

# The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

## The Revelation of God

### Ephesians 1:15-23

***Ephesians 1:15-23** Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, **16** Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; **17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: **18** The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, **19** And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, **20** Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, **21** Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: **22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, **23** Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Introduction*

---

#### Introduction

In the first fourteen verses of the first chapter, we have been introduced to the salvation work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

God the Father's work was and is in eternity past. He chose us before the foundation of the world, predestinated us into adoption into the family, and He accepted us.

God the Son's work was and is in history past. Jesus redeemed us through His blood, forgiven our sins and gave us wisdom and prudence.

God the Holy Spirit's work was and is in present day. Believers have been and will be sealed with Him as He is the earnest of our inheritance.

Today we will be introduced to one of four the Apostle Paul's prison prayers (Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12). In each of these prayers, Paul wants his converts to understand the joys of the blessings of God.

I believe today, many Christians are ignorant of the “spiritual blessings in heavenly places” and instead concern their lives with the blessings they find here on earth. I can understand this misguided goal as this is where we now live. We are on planet earth and this is all we know. Get a high school education. Go to college so you can have a better life for you and your family. Belong to organizations that can help you in the future to obtain your goals. These are what we are taught from our childhood. And on the surface they are great goals.

But a better question would be, what steps have we taken in order to enhance our spiritual lives? What are you doing to gain more knowledge of what God has for you? This is the lesson that Paul wanted his followers to understand. Paul was attempting to take their minds off of material things and place it on spiritual possessions.

As we read this prayer this morning, let us see very clearly, that Paul was not asking God to give believers what they did not have, but instead to open their eyes to what the Lord had already given them.

We can be relatively blind to God’s blessings. Many of our prayers center on requests we make to God. But how often do we center our prayer on thanks-giving unto the LORD? It may be difficult to begin, but simply start your prayer like you normally do and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind all the blessings you have from God. I will tell you from personal experience that this is one of the most wonderful prayer times I have. It helps to center me on my vertical relationship with God. I find that after this type of prayer, my check-list of needs gets really small.

As an example of focusing on things we don’t have instead of blessings we do, there is a story about the late newspaper publisher, William Randolph Hearst, who had a fondness of collecting.

*William Randolph Hearst invested a fortune in collecting works of art for his fabled home, Hearst Castle. The story goes that one day he read about some valuable pieces of art he just had to have. So he sent his art agent to Europe to find them. The agent looks high and low. Months go by. Finally he returns to California and reports to Hearst that the items have at last been found – but that Hearst absolutely cannot purchase them. Hearst is furious. “Name the price!” he says, “I must buy them!” “I am sorry sir,” the agent answers, “but that is impossible!”*

*Hearst was confused until the agent explains why: They’re already stored in his own warehouse. Hearst had purchased them years before!*

*He'd owned them all along but was still seeking them, because they were hidden away, out of sight.<sup>1</sup>*

## The Opening of the Prayer - Thanksgiving for the Ephesian's Faith

***Ephesians 1:15-16*** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

---

Notice the reason for Paul ceasing “not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers”, is he “heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” What a wonderful reputation; you have great faith in the Lord Jesus and you love the saints. I wonder what the church today would look like if every member would be known by this character and reputation.

Because of their faith and love, the Apostle keeps them in his prayers. They are a blessing unto Paul.

## That God May Give Wisdom and Knowledge of Him (1:17)

***Ephesians 1:17*** *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

---

Paul's prayer is that the church at Ephesus will gain a profound and enduring knowledge of God.

J. Vernon McGee writes of this verse:

*“Paul, having written that the church is the body of Christ, and that God the Father planned it, God the Son paid for it and God the Holy Spirit protects it, recognized that the Ephesians wouldn't be able to understand all this unless the Spirit of God was their teacher and opened the Word of God to them. Only the Holy Spirit of God could reveal the knowledge of God.”<sup>2</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> The Treasure You Already Have, [www.graceimmersion.com/day30](http://www.graceimmersion.com/day30)

<sup>2</sup> Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Swordsearcher

Please notice that the “*Father of glory*” is “*the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is a repeat of Ephesians 1:3 in the description of God. This phrase does not diminish the deity of Jesus, but reinforces the work of the God-head; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The *glory* contains, honor, praise and worship.

“*Spirit of wisdom*” is the Holy Spirit’s work in the believer. The Holy Spirit gives insight into the glory of God and the plan of salvation for all man.

“*Revelation in the knowledge of him*” – The Holy Spirit continues His work in the believer by revealing the glories and mysteries of the Father. This work never ceases.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

*“The believer must grow in his knowledge of God. To know God personally is salvation (John 17:3). To know Him increasingly is sanctification (Philippians 3:10). To know Him perfectly is glorification (1 Corinthians 13:9-12). Since we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28), the better we know God, the better we know ourselves and each other. It is not enough to God only as Savior. We must get to know Him as Father, Friend, Guide, and the better we know Him, the more satisfying our spiritual lives will be.”<sup>3</sup>*

The term “knowing Christ” is the way believers in the New Testament spoke about having a saving faith. This is identified in the prayer of Jesus after His last dinner with the Apostles and the Garden of Gethsemane. In the opening of His prayer, Jesus prays:

**John 17:3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

---

This knowledge is a relationship and the Holy Spirit will bring the wisdom and knowledge of God and Christ to the believer.

