

Book	Ephesian – Study 4
Topic	
Reference	Ephesians 1:15-13
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The passage today is specifically about learning how to pray and learning how to pray beyond the Lord’s Prayer. Learning how to use scripture, learning how to really dig deep into who God is in order for our lives to be changed and so when that happens, every time you see there are two sections in the whole epistle where Paul talks about prayer. It is this section and chapter 3, the last bit. It is important for us to understand that so that we can grapple with that and apply it.

Much of the problems that we actually face today are actually is a dissidence between what you believe and what you feel and what you do, there is a big gap. The reason why there is a big gap is because we fail to internalize the attributes of God. These few verses open up the attributes of God. If you actually don’t internalize the fact that he is all wise and his wisdom works in your life then you start to worry, because you don’t know whether God is doing the right thing. If you don’t internalize his mercy, then you walk around feeling very guilty because you don’t understand his mercy. If you don’t internalize his power then you got pessimism, uncertainty, timidity, anxiety that fills your life. You get frightened what if the worse happens, what if there are all sorts of cheating and you lose that confidence because you haven’t internalized his power.

PAGAN MEDITATION AND CHRISTIAN MEDITATION:

Pagan meditation is like you joined a yoga class or any of those classes, what they will do is that they will teach you to empty your mind, open it to all sorts of things but you just basically empty it, don’t have any presuppositions.

Christian meditation is not like that, instead of emptying your mind you actually wrestle with the truth. So which means you take the parts of God, his attributes and you wrestle with that to the ground and you take one aspect of God’s wisdom or his power and you wrestle with that and when you wrestle it becomes internalize in your heart. So that’s what Christian meditation is about.

Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV) For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,

First of all, Paul thanks them for their faith then there is a prayer. There is important thing to know, people say it is important to know thyself and you also need to know God. If you were to go back into the time where this letter was written, the Greeks have very famous temple, temple of Apollo at Delphi and if you go there, there is an inscription which even you can see today, which is basically “Gnothi Seauton”, which means know thyself. Every form of meditation there is this move towards knowing yourself. Socrates says, “The unexamined life is not worth living”

What Socrates actually did at that time was teach the young people, you got to think about your purpose in life. All the young people were doing, they were following orders of the older people and they were living by reflex. They never thought and the most dangerous thing for the Greek people and also for us is when people start to think for themselves, why am I doing that.

John Calvin writes, *“Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.”*

Piper writes, *“Indeed, it may be more difficult, first, because a true knowledge of ourselves assumes a true knowledge of God, and, second, because we tend to think we do know ourselves, when, in fact, the depths of our condition are beyond our comprehension without the help of God.”*

If you want to know yourself and know God, the first thing you need to do is that you have to know God. Because if you don't know God, you cannot know yourself. Jeremiah says,

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?10 “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” Jeremiah 17:9-10

So you may think you are very clever, you may think you are well very, you may think you are very well adjusted but it is God who actually searches the heart. The heart is very deceitful. So what Paul says is that, he wants to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. So basically it is the Holy Spirit giving us wisdom which is actually insight and revelation or disclosure of God, so that we will know God intimately and personally. So therefore wisdom is understanding, having insight. You cannot have an insight, if you are emptying your mind with just meditation, you got to have revelation.

How do you actually have revelation?

Christianity is a revealed religion, so therefore you have to have revelation. So when you are actually meditating you take the Bible, because the Bible is revelation and when you actually have the Holy Spirit interact with revelation you will have insight. Insight and revelation give you knowledge of God. He uses a metaphor, the eyes of your heart. It is as if the eyes are the avenue in which light flows into our hearts and minds and the heart is the center of our being, center of the moral intellectual life. So basically he wants us to be penetrated with the revelation of God in such a way that it will move the center of our being. So it is not like attending a Bible study and you just answer the theory questions and you go home unchanged. There is a process where the Holy Spirit actually makes that truth go into the heart, so therefore that requires prayer. Therefore, before you start your Bible study, you need to be able to wrestle and ask the Lord, Lord you need to let me see what truth you want to have me feel today and God will move it into your heart.

It is not intellectual, if it is intellectual I will just talk about the theory of God but until the Holy Spirit opens up your eyes, you cannot see it and it is the work of the Holy Spirit. You can only believe if the Holy Spirit speaks. So therefore Paul says, he wants your eyes of your heart to be open and it is something that you have to pray. So which means when you get home tonight and rest of the time you spend time meditating and asking the Lord, look I need you to open the eyes of my heart to this

particular truth rather than scanning the whole breath of scripture but actually taking a passage and asking God and God will answer that prayer.

So the knowledge of God is a wisdom and revelation and it is internalize, you feel his presence. There are three prayer requests inside

1. that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you,
2. what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
3. 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Paul has huge lengthy verses but we need to learn how to break it down. This part of scripture covers the past, present and future.

1. The Hope of His Calling: (PAST)

So it is better translated as the hope of his calling. Now because this is important, God calls you and then to eternal life. The hope to which he has called you is that you understand your eternal life. The hope of his calling means, the certainty of his calling. Now this is asking you to look backwards into your life.

