

# But Wait, There's More!

Ephesians 1:15-19 May 3, 2023

**Ephesians 1:15-19** - <sup>15</sup> **This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,** <sup>16</sup> **I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.** <sup>17</sup> **I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.** <sup>18</sup> **I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints,** <sup>19</sup> **and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength.**

*But wait, there's more!* That's been a motto of infomercial hosts for a long time. It's often associated with Billy Mays, the peddler of *OxiClean*, but it was the fine folks over at *Ginsu* knives who first used it in their commercials in the 70's.<sup>1</sup> One media scholar has called it "the pitch of all pitches."

Paul was no infomercial salesman, but he was overflowing with joy and enthusiasm as he told the Ephesians about the blessings of salvation. In verses 3 through 14, he wrote a song in one, long sentence, expounding the riches of God's grace. He pauses for a breath and then pours out *another* single sentence stretching from verse 15 through 23,<sup>2</sup> this time not a song, but a prayer.

It's a special thing to be able to examine the prayer life of an apostle. On the one hand, they were people like us. They had struggles and shortcomings. God didn't love them more than He loves us. But, on the other hand, they obviously had a depth of faith and experience and relationship with the Lord that we aspire to. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Imitate me, as I imitate Christ."<sup>3</sup> So, getting a glimpse into Paul's prayer life is a valuable thing.

In his prayer, we see once again that Paul was *convinced* that the more Christians understand about what the Lord has done for them, the more they will be able to thrive and grow and experience the benefits of salvation. After a long explanation of the mind-blowing advantages of life in Christ, he says "But wait, there's more!" and keeps detailing the blessings for us.

**Ephesians 1:15** - <sup>15</sup> **This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,**

Reading this verse, critics sometimes suggest that Paul wasn't the real author of Ephesians. After all, Paul had spent years in the city, and verses like this (they say) suggest he didn't know his audience. The truth is, it had been five or seven years since Paul was with them. Many people had been saved since then. He probably *didn't* know most of the church members at this point. But even though he hadn't met many of them personally, he had heard the testimony of their faith and their love.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://archive.knoxnews.com/business/but-wait-theres-more-to-ginsu-33c120a4-b9c1-0fa5-e053-0100007fd563-381237591.html/>

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Neufeld *Ephesians*

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:1

That's pretty remarkable for a world without phones, newspapers, social media, television, radio, telegram, blogs, or anything else that helps news travel. But God was moving the witness of His Good News all over the world, because that's what He loves to do.

God wants to build a testimony in your life and then broadcast the news of His grace through you. That doesn't mean every Christian is going to be in 'influencer' or preach to thousands of people or have books written about their lives. But God wants you and I to be His witnesses, the word Jesus used in Acts 1:8 was *martyrs*, with lives laid down for His purpose and His glory.

The Ephesians didn't run ad campaigns. They didn't go viral for some stunt. They were regular Christians living regular lives - but lives full of faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints.

The term that Paul used for faith is defined by words like constancy in profession, reliance upon Christ, belief, fidelity, conviction.<sup>4</sup> Their faith wasn't in Paul, it was in the GodMan. He was not only the real *Jesus*, Who really lived and really spoke and really did the things the Bible records for us, but He is also *Lord*. He is the Lord of all lords, the King of all kings. He is Ruler of the cosmos and Lord over our lives. He is the Head, the Decider, the Master and Commander.

Paul also heard about their love for all the saints. In this case, Paul was not referencing the *brotherly* love of *philadelphia*, but *agape* love. Agape love is a supernatural love. It's the love that God pours out in the hearts of Christians through the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> But, as one commentator points out, agape love is one we *choose* to express. It is "a thoughtful, volitional, purposeful love that wills to love even the unlovely."<sup>6</sup> It doesn't happen by accident but by choice. It's a particular love that we're called to exercise.

The agape love of God is one of the many gifts given to us in salvation. But Christians sometimes have a hard time loving others. Even in the book of Acts, we see that the Jewish Christians often struggled to love Gentile believers, or even other Jewish believers who were Hellenist in culture.

We struggle today with those who are unlovely to us for one reason or another. But the love of God calls us to love *all* the saints.

Doctors recommend that you get bloodwork done once a year to check a variety of levels. In a similar way, evaluating our things like our faith in the Lord Jesus and our love for the saints is an important measurement to take from time to time. In Paul's mind, these were acid tests of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Examining these elements of our religion is important. For example: Our love for others is connected to our love for God. John would later write, "The person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom He has not seen."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Strongs Concise Dictionary*

<sup>5</sup> Romans 5:5

<sup>6</sup> R. Kent Hughes *Ephesians: The Mystery Of The Body Of Christ*

<sup>7</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones *God's Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition Of Ephesians 1*

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 4:20

A number of years after Paul wrote them, the Church at Ephesus would receive *another* letter - this time from Jesus Christ Himself. And He would say, "Your faith is doing really well. I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary." But, He then said, "You've abandoned the love you had at first."

