### *Experiencing the Greatness of God's Power*

*"And his incomparably great power for us who believe."* Paul prays that believers may experience the greatness of God's power, which is available to us through faith. This power is the same mighty strength that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at God's right hand. Understanding and experiencing God's power is crucial for living a victorious Christian life. It enables us to overcome sin, endure trials, and fulfill God's purposes.

This power is not just a theological concept but a dynamic reality that transforms our lives. God's power and God's grace are one in the same. The best definition of 'grace' and one which is consistent with all the references to grace in the Bible, is 'God's empowering presence.' So, for Paul, to experience the reality of grace in our lives is to experience God's incomparably great power.

## **3. The Exaltation of Christ (1:20-23)**

Paul concludes this passage by highlighting the exaltation of Christ. He describes how God's power raised Christ from the dead, seated Him at His right hand, and appointed Him as the head of the church.

### *The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ*

*"That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms."* Paul emphasizes that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to believers.

The resurrection of Christ is the ultimate demonstration of God's power over sin and death. Christ's ascension to the right hand of God signifies His authority and sovereignty. He is exalted above all rule, authority, power, and dominion. This position of honour reflects the fullness of His victory and the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.

### *Christ's Supremacy Over All Things*

*"Far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."* Christ's supremacy extends over all spiritual and earthly powers. He is exalted above every name and title, both now and in the future. This supremacy assures us that Christ is in control and that nothing can thwart His purposes. It gives us confidence and security, knowing that our Saviour reigns over all things and that His authority is unchallenged.

### *Christ as Head of the Church*

*"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."* Paul concludes by affirming that Christ is the head of the church, His body. The church is the fullness of Christ, Who fills everything in every way. As the head of the church, Christ provides leadership, direction, and sustenance. He unites and empowers His body, enabling us to carry out His mission on earth. Our identity and purpose as the church are rooted in our relationship with Christ, who fills us with His presence and power.

## **Practical Applications:**

### *Cultivate Gratitude and Prayer*

Reflect on Paul's example of thanksgiving and prayer for the believers. Take time to express gratitude for the faith and love of those in your church community. Make it a habit to pray for others, like Paul did here, asking God to give them spiritual wisdom and revelation. Consider keeping a prayer diary where you record your prayers for others and the ways God answers them. Reflecting on these entries can help you cultivate a thankful heart and recognize God's faithfulness in your life. This practice can help you stay focused and intentional in your prayers, fostering a deeper sense of connection and intercession for your church family.

Find a prayer partner or join a prayer group where you can share prayer requests and pray for one another. This practice fosters accountability and encouragement in your prayer life. You should also incorporate thanksgiving into your personal and corporate worship times. Express gratitude to God for His blessings, His faithfulness, and the faith and love of your church community.

### *Seek Spiritual Wisdom and Revelation*

Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in your own life. Ask God to deepen your understanding of His character, His will and His purposes. Seek to know God better through prayer, Bible study, and meditation on His Word. Join a Bible study group or find a spiritual mentor who can help you grow in your knowledge of God. Engage in regular times of personal study and reflection, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal new insights and truths to you.

Develop a personal study plan that includes regular Bible reading, reflection, and study. Choose a specific book of the Bible or a topic to explore in depth and seek God's wisdom and revelation as you study.

You could also set aside time for spiritual retreats or quiet days where you can focus on prayer, reflection, and seeking God's guidance. These times of intentional solitude can provide space for God to speak to you and reveal His will.

### *Embrace the Hope of Your Calling*

Reflect on the hope to which you have been called. Allow this hope to shape your perspective and priorities. Trust in God's promises and His eternal plan for your life, and let this assurance give you confidence and direction. Write down the specific promises of God that give you hope and meditate on them regularly. When faced with challenges or uncertainties, remind yourself of these promises and the hope you have in Christ.

Memorize key Scriptures that highlight the hope of your calling. Let these verses encourage and strengthen you, especially during times of difficulty or doubt and always look for opportunities to share the hope of your calling with others. Whether through conversations, testimonies, or acts of service, let your life be a beacon of hope to those around you.

### *Value Your Inheritance in Christ*

Understand the richness of God's inheritance in you. Recognize your worth and significance as God's treasured possession. Let this truth give you a sense of purpose and motivate you to live a life that honours God. Reflect on how being part of God's inheritance affects your identity and your actions. Consider how you can live out this identity in your relationships, work, and service. Celebrate your inheritance by sharing your faith and the love of Christ with others.

Write down some affirmations based on your identity in Christ and God's inheritance in you. Speak these affirmations daily to remind yourself of how God sees you and who you are in Christ.

Celebrate spiritual milestones and growth in your life and the lives of others. Acknowledge the ways God is working and the inheritance you share as His people.

Use your gifts and talents to serve others and build up the body of Christ. Recognize that your service is part of your inheritance and calling as a child of God.

### *Experience God's Power*

Seek to experience the greatness of God's power in your daily life. Depend on His strength to overcome challenges, resist temptation, and fulfill His purposes. Remember that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to you. Pray for God's empowering presence to be evident in specific areas of your life. Whether it is overcoming a particular sin, enduring a difficult situation, or stepping out in faith to serve - ask God to demonstrate His power in and through you.

Ask for His strength to overcome challenges, fulfill your calling, and demonstrate His love and grace to others and take steps of faith that require you to rely on God's power. Whether it's starting a new ministry, sharing your faith, or making a difficult decision, trust that God will empower you.

Share testimonies of God's power in your life with others. Encourage them with stories of how God has worked in and through you. This will inspire them to also trust in His power.

### *Recognize Christ's Authority*

Acknowledge Christ's supremacy and authority over all things. Trust in His sovereignty and control, even when circumstances seem uncertain or challenging. Let His authority give you confidence and peace. Reflect on areas of your life where you need to submit to Christ's authority.

Surrender your fears, plans, and decisions to Him, trusting that He is in control and will guide you according to His perfect will. Ask for His guidance and trust in His sovereignty, knowing that He is in control.

In decision-making, seek Christ's will through prayer, Scripture, and godly counsel. Trust that His authority will lead you in the right direction. Live with confidence and peace, knowing that Christ is supreme over all things. Let His authority give you assurance in the face of uncertainty and challenges.

### *Live as Part of Christ's Body*

Embrace your role as a member of the body of Christ. Seek to contribute to the health and growth of the church by using the gifts God has awakened in you by serving others. Recognize that your identity and purpose are rooted in your relationship with Christ, the head of the church. Get involved in your local church by participating in ministries, small groups, and outreach opportunities. Look for ways to serve and support your church family, building up the body of Christ and reflecting His love to the world.

Identify and use your spiritual gifts to serve others and build up the church. Seek opportunities to minister and support your church community. Invest in building strong relationships within your church. Foster a sense of community and belonging, and encourage one another in your faith journeys.

### **Conclusion**

In Ephesians 1:15-23, Paul expresses his gratitude for the Ephesian believers and prays that they may receive spiritual wisdom and revelation, understand the hope of their calling, and experience the greatness of God's power. As we reflect on these vital truths, let us cultivate gratitude and prayer, seek to know God better, embrace our hope and inheritance in Christ, experience His power, recognize His authority, and live as part of His body.