When God calls you He doesn't make a mistake. This is the hope to which he has called you, this is the hope of his calling. Paul is saying that the hope of his calling, which means when God calls you, it is guaranteed it will happen. When Paul says, when you are praying, I want you to pray that we understand the fact that we were called. Remember back when you accepted Christ how many years ago and then you looked at how your life has changed over the years, in the circumstances under which you were called and you look back and say, my God that's right and that gives you reassurance, confidence and power. So we need to look back on that. If you look back in the past, you are able to see strength for the future.

2. Riches of His Glorious Inheritance in The Saints: (FUTURE)

Again this can be interpreted two ways, God's inheritance which is in us or our inheritance which is God, either way it really doesn't matter. It is still wonderful. Carson writes, "we cannot be matured Christians unless we are future orientated...I mean eternity orientated. So Paul is asking us to focus on the future. Christian are future orientated person. When you are praying, you are asking God to show us the riches of his glorious inheritance, which means what God has prepared for you, eternal life that God has prepared for you. A perfect new body.

In the Old Testament, we have Esau and Jacob. Esau had a birthright to be the firstborn of the family, he would inherit double the portion of the land and everything. He gave that birthright up for a bowl of soup, Jacob tricked him and basically the whole issue to him, he looked at his inheritance, he didn't have the faith to believe that all the lands and all the promises that father

gave him would come into reality one day. To him the bowl of soup was more important. So what he is saying is that, Christians can be the same thing. When you are faced with the temptation and trial, all I can see is the bowl of soup and I am going to sell myself for the bowl of soup. I am going to sell my integrity; I am going to sell my love for God for the bowl of soup. So therefore unless you understand like Esau did not understand, Jacob understood that's why he cheated him because he knew the inheritance would be fantastic.

So when we live in this life, we are either compromised of our faith or we maintain integrity. That only thing that is going to make a difference is the inheritance. Future orientated people always look at the inheritance; they don't look at short-term gain. What Paul is trying to tell us now, not only you pray and discover and uncover the hope of your calling before in the past but also look to the future that you ruminate on, you pray about and you meditate on what God has planned for you in the future, so that brings strength.

3. Gods Power Towards Us Who Believe: (PRESENT)

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

Paul is saying that for us who believe, we need to pray that we can understand all that. This whole verse works out a description of the power. He wants us to understand the contours of God's power towards us. The Greek word for power is Dunamis, working is energiea, Kratos which is dominion and mastery and might which is ischus. This is the only sentence in Greek where Paul used four words to describe one thing and they are all different.

Dunamis: It is a potential power, which means that on a jet plane who is carrying bombs fly off, the potential of devastation is huge. Dunamis talk about ability, capacity, potential. So God wants us to understand the potential of God's power. The same word was used in the Romans

Romans 1:16 (ESV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

That means when you go and share the gospel, it is the power, it is like the F16, because it is the dunamis for salvation, it will save everyone who believes.

Energiea: So not only a dunamis, it is energiea, activity of its power according to the working of his power. Ants carry the most weight if you compare to their body weight and they are always working and never stopping. So when you talk about energiea, it is the power of energy that keeps on moving and moving.

Kratos: Mastery of rule, dominion and rule.

Ischus: It is like the car engine roaring that is going to go but didn't go yet.

Four adjectives of how powerful God is. Why is God asking us to pray that we really understand his power? God is the God who has got all the dynamic power, all that mastery, all that energy and all that might and you need to pray that we will feel that, we will experience that in our work life, in

our family life, in our spiritual life. So it is actually getting home and saying Lord, Paul said this. So we are learning about how to pray, don't just pray for your job, for your wife, for your children, it is learning to use these things and come before the throne of grace with a kind of vocabulary and expansive demands of the heart and God will answer this. You see this, God will change your life, not immediately but over time.

COMPARISON OF THE POWER

Ephesians 1:20-23 (ESV) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Atomic bomb, hurricane or a tsunami are examples of power in the world. But,

Ephesians 1:19-20 (ESV) according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead

We got a lot of power to destroy things, but the greatest power is to make the man come alive. It is actually to reanimate someone for ever and ever, requires a power that is beyond nuclear, it is beyond fusion, that is the kind of power God works in us.

Why does devil doesn't kill all Christians in one go?

It is because the moment he shoots a Christian, the power of Holy Spirit takes over and that Christian is resurrected. You will be with God. The moment they kill you, you are going to be with him. That kind of power, if devil kills every Christian he is going to lose. The devil wants to keep you here and keep you rich so that you don't have to look at Jesus anymore, he gives you all that you want. Off and on devil will kill some Christians to intimidate you but it will be counterproductive because the greatest power lies in our souls, we are actually indestructible. When a bullet comes we will be with Jesus, it is nothing they can do to stop that. Ephesian says, it the same power that raises us from spiritual death to spiritual life, there is a same power that takes Jesus from death to life above the spiritual life, the heavenly life to the right hand of God, above everything else and that's the power God has in us and we need to understand that. God wants us to feel that power of raising up in our lives.

Victorious life starts in prayer and in prayer we need to ask for this, just don't ask for the money, just don't ask for the house, ask for this because your house will go away, the money will go away. God exercise in defeating all powers.