A Christian and a church needs both faith and love. Today, many churches have faith but no love. Some churches have a lot of love but no content to their faith. We're called to both. A growing faith in the Lord Jesus and a growing love for all the saints.

Our tendency might be to then say, "Well, I have to *force* myself to love others." Or, "I have to generate acts of faith." That's not the Biblical way of thinking about it. Faith and love are gifts that God pours out in our lives.<sup>9</sup> Our calling as Christians is to receive those gifts, allow them to operate, and continually cultivate them in our lives by the power of God's grace.

**Ephesians 1:16 - <sup>16</sup>I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.**

What an encouragement this must have been. Paul not only heard about them, he made mention of them as he prayed to God, not just once but on a regular basis.

There are a lot of things Paul could pray about. By the time he wrote this letter he had already died and gone to heaven and come back to life, which he reported on in Second Corinthians. But he had a *genuine* care for these churches he was involved with. He cared about their spiritual health. He was excited to hear that they were continuing to grow in their faith. Their spiritual success was something to celebrate because Paul understood that it's all one Body. If one part is flourishing, that's good for the whole Body. He wasn't jealous that people were talking about the Ephesians or thinking, "you'd be nothing without me!" He took time to thank God for them.

On top of that, we see he was practicing what he preached. In chapter 6 he will command them to pray at all times for all the saints and he'll say, "Pray also for me." But he didn't tell them to do things that he didn't do. He is a true example of humble, powerful, exercising Christianity for us.

**Ephesians 1:17 - <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.**

Hadn't they already received the Holy Spirit? Paul was very clear in verse verses 13 and 14 of this chapter that they were sealed with the Holy Spirit, the down payment of our inheritance.

Back in Acts 19, when Paul first came to the city, he met with some disciples and he said, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they answered, "We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And then Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came down on them.

---

<sup>9</sup> 1 Timothy 1:14

So what is Paul saying here? Well, scholars debate whether Paul mean the *Holy Spirit* in this verse or spirit with a small s - speaking of an attitude or tilt of the heart.<sup>10</sup> Either way, Paul's writings reveal that our relationship to God is meant to always been deepening, always developing, always growing in our understanding of Who He is and what He has called us to.

Paul prays that God the Father would give them more wisdom, more revelation, so they could have a greater knowledge of Him. R. Kent Hughes writes, "The regular Greek word for personal knowing is *gnosis*, but here the word is intensified with the preposition *epi*. Paul is asking for...a 'real, deep, full knowledge.'"<sup>11</sup> Hughes continues, "*The great need of any church, whether it is healthy or not, is knowing Christ - a better, deeper, fuller knowledge of Christ.*"

Paul wanted this not only for the Ephesians, and not only for us, but also for himself. Listen to this remarkable statement from Philippians chapter 3:

**Philippians 3:10, 12 - <sup>10</sup> My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death...<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.**

So Paul, who saw Jesus face-to-face multiple times, Paul who wrote over a dozen books of the New Testament, Paul who had seen a vision of heaven itself, *that* Paul said, "My goal is to *know* God more and I do not consider myself to have attained this goal yet."

The Apostle prayed that God the Father would give the Ephesians more knowledge and more wisdom. The knowledge of God he's talking about must come from God Himself.<sup>12</sup> I saw a YouTube video the other day from a very popular social commentator and philosopher who has millions of followers, and he was talking about his understanding of what the Ten Commandments mean. And he said "*how I like to look at it is...*" and then went on to say that each person must simply find their own god so as not to have many gods and give into vice or greed or aimlessness. Of course, he's completely wrong. His understanding of God comes from *himself*. But knowledge of God has to come from God. That is why God has gone to so much trouble to *reveal* Himself and protect that revelation, so that we might know Him deeply and personally and accurately.

John Phillips writes, "*Get to know [God]' is Paul's basic answer to all of life's problems and perplexities.*" Getting to know God is a lifelong pursuit for every Christian. It was for Paul. It's not just that "I know enough to be saved," or, "I memorized the entire Bible." Even if you did, there is *still* more to know of the God Who made you and saved you and loves you, just as there is always more you could learn of your parents or your spouse or your best friend. Because God is a *Person*.

---

<sup>10</sup> Darrell Bock *Ephesians: An Introduction And Commentary*

<sup>11</sup> Hughes

<sup>12</sup> John Phillips *Exploring Ephesians*

Now, on a practical level, how can I know more God? How can I receive more of this wisdom and knowledge and revelation that Paul is talking about? Listen to 1 Corinthians 2:

**1 Corinthians 2:10-11** - <sup>10</sup> Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

So, it is fellowship with the Spirit that reveals these things. We fellowship with Him by going to the Scripture, which He inspired and with which He guides us in all truth. But we also fellowship with the Holy Spirit as we would with a friend because He *is* our Friend, He *is* dwelling in our hearts, and He is a *Person*, just as Jesus and the Father are.

