

Ephesians 1:15-23: 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 a 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 might²⁰ 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.

Intro: Last Sunday we focused on the Word of God, especially the preached Word of God, to encourage you to pursue God in His Word in 2023 like you never have before. Today we focus on prayer to encourage you to pursue God in prayer in 2023 like you never have before. To do that, we are meditating on one of Paul's Holy Spirit inspired prayers for the church in Ephesus. We can learn how to pray by looking at this prayer, but we also learn so much about what God does for us in Christ: **Our Sovereign God grants us power to know God, to know our hope, to know God's love for us (we are His inheritance), to know God's power for us, and to know Christ Who has all power and authority and Who is all in all!** Pray the Bible! Pray the Bible! Pray the Bible!

1. Paul's Reasons For This Prayer: Faith, Love, And God's Glorious Work Of Redemption

Eph. 1:15: For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus & your love toward all the saints

Paul writes that he's praying "For this reason," and the "For this reason" looks forward and backward.

a. It looks forward to the Ephesian Christian's faith in the Lord Jesus & their love toward all the saints:

Paul is praying because he's heard of these believers' faith and love. Their faith and love motivate Paul to pray for them, and he prays that their faith and love will grow! They have faith & love, but there's more to have!

b. But the "For this reason" also looks backward to God's glorious work that made the faith and love of these Christians a reality: Ephesians 1:3-14: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love⁵ he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,⁶ **to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ **might be to the praise of his glory**.¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory**.

(Dever: Prayer should be up & out./A-Adoration; C-Confession; T-Thanksgiving; S-Supplication)

2. Paul's Ceaseless Thanks And Ceaseless Prayers

Ephesians 1:16: I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers

a. Paul always gives thanks to God for others: His thanksgiving is always Godward: God focused! (Anthony ex)

b. Paul prays without ceasing: 1 Thessalonians 5:17: pray without ceasing

John Piper: 1) There is a spirit of dependence that should permeate all we do; 2) Pray repeatedly and often; 3) Don't stop praying! Don't ever give up! Ever!

3. Paul's Object In This Prayer

Ephesians 1:17: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory

a. As believers we can pray to the Son & to the Holy Spirit. But the normal pattern we see in Scripture is prayer addressed to the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit: Here, Paul prays to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory! We see two Persons of the trinity here: The Lord Jesus Christ & His God: the Father of glory: Verses 6, 12, & 14 – God the Father acted to save us for His own glory!

D. A. Carson: glory is often associated both with God's domain and with his gracious self-disclosure. Thus it is the God of glory who appears to Abraham when he is still in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2). When Moses wants to know more of God, he begs the Almighty to show him his glory – and this God does, even if it is only the trailing edge of his glory. Jesus wants to return to the domain of his Father, to the glory he shared with the Father before the world began. Even so, what he has been doing on earth, what he does supremely on the cross, is to manifest God's glory. Glory is the Christian's ultimate destination, and already we "are being transformed into [the Lord's] likeness with ever-increasing glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Thus for Paul to pray to the Father of glory is to confess his awareness of God's proper domain, to articulate his gratitude for God's gracious self-disclosure, and to hold up the Father's domain as the Christian's ultimate hope.

b. What an unbelievable honor it is to call God Father: J. I. Packer: Adoption is the highest privilege that the Gospel offers: higher even than justification . . . To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater.

Kevin DeYoung: Jesus wants us to call the God of the universe; the God Who made the world out of nothing; the God Who calls all of the trillions of stars out by name; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea; the God of the glory cloud filling the tabernacle; the God who shakes the cedars of Lebanon; the God Who showed Himself to Daniel as the Ancient of Days; the God before Whom no one can stand face to face and live! Jesus wants us to call this God, Father!

Jesus is God: 1 Corinthians 2:8: they would not have crucified the **Lord of glory.**

James 2:1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Lord of glory.**

4. Paul's Petitions In This Prayer

a. V. 17: Paul prays that the Father may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him: Paul prays that the Christians in Ephesus will be given a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. He wants them to know God more! Some argue the "spirit" mentioned here is the Holy Spirit.

b. V. 18: Paul prays that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened: This knowledge of God only comes when God Himself enlightens our eyes! Just as this happened when we were first converted, it has to keep happening that we might know God more: **Acts 16:14:** [Lydia] The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

John Piper: I: Incline my heart to your testimonies (Psalm 119:36).

O: Open my eyes to see wonderful things in Your Word (Psalm 119:18).

U: Unite my heart to fear your name (Psalm 86:11).

