

Ephesians

Week Three: It's a Real Relationship A Prayer for Wisdom, Revelation and Power

Problem & Solution: (for leaders)

**Our response to the amazing truth of the gospel and all the spiritual blessings is often to assume that we already know it, understand it and believe it. Such presumption prevents us from truly tapping into the power that resides in the gospel for daily life. – As we truly believe the gospel, trusting in the real relationship we have with God through Christ, we tap into the power of the risen Christ who has authority over all things. In so doing, we begin to see Him as he truly is, growing in wisdom and knowledge and intimacy with Him.*

Introduction:

*Have you ever experienced someone forming an opinion of you based on things they have heard but without actually knowing you? (or have you ever done that yourself?) How accurate were their or your assumption of who they are?

The Biblical Text: Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul's Prayer (v.15-23):

*Why is Paul thankful? (the passage starts with *for this reason...* what is the reason?)

*In addition to giving thanks, Paul prays that God would give them a “spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Why is knowledge of God foundational for believers? What is the source of wisdom which leads to this knowledge?

*Why do you think it is important that their hearts’ are enlightened and not just their intellect? (*This is something that they already have as believers. However let’s look at the source of their unbelief—it may come from lack of knowledge but it also may be due to a lack of belief on a heart level of what they are already know to be true*)

*In Ephesians 1:18-19 Paul asks that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened so that they may know what three realities? (*The hope to which He called them; the riches of the glory of His inheritance; the surpassing greatness of His power.*) What do each of these three mean? (*hope for future with God; God’s inheritance in his people, the power of God in his people*)

*Paul goes on to pray that we will know the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. According to verses 19-23, how has God demonstrated His power? (*Through the resurrection of Christ. Christ is seated at the right hand of God; God put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church*)

Conclusion:

*What do your prayers typically look like? How is Paul’s prayer here different? (*it’s focused on God, and specifically his people seeing Him; our prayers are typically focused on ourselves and what we think we need*) What would it look like for us to pray like Paul does?

*Imagine that Paul’s prayer was answered in your life. What do you think that would look like? What might look different? What are the implications of Paul’s prayer for our relationship with God?

*What are the implications of Paul’s prayer for our relationship with God? What does it look like to continually pursue the things Paul prays for in our own lives?

G o i n g D e e p e r

Additional Discussion Questions:

*What is the “hope” to which we have been called? [*The word hope carries with it a confident expectation of the future. It is sure and certain. Before we came to know Christ we were separate from Christ, strangers to His promises, we had no hope, and were without God (Ephesians 2:12). But now, because we are in Christ, we have a sure and certain hope; therefore, Paul prays that we will know the hope of His calling. What is true of us and our future because of the hope of His calling?*

“We can look forward to a happy ending of life with God. Hope is therefore a positive force. God has built a bridge from no hope to hope in his creation of life in the midst of death. Hope is a life-changing experience. Paul does not present an otherworldly, pie-in-the-sky theology, but he does view God’s work in the resurrection as a cosmic event that has changed the course of history. He therefore prayed that people might know what God’s call meant for their future and, therefore, for their present...if God has called us to be among his future people, hope changes everything and becomes the basis from which we live in the present.” Klyne Snodgrass, NIVAC, 83.]

*What is the “inheritance” to which Paul refers? Is it God? Is it us? [*Ephesians 1:3-14 lists the riches that are ours in Christ – a lavish spiritual inheritance – which we’ll grow to know and understand in deeper ways as we walk with the Lord. Interestingly, however, Paul prays in verse 18 that we will know the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance. You and I (and every believer) are God’s inheritance. He sees us as His treasure, redeemed at great cost – the death of His Son.*]

*Paul goes on to pray that we will know the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. According to verses 19-23, how has God demonstrated His power? [*Through the resurrection of Christ. Christ is seated at the right hand of God; God put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church*]

Snodgrass writes, *“The power Christians have is not intrinsic power, something they have in themselves, but a power that comes from God, defined by the resurrection of Jesus and his exaltation as Lord over every other power, both now and in the future. Because no other power can rival him, and because in him the fullness of God lives, Christians do not have to look elsewhere to find what they need for life. What they need is in Christ. This power, however, is not power in the abstract, it is relational power – power that is known because of being bound to the one in whom power resides.”* (NIV Application Commentary, page 91)

Prayer

*Spend time in prayer as a small group: Split into pairs and pray Paul’s prayer in v.15-23 for one another replacing the pronouns with the other person’s name.

Check out D.A. Carson’s book “A Call to Spiritual Reformation” for more on how to pray like Paul.

How do other’s teach this text?

*Hear Jeff Purswell teach this text at Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland here:

http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671717-Prayer_for_Understanding_of_Gods_Mysterious_Blessings

or just check the Resource Library at www.covlife.org and search by passage if you don’t want to type in the whole address.