That We Might Know the Hope of His Calling (1:18a)

**Ephesians 1:18** *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling...*

---

<sup>3</sup> The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, New Testament, Warren Wiersbe, David C. Cook publishing, p589

The reference to the “eyes” is the spiritual eyes of the believer. Paul wants the spiritual side of man to understand and be enlightened. When things are enlightened, they are made visible. If you have ever been in a large cave, you have seen the beauty of the cave because it is lit up. Some caves are magnificent like Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. But if the light goes out, you can no longer see and you miss the beauty that is all around you. That is what Paul wants. He wants the understanding of the hope of his calling to be illuminated in the believer.

Our hope of His calling took place before the creation and was sealed in the believer by the work of the Holy Spirit. That is the truth that Paul is illuminating; Our Hope!

That We Might Know the Riches of Glory of His Inheritance (1:18b)

***Ephesians 1:18 ...and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,***

---

The second area that Paul says that needs to be illuminated is the “*riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*” In the previous verses in Ephesians, Paul has had much to say about the glory of God.

***Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.***

***Ephesians 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.***

***Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.***

***Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:***

***Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,***

---

It is the glory of the God’s inheritance that Paul was to ensure that the Ephesians needed to illuminate and appreciate. Glory of His inheritance becomes our inheritance. Concentrate on that point today church and worship God. We should glory in all that God has seen fit for Christians to obtain.

*When all my labors and trials are o'er,  
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,  
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.*

*Refrain:*

*Oh, that will be glory for me,  
Glory for me, glory for me,  
When by His grace I shall look on His face,  
That will be glory, be glory for me.*

*When, by the gift of His infinite grace,  
I am accorded in heaven a place,  
Just to be there and to look on His face,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.  
Friends will be there I have loved long ago;  
Joy like a river around me will flow;  
Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.<sup>4</sup>*

This song was based off of another of the Apostle Paul's letters, to the Romans:

**Romans 8:17** *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

---

That We Might Know the Greatness of His Power (1:19-23)

**Ephesians 1:19-23** *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly*

---

<sup>4</sup> Oh, That Will Be Glory, Charles H. Gabriel, Public Domain

*places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

---

Focus in on the words; “*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to-us-ward who believe.*” Oh I feel like singing that chorus again, “Oh that will be, Glory for me.”

In verse 20 Paul gives the Gospel, followed by the standing of Jesus today. Notice the position of Jesus: 1) far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion. 2) far above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

God has placed everything under his power.

Jesus is the head over all things to the church.

God says that Jesus is the completion and fulfillment of the church. The church is filled by those accomplishments.

Conclusion

In the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, Paul speaks of having knowledge of God. Knowing Jesus is more than facts about Him.

I am a very big fan of Tim Tebow. Tim’s full name is Timothy Richard Tim Tebow. I was so happy when the Denver Broncos drafted him in the first round (25<sup>th</sup> overall) of the 2010 draft. I know about his parents, Robert and Pamela, and the ministry that they have had in the Philippines. Tim was born in August of 1987 in Makati, Philippines. He is the youngest of five children. He was the first-ever sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy in 2007. He was the winner of the Davey O’Brien Award as the nation’s best college quarterback. He was two-time winner of the Maxwell Award as the nation’s top college football player. He also was the winner of the James E Sullivan Award as the nation’s most outstanding amateur athlete in any sport.

His favorite song is “Where I’m From” by Jason Michael Carroll. His favorite quote is “Hard work beats talent when talent doesn’t work hard.” He is 6’3” and weighs 240 lbs.

I know everything about Tim Tebow. But he doesn’t know me. He has never heard of me nor have we ever met face to face. I know all about Tim, but I don’t a personal relationship with him. To truly know another, there must be a common and shared knowledge of each other and a common and shared give-and-take.

Tragically, there are many religious people who know all about Jesus. They can quote Him. They can study him and His message. They can know His disciples. But they tragically do not know him in the biblical sense. Having a spiritual knowledge of Jesus is the difference. There must be a relationship; an intimate exchange on both sides.

Humans have a general desire to share, belong and to love. Intimate relationships involve an attraction between two people. In this place I am talking about an intimate relationship between God and you.

I have studied Tim Tebow and know all about him, but I do not have an intimate relationship with him.

Do you have a working knowledge of Jesus? Have you read about Him? Have you studied his speeches and His miracles? If you do that is great! But, that does not mean you have a personal relationship with Jesus. The real question; Is He in you and you in Him?

*Robert C. Crowder*