S: Satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love that I might be joyful in you all my days (Psalm 90:14).

c. V. 18: Paul prays that they would know what is the hope to which God has called them: We have a great hope through God in Christ! Hope of salvation! Hope of everlasting joy! Hope of pleasures that increase forever!

D. A. Carson: this "hope" is nothing less than life in the new heaven and the new earth, life in the presence of God. It is the "hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), the hope of sharing that glory, the hope of appearing with

Christ in glory at the end (Col. 3:4). It is the anticipation of being presented to Christ “without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:27).

d. V. 18: Paul prays that they would know what are the riches of God’s glorious inheritance in the saints:

1) God gives us a great inheritance! (glory; world; all things); 2) We are God’s heritage/inheritance:

- **1 Kings 8:53:** [Solomon] For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage

- **Psalm 94:14:** For the LORD will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage

D. A. Carson: Already in this chapter Paul has told us that God will redeem those who constitute his possession at the consummation (1:14). We are God’s inheritance; to use the language of the fourth Gospel, we are those whom the Father has given to the Son, his gift to his Messiah. The thought would be incredible were it not for the fact that God sees us in Christ. God’s valuation of his people is established by his valuation of Christ. We need to know who we are, as God sees us. We need to know who we are, as God sees us. Paul wants us to appreciate the value that God places on us, not because we are intrinsically worthy but because we have been identified with Christ. We have been chosen in Christ; his righteousness has been reckoned ours; our destiny is to be joint-heirs with him. If we maintain this vision before our eyes of who we are – nothing less than God’s inheritance! – we will be concerned to live in line with this unimaginably high calling.

- **Zechariah 2:8:** For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye:

- **Zephaniah 3:17:** The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

Are you a saint? Are you part of God’s precious inheritance? GOSPEL!

e. V. 19: Paul prays that they would know what is the immeasurable greatness of God’s power toward those

who believe: We have immeasurably great power as God’s children! We have immeasurably great power to know God! We have immeasurably great power to trust in God! We have immeasurably great power to delight in God! We have immeasurably great power to obey God! We have immeasurably great power to fight sin and turn from sin! We have immeasurably great power to grow in holiness and be more like Jesus! We have immeasurably great power to persevere to the end! God, the Father of glory, will keep us! He will hold us fast!

1) God’s power toward & for believers is great might (V. 19): Romans 8:31: What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

- **Shai Linne:** God is the universe's Creator and Sustainer plus the only Savior, there is no one greater. He's triune, holy, omnipotent, omniscient, absolute, loving, sovereign, and righteous are a few of His attributes!

- **Song:** My God is so big, so strong and so mighty; There's nothing my God cannot do!

2) This power toward & for believers is God’s power that raised Christ from the dead (V. 20): Romans 8:11:

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

3) This power toward & for believers is God’s power that seated Christ at God’s right hand (V. 20): Acts 2:32-33: This Jesus God raised up, & of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God

Eric Watkins: If the resurrection is the main event of history and the climax of the Christian story, the ascension is the crowning of our King as He sits upon His throne in glory. From there, He bestows many fine gifts upon us, the chief of which is union with Him through the Holy Spirit. In Christ, we find life and fitness for service to the King of kings and Lord of lords who is our divine Rescuer and the Lover of our souls.

Robert Letham: Christ is heir to the cosmos (Col. 1:16). It was created in him, through him, and for him. He maintains it in being and directs it to its appointed goal. The reconciliation he achieved relates not only to the church but to the entire universe (Col. 1:19-20). This inheritance he received at his resurrection, his ascension to the Father effecting his enthronement as king. While as Son, he ruled inseparably with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the indivisible trinity, this was his investiture as king in his incarnational, mediatorial office. In his ascension Christ publicly displays his conquest of his enemies, as in a triumphant victory procession (Eph. 4:8-10). Christ's realm is universal. He has ascended far above the heavens and now fills all things. He has passed through his territory and has won the authority throughout his realm. From this, the cosmos will be liberated when Christ returns (Rom. 8:18-23) . . . By his ascension Christ establishes the church, granting gifts to it for its preservation and advancement (Eph. 4:11f). All that he did and does is in union with us. We were in him in his ascension. We too have ascended to the right hand of the Father in Christ. We too sit with him in heavenly places. Christ is not king merely over a collection of disparate individuals but over his covenant people, of which individuals are a part.

