

## Ephesians 1:15-23 Bible Study

**Intro:** What sort of things have motivated you to pray over the past week? Has this been a regular occurrence? If not, why not?

### Read Ephesians 1:15-23.

1. From verses 15-17, what characteristics mark Paul's prayer? What is the reason he moves on to pray for them now? (cf. v3).

*Prays with thanks – for them as those who have faith and show love to God's people*

*Prays with persistence (=regularly) – “not stopped give things” (v16), “Keep asking” (v17).*

*“For this Reason” links us to the section before. I think it's clear that it encapsulates the whole of v3-14, of which v3 is the summary verse. (i.e. I'm praying for you because you have every Spiritual blessing in Christ).*

2. From verses 17-19a:

How many references to the idea of 'knowledge' can you find?

*About 5?? ('Spirit of wisdom...', '...and revelation', 'may know him better', 'eyes of your heart enlightened', 'so that you may know').*

What four things does Paul pray that the Ephesians will know?

*(Do this quickly – we'll zoom in on each of these in the following questions).*

- 'Him' = God*
- the hope to which you've been called*
- the riches of his glorious inheritance*
- his incomparably great power for us who believe*

*(in the English, it can look as if the 'glorious inheritance' is the same thing as the 'hope'... However, in the Greek, the three things (v18-19) are introduced with the same phrase which makes it clear that they are three separate things – in case anyone asks!).*

3. Do you wish that you did know God better? Can you look back and see that you have come to know him better over the past few years? How will knowing him better help us make sense of our experience of this world?

*It's helpful to see that this doesn't happen automatically. Some people may feel like they haven't grown in knowledge (not a bad thing to recognise – the encouragement is to pray this prayer!). Hopefully others will feel like they do know him better.*

*Knowing the God of the Bible will help us tell others about him because we know HIM. It'll help us when things seem to be going really badly; because we know he is at work in all things for good (Rom 8:28); etc. See what people come up with!*

4. What is the hope to which we've been called? How often are you aware of this certain hope in your daily life? How does knowing this hope help us face life's challenges?

*Some verses to spell out the hope (=heaven and all the blessings of it):*

*1 Thess 5:8 (Salvation); Gal 5:5 (Righteousness); 1 Cor 15:52-55 (resurrection and incorruptible body); Titus 1:2, 3:7 (eternal life), Rom 5:2 (the glory of God). Look some of these up if needed!*

*Hope brings the perspective we need. The more we grasp the certainty and goodness of what is to come, the less we will be sucked in to the things of this world that hold themselves out as fulfilling us, but won't. The more we will persevere through difficulty here because what is to come is so much better!*

5. In verse 14 Paul tells us about our inheritance. However, verse 18 tells us about **God's inheritance** – namely his people! Have you considered that God is looking forward to his inheritance?. How does viewing the church as God's inheritance affect our view of church?

*Firstly, the OT talks of God's people as his inheritance regularly (E.g. Deut 4:20; 9:26; 1 Kings 8:51).*

*God values his people – the church – and he is at work to prepare them for himself.*

*(Perhaps see Eph 5:25-27 to see what God is doing for his church = preparing it as a Bride for Christ). We too should value God's people. Invest in them, grow together, and look forward to this reality.*

*Notice also that God put all things under Christ's feet FOR the CHURCH v22. God's actively at work for the purposes of his church being transformed and brought into heaven as his inheritance.*

*We should invest in the church! See the good God is doing, and be a part of it.*

6. How does Paul describe the power that is at work in us (v19-22)? When do you think we see such power at work? How is it helpful to know this is true as we face the challenges of life?

*This is the power that raised Jesus to life and exalted him to God's right hand. This power also ensures that there is no one and nothing that will ever challenge Jesus' authority.*

*Cf. 3:16-17 Power = Christ dwelling in our hearts.*

*Resurrection power is seen when people turn to God in faith and repentance (it takes that much power to save us from sin!). It is seen as people persevere in the face of opposition and struggle; it is seen when sin is conquered in the life of a believer as the Spirit works.*

*God has us. He has sealed his people with his Spirit **guaranteeing** our inheritance (v13-14). God will complete his good work of saving people!*

Think back over your prayers for the past week or so. What have you prayed for? How have your prayers compared with what Paul prays here?