*Ephesians 1:22-23 (ESV) And he put **all things under his feet** and gave him as **head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.***

When you put all things under his feet, it means it is victory. In the olden days, you have victory you step on top of your enemy. So this is the power that God exercise indicating all things and gave him as head over all things to the church. This means Jesus Christ is raised up to the right hand of

God and he is head over all things, which means control of history and work all things for the benefit of the church. Which means you have got this idea of common grace, God is now in control of the world. So we have got this idea of grace, God gives grace, we get special grace. We get saving grace in the work of Jesus. We get new birth, we get redemption, we get resurrection, that's special because he has made us born again and then we believed. That's special grace. For the people who don't believe, God gives common grace.

- Great gifts of wisdom
- Beauty and goodness
- On all mankind regardless of faith

James 1:17 (ESV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Which means every good gift, Christian life, non-Christian life actually come from God.

Matt 5:45b For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

The Lord is good to all; his mercy is over all that he has made. That's common grace.

*Romans 2:14-16 (ESV) For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the **law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them** 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.*

Common grace is in the heart of every person, whether Christian or not, he knows some idea what is right and what is wrong. So they got solid moral character.

*Acts 14:16-17 (ESV) In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by **giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.**"*

So here is Paul telling them, in the past generations he has given you many good things. In Exodus when God asked the people to build the tabernacle, he gave them gifts.

*The Lord said to Moses, 2 "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, **with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship,** 4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, 5 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. 6 And behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you*

So God give gifts to people.

Isaiah 45:1 Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:

Even the evil of Cyrus was under the control of God, that's common grace. Mozart was one of the most prolific composers of the age, many of us have heard his music and Amadeus actually is a movie that actually looks at the life of Mozart. Mozart was very talented, at the same time there was another guy called Antonio-Salieri and they were like competitors. Antonio-Salieri was a devout Christian man, Mozart was a profligate, useless, immoral bum, but when he starts to play the piano it was wonderful. So Antonio-Salieri came to the royal court, they produce music and he couldn't do a good job. He tries as hard as possible, he made a bargain with God; I love you God, I worship you, you give me music talent, I write, I become famous, I glorify your name. Much of the many transactional prayers that we have prayed. On the other hand, Mozart comes, no effort and he wins every award and Antonio-Salieri cannot take it. There was a movie part, he looks at the Crucifix and says, *You and I are enemies and throws it in the trash can*. Because God let him down, he let a non-Christian have more talent and gift that he did.

Gandhi, Michael Jackson and Steve Jobs are some of the people who made this world a better place. None of them were Christian. They stood up for what is right and they didn't compromise, none of them were Christian. They have the guts to stand up because of common grace.

The more righteous you are in your own self; it is very unlikely that you will come to Christ. You might think that you have got the integrity and the goodness in front of God to be able to earn salvation. That happens to a lot of morally good people, that's the problem. It is the scumbags of the world, us, who are repentant that actually see the kingdom of God.

WE NEED TO GET HUMBLD:

Martin Luther says, *I would much rather be ruled by a wise Muslim ruler than a stupid Christian one*

Because Martin Luther understood the doctrine of common grace. The doctrine of common grace says that God gives good gifts to non-Christians as well and we need to recognize that. It would be a failure of understanding when we deny it.

Common grace is for the benefit of the church-control of history

Ephesians 1:22-23 (ESV) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all

So basically he restrains evil, he gives the blessing of goodness. So when we look here, we cannot make sense of our lives, but we can only understand if we get high enough.

Psalms 73:16-17 (ESV) 16 But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, 17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end

Ephesians 1:22-23 (ESV) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body....

So therefore the purpose of common grace is he gives you grace, so that it is a witness of his goodness and mercy, that people would be saved, give common grace, demonstrate his goodness and mercy, common grace to demonstrate his righteousness and justice and demonstrate his glory. That's why God does it. He gives common grace to the world.

Effects of common grace:

- Does not mean that those who receive it will be saved
- Careful not to reject the good things that unbelievers do as totally evil.
- Stir our hearts to much greater thankfulness to god

So therefore you could be CEO and / or leader or elder of the church but you could use these things in order to help people in church. So what we are saying is that, God has put everything in the world under his lordship for the benefit of church. So we need to see things from God's perspective.

Which is his body, the fullness of him who fits all in all

Which means God's moral excellence, character, power and perfection is put into the church by Christ Jesus even as God fills Christ. Christ is the head, he gives common grace, he controls history and as a filling function, he will fill the church with godliness, his character in his power and his perfection because Jesus Christ is in that position.

APPLICATION:

- The hope of his calling which looks in to the past
- The wealth of his glorious inheritance which looks to future when Christ will come for his saints
- The greatness of his power which Paul looks to the present day
- This power demonstrated by raising Christ seating Him in right hand and subjecting all things under his feet and giving him to the church as head
- The fullness of Gods power and attributes are being given to the church by Christ who is in turn being filled with them completely
- They have been blessed with every spiritual blessing this prayer is for them to experience it

The next time you will pray take this out and it will explode your mind and change your life.