4) This power toward & for believers is God's power that seated Christ above all (V. 21):

1. Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion (V. 21): Colossians 2:9-10, 15: For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority . . . ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

2. Far above all names (V. 21): Philippians 2:5-11: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

3. Far above all for all time (V. 21): Daniel 7:13-14: I saw in the night visions, & behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, & he came to the Ancient of Days & was presented before him. & to him was given dominion & glory & a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, & languages should serve him; **his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, & his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**

4. All things are put under Christ's feet (V. 22): Jesus fulfills Psalm 8:6; **1 Corinthians 15:24-27:** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule & every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet."

5. Christ is the Head over all things (V. 22): Christ is the sovereign ruling authority over all things! He is supreme! He is preeminent! He is superior! He is the greatest! He's the Alpha and the Omega! He's the First and the Last! He's the Beginning and the End! He's King of kings and LORD of lords!

John Piper: If there is anything admirable, if there is anything worthy of praise in all the universe, it is summed up in Jesus Christ. He is always infinitely admirable in everything and over everything supreme. He is sovereign and supreme over all plants and animals; He is supreme over all weather; all chemical processes and all the amazing grace of antibiotics; He is supreme over all countries and governments and armies; He is supreme over all nuclear threats; He is supreme over politics; He is supreme over all education and universities, no matter what they teach; And He is supreme over all scholarship and science and research; He is supreme over all business and finance and industry and manufacturing and transportation; and He is supreme over the internet and all informational systems. As Abraham Kuyper famously said, "there is not one square inch on planet earth over which the risen Christ does not say Mine!"

6. God gave Christ to the church (V. 22): This is the most glorious wedding! Christ is the heavenly, perfect Husband. The church is His pure, spotless bride! **Pastor:** God created the world to get a bride for His Son!

7. The church is Christ's body (V. 23): Acts 9:4: And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

8. The church is filled/completed by Christ (V. 23): Ephesians 3:19: to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:13: [God gave gifts to the church] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

Jonathan Edwards: The end [goal] of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for His Son Jesus Christ [who] might enjoy Him & on whom He might pour forth His love. & the end of all things in providence are to make way for the exceeding expressions of Christ's love to His spouse & for her exceeding close & intimate union with, & high & glorious enjoyment of Him & to bring this to pass. & therefore the last thing & the issue of all things is the marriage of the Lamb. & the wedding day is the last day, the day of judgment, or rather that will be the beginning of it. The wedding feast is eternal; & the love & joys, the songs, entertainments & glories of the wedding never will be ended. It will be an everlasting wedding day! . . . She shall then be brought to the entertainments of an eternal wedding feast, & to dwell eternally with her bridegroom; yea to dwell eternally in His embraces. Then Christ will give her His love, & she shall drink her fill, yea she shall swim in the ocean of His love.

9. The fullness of Him (Vs. 22-23): the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all:

1) Christ is the fullness: **Colossians 2:9:** For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily

2) (Calvin & Charles Hodge) The church completes Christ – the church is the fullness. (Adam and Eve example;

Michael Osborne: the church completes Christ, not in the sense that Christ, in His Person or Being lacks anything, but in the sense that Christ's mission is completed by all His elect being saved and conformed into His image – He came to save His bride – and when He does His mission is complete!)

3) Christ fills the church with power and life; **Commentator:** Christ fills believers with His Spirit, grace, and gifts.

Finally in V. 23, Christ does fill all in all: Commentator: Christ is the one who completely fills "everything," that is, the whole of creation, the earthly & the heavenly, comprising all of humanity as well as the entire angelic realm, especially the rebellious powers . . . Christ pervades all things with his sovereign rule, directing all things to their appointed end, & this entails his functioning as the powerful ruler over against the principalities & giving grace and strength to his people, the church.

Pray the Bible! Noon day prayer; Evening prayer; Wednesday night Bible study/prayer; Prayer in church; Family time prayer; Before meal prayers; Prayer with/for each other; Personal, private prayer; Prayer before Bible reading

Christ Jesus Moves Saint Paul To Pray
With Ceaseless Thanks And Praise Array
Our Glorious Father Hears Him Say
Grant Hearts To Know Our God Who May
Enlighten Eyes Without Delay
For Greatest Hope And Riches Yea
His Power's Immeasurable Display
For Those Believing Christ The Way
Who Evil Men Would Mock, Betray

He Bore God's Wrath, He'd Die, They'd Slay
But Then He Rose On That Third Day
He Rules O'er All, Don't Go Astray
But Bow To Him, His Word Obey
He Heads The Church With Perfect Sway
Fills All In All, You Can't Repay
In Christ You'll Always Be Okay
Our Savior None Can Take Away
For He's Our All And Joy And Stay!