

Ephesians

Thanksgiving & Prayer

Ephesians 1:15-22

February 16th, 2025

I. Introduction

Our Lord was a Man of _____. How often would He go away from the crowd to pray to His Father, sometimes even praying all night. Though very God of God, the very Son of God, yet He became Man, and He knew how to pray. He prayed and He was heard. As the Apostle says of Jesus, “He, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” (Heb. 5:7). The disciples who were daily with Him knew this about Jesus. That’s why they asked Him to teach them how to pray, and this is why we have the Lord’s Prayer. Along the same line, our passage this morning is instructive for us. Throughout Paul’s letters we have preserved for us several of his prayers. Paul’s prayers are instructive for us in how we ought to pray.

II. Summary of the Text - Ephesians 1:15-22

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease 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 to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which 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 principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Paul is giving thanks for these Christians, specifically he is giving thanks for God’s work in their lives. He has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and of their love for all the saints. It is a _____ faith. The seed of the Gospel took root in their lives and it is bearing the fruit of the Gospel. And so Paul cannot but give thanks.

Paul also tells us how he is praying for the saints. They have received grace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ—and he wants God to pour out still _____ upon them. Paul prays that we would be enlightened by a deeper and fuller knowledge of our God, so that, *first*, we may know the hope of His calling. We have been called out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light. This kingdom begins here and is consummated in the age to come, when the fullness of our redemption is accomplished. And Paul wants God to deepen our knowledge of this hope.

Paul prays, *secondly*, that God might enlighten us so that we might come to know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. God is our inheritance—and _____ are *His* inheritance. Paul prays that God our Father would make known to us how much our God delights in us, for we are His inheritance, His portion, and His joy.

The *third* thing Paul asks God to make clear to us is “the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.” He wants us to know God *in* us: His mighty power at work in our lives, sanctifying and refining us—leading us from sin into all glory.

III. Teach Us How to Pray

Lesson 1: To God goes all the glory—so give _____. This is a recurrent lesson throughout Ephesians: all glory goes to God. And our prayer lives must reflect this. This means that we ought to give thanks always and forever. Christians are a grateful people, while ingratitude flows from atheism. For Christians know that all things are decreed by the Father, summed up and secured in the Son, and carried along to their proper end by the Spirit. Therefore we give thanks.

It is good and right to give thanks to God for His work in our lives. We become self-righteous when we see any goodness in our lives, in our hearts, and start looking around for _____. It is all from God after all. God gives us faith. God writes His law upon our hearts. God by His Spirit guides us in His ways. God fills our heart with love for Him and for the saints. That is all from Him. But we are tempted to boast. Likewise, when we see God at work in our brother, in our sister, in our kids, in our enemies, we are to give thanks. God's almighty grace is at work in our midst bringing to completion the redemption secured in Christ.

Lesson 2: Ask God for _____. Paul was grateful for what he saw God doing in the lives of the saints. He was grateful for their faith, for their love, and so he asked God to do still more in their lives. In fact, that was his own mindset: "one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13). We are to be grateful for God's past grace, and call upon Him to give still *more* grace. This is how David prayed, too (Psa. 116:12-13).

We have tasted and seen that God is Good, and we want more of Him. We have tasted and seen that holiness and faithfulness and righteousness and truth are very good—and we want to know these better. We want to embody these better. We want to become more like the God we worship. That is why we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. This is a sign of maturity, that we want to grow in the grace of our God, never being stagnant and dull. But always increasing in our knowledge and love of the Lord.

Lesson 3: Pray boldly. We are too _____ in our prayer life. We have a great and glorious calling put upon our life. We have been baptized into Jesus Christ. We have been united to the One who has been set over all. We are servants of the King of kings, and the same power that rose Him up from the grave, is at work in us—so, do we pray like it?

God is in the business of raising the dead. This begins with a spiritual resurrection, and it will be matched with a physical resurrection at the end of the age. This is where His power is truly made manifest to us—and to the watching world.

God is driving all things to their full perfection, which means we must go along with Him. And our prayers must go along with Him. He has promised to do great things for us—great things according to the working of His mighty power, the same mighty power that rose Christ from the dead and exalted Him into the heavenlies. So we must pray *boldly*.

IV. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