

The Power Available to You

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Ephesians 1:15-23

Poll:

In this year of COVID, confusion and chaos – if you are honest to the Lord – what is the greatest personal struggle for you? Text your answer to (205) 512-3276.

(Please answer in one word. You may answer up to 3 times.)

While we have been looking at different aspects of Basic Christianity, we must not omit the personal struggle that is part of our experience as believers. We have theology – the knowledge of what God has done for us and what God will do for us in eternal life; yet, we also need to know how God is helping us along the way.

Today I want to share with you one of Paul's prayers for the Ephesians. He is going to talk about the great power that is available to us who are in Christ. Hear me, though. The Apostle Paul was not immune from suffering as a follower of Christ. He was often beaten, imprisoned, left for dead, hungry, alone, abandoned by friends.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 NASB

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

²⁷ I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.

Yet, even through all of this, Paul found the abiding presence of the power of Christ to enable him to keep serving.

I want to talk about what we have access to in Christ. I will not tell you that God is going to protect you from bad things. I will not try to give a soft-pillowed life. We are in a world that is influenced by evil. People under that darkness do evil. We are not free from it. What I will tell you is that the full power of the living Christ is in you to help you serve Him even now!

Ephesians 1:15-23 NASB

¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so 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 surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰ which He brought about 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 every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul prays for the believers to be able to know the Lord more. He says this in two phrases:

My prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,

Paul prays that God may open our souls to revelation of the greater nature of God's power working in us. In Christ, we have access to all that belongs to God. We have a pipeline to heaven!

There is more to this text than I am going to cover. For example, what it means that Jesus is made the head of the church. Jesus is the head, not the pastor, deacons, bishop nor the pope. I want to focus today on three things Paul prays for believers in verses 18-22.

Paul prays that we might know that because we are in Christ we have access to all of God. This access to God gives us access to power of which we are not always aware.

1. The power of hope we have in Christ Jesus.

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling

Having hope is powerful. When you loose hope, life closes in on you.

Testimony of Dave Roever?

Dave Roever was burned over most of his body in Vietnam when a phosphorus grenade went off in his hand. Most of his face, arms and upper body were burned severely. They placed him in a hospital ward where they put severely burned soldiers. It is a ward where they don't expect them to survive. Most of them don't make it. At some point they let the wives come for their first visit. It's the first time the wives come in to see their husbands with all of their burns and bandages. The wife of the man next to him came in. He was 80% - 90% burned. She looked at him and told him, "You look disgusting." She took off her wedding ring, tossed it at him and walked out. Dave said that man didn't make it through the night. Dan said his wife came in and smiled. She said, "I love you." His wife gave him hope. Many times, Dave said, the darkness of hopelessness tried to creep in on him. Dave says, without hope, you cannot make it. It is hope that someone loves you, that there is still purpose to your life – that keeps you alive.

Dave visits veterans and soldiers around the world. He takes his message of hope in Jesus to the hospital and high schools. The military flies him everywhere to speak to wounded soldiers, and soldiers at risk of suicide. They do it because they know he has a message these soldiers need to hear. He knows a secret. Jesus gives you hope. He says when you lose hope, the walls cave in around you. Your soul goes dark. You cannot make it without hope. If you have hope, you can endure the most severe of trials.

Paul writes the letter to the Ephesians **when he is in prison!** He is in prison and he is sending out a message of hope to those who are not in prison, because many people are imprisoned in their own hopelessness. Yet, Jesus gives us hope. **We have the hope of God's love that never gives up on us.** No matter how many times we fail, no matter how often we feel alone or afraid, God still reaches down and hugs us. He still claims us as his children. We have the hope of life with God forever. The Spirit of the living God continues to speak hope to us. Yet, many are still living without hope.

COVID has left many living in the distress of loneliness. People are isolated. They get depressed because they have no one to talk to. We are social creatures. We need to hear and see and touch others. I've heard that more people are dying from suicide than from COVID. People need access to hope. That is one of the reasons I am doing my Wednesday devotions on Facebook. That is why I am doing Thursday's Cup on Facebook. People need hope. Our hope is in Jesus. No matter how bad life may get, no one can take God's love away from us. You have access to hope in Jesus!