There are clear principles in Scripture that show how to get the wisdom of God. Seek it, ask for it, and regularly *consider* the word we've already received. Daniel was reading what Jeremiah wrote, as he probably had many, *many* times before, but as he considered and prayed and fellowshiped with the Lord, he says, "I understood...the word of the Lord."<sup>13</sup> He had harvest of wisdom that day.

Let's remind ourselves that Paul's prayer was not for a certain, special class of Christians, but for *all* of them. Paul is referencing all of these incredible things as part of the regular, ordinary Christian life. He expected this to be the reality for *all* the believers in Ephesus and elsewhere.

**Ephesians 1:18-19** - <sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength.

This is where the "But wait, there's more" really kicks in. Paul references hope, wealth, and power sent by God for us who believe. We have a living hope that secures our future and gives us all the orientation needed to direct our lives. As we head forward in that hope, God acts powerfully on our behalf. In describing the enormous power of God, Paul uses four different Greek synonyms to stack up the image of God's might and how He sends that power out for us.<sup>14</sup> There is no foe, there is no trial, there is no hurt, there is no fear, there is no problem, there is no shortcoming, there is no obstacle that God's power cannot overwhelm. God's power surpasses everything. And the Lord says, "*that* power is being activated for My people as they walk with Me."

Did you notice that Paul lumped the Ephesians in with himself? "His power toward *us* who believe." He says, "you Ephesians are in the same boat as me and the other apostles." You and I, here tonight, are objects of God's tender care and powerful work. What was true in Acts is true today.

---

<sup>13</sup> Daniel 9:2

<sup>14</sup> Hughes

We skipped the second item in Paul's "but wait, there's more" list here. When Paul talks about the wealth of the glorious inheritance, he's not talking about *our* inheritance like he did earlier in the chapter. He's talking about the fact that *we* are the *Lord's* inheritance.<sup>15</sup> Paul is revealing the matchless value that God places on you as His special possession.<sup>16</sup>

Before the foundation of the world, God made a plan so that *you* could have hope and power and peace and joy and purpose in the eternal work of God your Father. *You* are a special treasure that He holds in His hands and focuses His attention on. *You* are the thing God has set aside for Himself to bring Him glory and to enjoy His love and give Him love back. He has made a place in eternity for *you*. He has opened the storehouses of heaven on *your* behalf. He has carved out of time and space an individualized life so that *you* might know Him and know His love and know His power working in and through you.

Then, Lord, if this is meant to be the regular, everyday life of a Christian, why don't we *feel* or experience these things as plainly as we want to? Even Paul himself said, "Listen, I live to know God and His power, but I haven't attained it fully yet. So I reach forward, pursuing the prize." And he went on to say, "Let all who are mature think this way."<sup>17</sup>

Right now, it's true, we only know in part, but one day we'll know fully. Right now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but one day face-to-face with the Lord Who loves us so. Meanwhile, God has shed faith, hope, and love into our hearts that we *may* grow in our knowledge of Him.

As we walk with God we discover more and more of Who He is and what He has done. And as these truths take root in our hearts, our faith grows and our faith produces love. Paul told the Ephesians, "That's what's happening in your lives and I'm so excited about it and I pray that it *keeps* happening more and more." He didn't talk to them about doing more events or hitting certain quotas. He didn't talk to them about the metrics of their influence. In this prayer he "*congratulate[d] his readers for displaying precisely the quality that he will urge them later in the letter to cultivate.*"<sup>18</sup>

He said these things *are* true now, so understand more of that truth and cooperate with God in His desire to expand your experience of your salvation. Toward that end, Paul was excited, because these young Christians in Ephesus *were* walking in faith, they were living in love. Elsewhere, Paul said to the Galatians: "In Christ Jesus...what matters is faith working through love."<sup>19</sup>

But we know the Ephesians eventually stopped experiencing a significant aspect of their Christianity. They abandoned their first love. The blessings of our Christian faith have been given, but they're not a given in our personal lives or in our church if we don't actively walk in them. The way forward is to know God, pursue Him, and enjoy more and more of the salvation He has provided.

---

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Fowl *Ephesians: A Commentary*

<sup>16</sup> F.F. Bruce *The Epistles To The Colossians, To Philemon, And To The Ephesians*

<sup>17</sup> Philippians 3:10-15

<sup>18</sup> Frank Thielman *Ephesians*

<sup>19</sup> Galatians 5:6