



Ephesians 1:15-23

KNOW YOUR BLESSINGS!

Here we see a prayer Paul offered with the intention of strengthening Christ's church. What did Paul ask? That we might know God better. That we might look beyond appearances, to see the church as God does—a people transformed to display His glory, unspeakably precious to Him. That we might sense and experience the working of "His incomparably great power for us who believe." I suppose it's all right to pray for that addition to a new Sunday School wing. Or the funds to go on the radio. But if we want our church to truly be the church, the things Paul prayed for here are vastly more important.

—Lawrence Richards

If the apostle Paul were to pray for CBC...and for you as a believer in Christ...what would he pray? Ephesians 1:15-23 gives us a window into Paul's prayer life and also teaches us how we should pray, what we should pray for, and what we need to know and grasp onto as believers and as a church.

THE CATALYSTS TO PAUL'S PRAYER (1:15)

For this reason...

After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints... (cf. Gal. 5:6; Col. 1:4; 2 Th. 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:5; Phile. 5)

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S PRAYER (1:16)

- C _____
- T _____
- S _____

THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S PRAYER (1:17-23)

Paul's prayer has one main request—that God would give them the ability to grasp His _____ in their relationship with Him, through His Spirit, with the eyes of their heart.

The whole Christian life depends on the clear consciousness of our position in Christ.

—Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

Where faith is genuine, it will always be manifested by love.

—H.A. Ironside

The measure of our love for others can largely be determined by the frequency and earnestness of our prayers for them.

—A.W. Pink

The prayer is not for some further Spirit reception, but for the indwelling Spirit whom they have already received to give them further wisdom and revelation.

—Gordon D. Fee

William Chillingworth said: "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." The exposition of Scripture from the pulpit is a first necessity of religious wakening. We are interested, not in what a preacher thinks, but in what God says.

—William Barclay

"If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." —John 8:31b-32

Paul's prayer is that believers would use their spiritual eyes in order to see, embrace, and experience three great truths:

1. WE HAVE AN ASSURED _____ IN CHRIST.

Our calling. By God's grace, we have been called out of darkness and into His light, out of death and to salvation, for His purpose (cf. Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 4:1).

Our hope. We look to the future with confident hope (cf. Psalm 62:5-7; Rom. 5:1-5; 15:13; Heb. 10:23; 1 Pet. 1:3-9).

2. WE HAVE ABUNDANT _____ IN CHRIST.

Our glorious riches as God's people (cf. Titus 2:14)

Our glorious riches as God's heirs (cf. Rom. 8:15-17, 31-32)

3. WE HAVE AVAILABLE _____ IN CHRIST.

His great power has been exercised for us in Christ.

His great power works through us as the body of Christ.

What does all this mean for us today?

- I can live each day with confidence.
- I can live each day with contentment.
- I can live each day with celebration!

Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy (Col. 1:11)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)

Paul is not speaking so much about what we have in Christ, but about what He has in us... He thinks of us as His inheritance. In the Old Testament, that's what Israel was called; she was called "The Lord's Portion," the Lord's inheritance. (cf. Deut 32:9) And that's what we are. We are the Lord's Portion, the Lord's Inheritance. We have an inheritance in Him and He has an inheritance in us. God glories in his saints. Isn't that something? That's amazing.

—S. Lewis Johnson

Power. Greek, *dunamis*, inherent power, power within the very nature of something.

Working. Greek, *energeia*, active power, power at work.

Mighty. Greek, *ischus*, power in reserve, power available and given at the time it is needed.

Strength. Greek, *kratos*, supernatural, awesome power, that can overcome any obstacle.

The omnipotent God displays His power in us by giving us strength to overcome any obstacle at the very time we need it.

*The Resurrection proclaims "He lives—and that forever!"
The Exaltation proclaims "He reigns—and that forever!"*

—Peter T. O'Brien

There is given to the Church, and for the Church's benefit, a Head who is also Head over all things. The church has authority and power to overcome all opposition because her Leader and Head is Lord of all [Matt. 28:18].

—Francis Foulkes