



Paul's Passionate Prayers
Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom
Ephesians 1:15-23

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

Prayer is an essential part of our personal relationship with God. Our daily time with the Lord begins and ends with prayer. Prayer is also an essential part of the spiritual health of the Church.

- According to Philippians 4:6, if a believer has a physical or material need, they should bring it before the Lord in their prayers, then leave it to Him to answer it in His way, in His time, for His glory.

- However, the believer's prayers should not be limited to the physical or material needs of those for whom we are praying, but that God would use the circumstances of their lives to draw them to Him.
- The Apostle Paul's apostolic ministry began in prayer, was grounded in prayer, and ended in prayer, as he willingly laid his head on the chopping block to be martyred for his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.
- **"Know thyself, presume not God to scan; the proper study of mankind is man."** – Alexander Pope
- **"It has been said by someone that 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father."** – Charles Haddon Spurgeon
- ***"This is eternal life, that we may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."*** – John 17:3
- The Apostle Paul never asked God to change the circumstances of life in which people lived, but rather that God would give them ***"the spirit of wisdom and the knowledge of God."*** Therefore, our prayers for others should focus on how God is using the circumstances of their lives to increase their knowledge of Him.
- **"Trials are divine sculptors; they chisel away at our pride, carving us into humble vessels of God's grace."** – John Knox
- In Philippians 3:7-11, Paul clarified that purpose very clearly.
 - *Nothing in this world matters to me more than the knowledge of Christ.*
 - *The things of this world are rubbish compared to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord.*
- But Paul was still not satisfied with his knowledge of Christ. He wanted to know the FULLNESS of Christ, including the:
 - Fellowship of His sufferings
 - Fellowship of His resurrection
- The word that hangs over the world like a dark cloud today is
- However, the word that describes the Church, i.e., those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, is
- Christians not only live in the promise of a future resurrection, but we CAN live each day in the glorious power of that resurrection over the things the devil wants to use to destroy us.

1. Resurrection Identity – Ephesians 1:15-16 – *"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."*

- The number one issue, even among Christians today, **is identity**; who we are, what defines us; what gives us our personal identity.
- In Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, his primary concern was to remind them of their identity in Christ.

- Paul captured that identity in Ephesians 1:3-14 when he reminded them that they had been **“Chosen of God even before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of God, included in the family of God, and sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption.”**

2. Resurrection People –Ephesians 1:17 – “*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.*”

- Paul commended the Ephesians for living out that which Christ commanded Christians to do – to love one another.
- While Paul’s letters were written while he was alone in some kind of prison, his main focus was on the importance of the love of the brethren for one another.
- The Christian Church should serve as a little colony of heaven in the midst of the culture of death. When we gather together for worship, and the resurrection power flows from one to another, our cares and concerns for the world are alleviated by our love for one another.

3. Resurrection Language – Ephesians 1:18-23: “*That 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, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 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. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”

So, the three words of our new resurrection language are: **Love, Encouragement, and prayer**, and when we employ those words in our relationships with others, we are, in effect, living out our identity in Christ, and reminding them of theirs.

Notice the four things Paul mentioned in his prayer for the saints at Ephesus.

- **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.*”**
- Our Christian life must be centered around this purpose – **to know God as He is in truth, as revealed by His Word, and to correct our false, idolatrous ideas of who God is.**
- While it is important to have an accurate knowledge of who we are, it is much more important to know who God is.
- **18 – “*That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know:***
 - *the hope of His calling,*
 - *the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*
 - *the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand*

in the heavenly places, 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 knew, that for a person to truly see Jesus Christ for who He was, is, and soon will be, the eyes of their heart must be opened, and only the power of the Holy Spirit can do that.
- Many Christians have closed the eyes of their heart; they see the lost world only through the eyes of the flesh, which is why there are no tears for those who are still bound in their sins.
- **22 – “*That God put all things under Christ’s feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”**
- Many Christians know about God’s power through the historical record of His death, burial, and resurrection, but they have never experienced His mighty power in their personal lives.
- God wants us to live in the power of His resurrection, which means the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the grave is available to the drunkard, the thief, the adulterer, and even the self-righteous hypocrite, if they would yield to it.
- In Romans 8:11-13, Paul said, ***“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”***