

Ephesians: Good News of the Church

Ephesians 1:15-23

"The Head of the Church"—September 4, 2022



Introduction

The church in Ephesus was outnumbered and hated by the people in the city. They were dealing with the pressure that came from those who didn't believe. The temptation was to be ashamed of their faith. Paul wrote this letter to encourage the saint in Ephesus.

At the beginning of chapter 1, Paul reminded them of all the blessings that they had in Christ. With all they had in Christ, there was no reason to fear or feel intimidated. They had every reason to praise God.

Like the Ephesians, we feel the same - fear, anger, anxiety, and discouragement. Paul refused to accept a Christianity in name only!! He wanted people to know a real, life-changing Christianity. He turned to prayer for the Ephesians to experience the life-changing reality of what Jesus did for them. We need this same life-changing reality. Prayer is God's ordained means to take truth that we hear and make it truth that transforms.

Sermon Outline

1. Give thanks for the faith of others. Vs. 15-16
2. Pray for others to know God better. Vs. 16-17
3. Pray for others to know God's grace. Vs. 18-23

Read & Discuss

1) Read vs. 15-16

Paul started by giving thanks because the Ephesians believed the Gospel. He knew that they believed because of their faith (God-ward) and their love ("other"-ward). What makes the church distinct is their love for ALL the saints including those difficult to love, those different than you, and those who require a dying to self to love. This love identifies and sets us apart from the world. ([John 13:35](#))

Pain in our life and in our world screams for our attention and can dominate our thinking. We can become blind to the good things that God has set before us. When we see a Christian trusting God in difficult times or another Christian giving of them self, we need to put the spotlight on that. Faith and love are evidence of God's gracious work in the life of a believer.

Where have you seen evidence of God's grace in another member of this church? Where have you seen another member of this church trust God in a difficult situation? Where have you seen someone meet a physical need for someone, reach out to a shut in, make a meal for another member, give a ride to one who needs it? Thank God for that and then tell that Christian what you see in them. This type of gratitude will encourage them.

Additional Reading: *Matthew 5*

2) Read vs. 17-18

Paul was praying that, by His Spirit, God would turn on the light of understanding so that the church in Ephesus would know God, love Him, and cherish Him.

Given the severity and amount of our trials and problems today, we may think that knowing about God and what He can do for us will make things better. Our goal, as Christians, is not to come to God and take all He has to fix our problems. Our fundamental goal is God. He's not a means to an end. He is the end!! ([John 17:3](#))

It's not just that God has power, love, or wisdom. The attributes of God are not separate from His essence. He IS all power. He IS love. He IS wise. Would you say that you know God well enough? Do you have a holy discontent and a desire to know God? One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to awaken in us a desire to know God. He gives us the longing and then satisfies it. We should pray that God would give each member of FBC the wisdom and revelation of God. The more we grow in the knowledge of God, the more we will know God's grace.

3) Read vs. 18-23

The function of your eyes is to know reality. We make decisions based on what we see as valuable or important. The eyes of your heart see and affirm what is glorious, important, and valuable. It's possible to see the glorious theology the Paul spelled out in vs. 3-14 with only the eyes in our head ([Matthew 13:13](#)). The only way to see the glorious reality is if God turns the lights on and opens our eyes to that truth.

Paul is praying that God would open their eyes to see hope, value, and power. What does that mean for us in a practical way today?

-Pray to know the hope of God's calling. The preacher in Ecclesiastes said that if you only live for today, death will reveal that that is worthless, meaningless, and vain. Paul, in [Ephesians 2:12](#), said that without God you have no hope. Christian hope is yet in the future, but it is certain. It is the fulfillment of what God has called us to – a life unhindered by sin, in the presence of God, without sickness, pain and death ([Rev. 21](#)).

-Pray that we know the value that God assigns us. In vs. 18 Paul talks about God's inheritance. WE are God's inheritance!! Many Christians often will believe that God loves them, but wonder if God likes them. Have you ever thought this way? Do you think that God merely puts up with you? When God looks at you today, He sees riches, because you are in Christ. ([Malachi 3:17](#); [Zephaniah 3:17](#)) The King of kings loves you. The Creator of the world is mindful of and cares for you.

-Pray that we know God's awesome power.

Hebrews 12 tells us to run with endurance. Genuine faith perseveres to the end. Are you weary and exhausted today? Do you wonder how you will make it to the finish line? We need to see the immeasurable power of God to those who believe.

Paul gives us three examples of this power.

-This power is displayed in Jesus' resurrection. [Vs. 20](#)

-This power is displayed in Jesus' exaltation. [Vs. 21](#)

-This power is displayed in Jesus' victory. [Vs. 23](#)

God gave Jesus, as Head over all things, to the church ([vs. 22](#)). We can be confident that Christ will care for the church, because the church is His body. Are there things in your life that are overwhelming? What is your response to being overwhelmed and feeling out of our control? Jesus "fills" all in all. He controls all things. We can trust in and rely on Him.

Additional Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 2:5-11

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 8a "A More Excellent Way"