2. The power of the glory we have in God's inheritance.

You might know - what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Paul prays that we might know the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. That is a peculiar prayer. Notice the pronouns. Paul is not praying that we might know the glory of *our* inheritance. Paul is talking about God's inheritance. He wants us to know the glory of God's inheritance in His people. The inheritance is God's inheritance. We usually like to think of our gain when we go to heaven. We want our inheritance. "I'm here.

Where's my mansion?" Did I get one on a hill? Or am I going to get stuck in a high-rise on a busy street for all eternity?"

Paul wants us to know about the glory of God's inheritance in His saints. God's inheritance is not our paradise. This is about God's inheritance. God's glory. Yet, it is so much better that way. We get to belong to God's glorious inheritance. More specifically, it says that we are God's glorious inheritance. What this means is that **God is getting the glory**. We get to enjoy the glory, yet the glory is God's.

It is better that it is that way. (God's glory. God's inheritance, not ours.) If it were our inheritance – inheritance by our design - it would end up being so much less than it will be as God's inheritance. God's glory will be far greater than anything we can imagine.

I think sometimes when we think of paradise we imagine an eternal Disneyworld. Maybe one where you don't have to pay to get in. Did you know there is a magic kingdom in Paris? There is. I saw a post on Instagram. A lady posted a pic of the magic castle in Paris. They have a pink castle. Voulez-vous Disney en paris? Oui?

When you go to Disney World, you can enjoy a fun place for a while. Yet, after the initial fun and newness wears off, you begin to realize that it is all a make-believe world. It is a character fantasy land. It's a staged reality. Make believe is non-real. At some point you begin to long for the real. With God, in His glory, it will not be a staged reality. **God's paradise of glory is real.**

Perhaps paradise for you is going to the beach? It is wonderful to hear the rhythm of the waves in the morning or evening. Yet life on a beach would not be so wonderful. Sometimes you need some mountains. Sometimes you need the openness of the prairie. Sometimes, you yearn for the shops in the city. In God's glory, His inheritance will be more than anything we can imagine. Yet to hope in God's glory means you have to keep your eye upon the eternal, not just the now. Yet, it is better that it is God's glory because it will be designed by God. He is the best at making paradises.

3. The power of the presence of Christ in you.

You might know - ¹⁹ what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

This last phrase is so great, I hope you will take it to heart. Paul prays that we might realize that because Jesus is in us, we have access to the full power of God – all that God can do! He goes on...

These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰ which He brought about 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 every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Don't let these words pass over you too quickly. Consider them. You have access to this! We have in Christ who is in us access to the same power which God worked when He raised Jesus from the dead. **The same power by which God raised up Jesus** and seated him above all powers and authorities. God is available in you with this power!

I cannot make this less than it is. This does not mean that every time you say something or ask for something, BAMB! you get what you want. Yet it does mean that in Christ you have access to all that God does to meet your need or to answer your prayers for others. If God chooses, BAMB! He sends down His power. As a believer you have **a direct pipeline** to One who spoke and made heaven and earth out of nothing.

God hasn't changed. He is still doing miracles every day. Why or when he chooses to act in a miracle is His choice. Yet, God is still the same. We are often held back with doubts that God would do such things for us. Who are we that God should work his powerful works? We forget that all of the people we read about in the Bible were just normal people, people with whom God chose to work His works so He could reveal His glory and salvation. He is still the same God today that He is in the pages of the Bible.

Graves into Gardens, Elevate Worship

**You turn graves into gardens
You turn bones into armies
You turn seas into highways
You're the only one who can**

**You turn mourning to dancing
You give beauty for ashes
You turn shame into glory
You're the only one who can**

Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: *Brandon Lake / Christopher Joel Brown / Steven Furtick / Tiffany Hammer*
Graves Into Gardens lyrics © Essential Music Publishing

Paul says that - Jesus in you - means that all that all that God has done in Jesus, all that Jesus did on earth, all that God can do is living in you, because Jesus is in you! Jesus seated at the right hand of God has access to all of the Father's authority and power, and because you have the Holy Spirit, you have access to Jesus through the Holy Spirit; so you have access to all of the powers of God to hear your prayers and do what needs to be done in your midst.

In Jesus we have access to power!

Power to hope in God.

Power to glory in God's glory.

Power to link to the very presence of God who is the supreme power.