

Connecting to God's Power (Ephesians 1:15-23 & Psalm 86) 10-Sep-2017¹

So this morning we're continuing our series on the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians. So it would be great to have your Bibles opened up to Ephesians chapter 1 and we're looking at verses 15 to 23.

You have an outline there in the bulletin for you to write notes if you wish.

Let's ask God for His help in understanding this morning

Recap

First up then - let's recap what we learnt last week

[Powerpoint 1-Recap 1]

The author of the letter is the Apostle Paul - and he's an Apostle - a called one - of our Lord Jesus - called by God's will

The recipients of the letter are the Holy People (Saints) of Ephesus - and these people are holy by virtue of the fact that they have faith in Jesus - and we said last week - we are all saints here - if we have faith in Jesus

And Paul in those first 14 verses of chapter 1 - from last week

Tells the people of Ephesus - the Ephesians - that they have spiritual blessings from God - available to them because of their faith in Jesus, God's Son

And we said that these spiritual blessings were God's eternal (everlasting) "good stuff" for us too

These spiritual blessings are:

- God chose us to be His - before the creation of world
- God predestined - decided before hand - that we would be adopted into His family

- Because of Jesus - we are redeemed and forgiven of our sins
- Because of Jesus - God's will and purpose for our lives is revealed to us
- We have an inheritance of eternal life - sealed and guaranteed by God's Holy Spirit

Intro

So for this reason - Paul says in v15 - because of these spiritual blessings that the people of Ephesus have - in Jesus

Paul begins a prayer

As we learnt from the children's talk earlier

Prayers can consist of 4 types

[Powerpoint 2 - Prayer]

Praise/Adoration - saying how awesome God is

Confession - Saying Sorry to God for our sin and rebellion against Him

Thanks - thanking God for all what He has blessed us with

Supplication - A shopping list - Asking God to help us and help others

A way of remembering these 4 prayer types is the Word - A.C.T.S. - Adoration, Confession, Thanks and Supplication

Usually our 1st prayer in the family service is - Adoration and Confession - followed by the Lord's Prayer

And our 2nd prayer in the family service is - Thanks and Supplication

As we look at Paul's prayer this morning - vv15 to 23

We see 3 of those 4 types of prayer -

Not all our prayers have to consist of all 4 types

It depends on the context, the time we have and the needs we have

In Paul's context - he is encouraging a church in Ephesus -

He's just reminded them (last week) of what Jesus gives them

And now he prays a prayer of encouragement to them

Prayer is powerful

There's a true story of a man who prayed that there would be no rain - and it didn't rain for 3 and half years (1 Kings 17:1; Luke 4:25; James 5:17-18). Then he prayed again and it rained and produced great crops for harvesting (1 Kings 18:41-45; James 5:17-18)

Anyone know who this man was?

Yes - the prophet Elijah?

Prayer is powerful

Paul's prayer here in Ephesians 1:14-23 consists of 3 types

Thanks

Supplication

Praise

Thanks (vv15-16)

Let's look at how Paul's prayer give thanks to God

In verses 15 and 16

[Powerpoint 3a-Thanks]

- Paul never stops (without ceasing, constantly) giving thanks to God in v16
- What's he thanking God for? 2 things in v15
 - Their faith in the Lord Jesus - which gives them all these spiritual blessings which go into eternity
 - Their love for God's people - their love for one another

[Powerpoint 3b-Challenge]

Challenge and question for us

- Are we constantly praying with thanks - For our shared faith in Jesus - it's that shared faith in Jesus that keeps us all going, keeps us encouraged - keeps us wanting to meet together - doing ministries together - wanting to attend growth groups and wanting to join the various communication corner ministries
- Are we constantly praying with thanks - for our love for another - a love we show to each other by caring and helping each other
- Paul's saying he never stops thanking God for these Christians in Ephesus - are we going to follow Paul's lead and never stop thanking God for the saints here at St. David's Toukley?

(pause)

Supplication (v16b-20a)

Next Paul prayer comes to supplication

His shopping list

In verses 16b to 20a

And notice before Paul's shopping list - He has already given thanks in his prayer first! He hasn't just gone to the shopping list - which is something we sometimes do

Then Paul says - still in v16 - he never stops remembering them in his prayers

And he asks God to help with a few things:

[Powerpoint 4-Supplication]

1. He prays for a spirit of wisdom - this is God's wisdom - far more important than human wisdom - knowing God's wisdom - according to Jesus in John 17:3 - knowing God's wisdom is knowing God and His Son - which leads to eternal life
³Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
2. He prays for a spirit of revelation - revelation here means showing or disclosing what the truth is about God - this is done - Paul says through the work of the Holy Spirit - as we pray and as we read God's Word - the Holy Spirit - teaches us and shows us more about God and His Son Jesus - that's why we call our Bible study groups - Growth groups - because we grow in our understanding and knowledge of who God is , who His Son is - and what God's plans and promises

for us are. That's why Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians - and why we are studying it - to grow

3. He prays for eyes of their hearts - literally the eyes of their imagination, their mind, the eyes of their understanding - be opened - so they can hang on to the hope they have been called to - a hope of that glorious inheritance of forgiveness and eternal life - Paul mentioned last week. That's going to keep them going through the persecutions of the church - that's what Paul is praying for them to be encouraged realizing whatever they're going through they have that hope for the eternal future. We can be encouraged this morning that we have that same glorious hope - no matter what we're going through at the moment

4. He prays that they might also know the incredible power they are connected to because they believe in Jesus. Because they believe in Jesus they have God's **incomparable** (Greek literally means exceeding, excelling, surpassing, transcending-hyperbole) **great** (mega) **power** (dynamo).

What is this power?

Paul says it's the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead and placed him in Heaven at His right hand. And Paul wants the people he's praying for to know they have this power at their disposal. God has the power to raise people from the dead. He's the same God that created the Heavens and the Earth out of nothing, just by speaking and breathed out stars (Ps 33:6).

And because of Jesus' death and resurrection - and believing in it - we have connection to God - and that same power

That same power that changed Jesus' scared and timid disciples into brave, bold and fearless apostles

That same power that changed Saul, the anti-Christian terrorist, to Paul the devoted Apostle of our Lord Jesus

No wonder the great reformer - Martin Luther could say:

[Powerpoint 5-Luther]

Prayer is a strong wall and fortress of the church

And the great preacher Charles Spurgeon could say:

[Powerpoint 6-Spurgeon]

I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach

How seriously are we taking the truth that prayer is connecting us to God's power source?

(pause)

The challenge and question for us:

[Powerpoint 7-Supplication Challenge]

- Are we praying for God's wisdom for each other - and praying for wisdom for our politicians and leaders

- Are we praying for our own and other's growth in knowledge and understanding of God and Jesus His Son
- Are we praying that people know God and know Jesus - not just know about God and know about Jesus - but really really know Him personally!!
- Are we praying for eyes and hearts to be opened - especially for those who don't even know Jesus - and haven't yet come to believe in Him
- Are we praying that we will be encouraged to keep going because of the hope we have of eternal life
- Are we praying that we will know the power we have at our disposal because we are connected to God

(pause)

Praise (vv20b-23)

Because Paul is able to thank God for the people's faith and love of God and of God's people

And because Paul is able to pray in encouragement for the people asking God to help them and supply their needs

He then concludes His prayer by praising God for Jesus, the Son

[Powerpoint 8-Praise]

Because Jesus the son is:

- Seated at God's right hand in Heaven - a position of authority - interceding for us (Rom 8:34)
- Jesus is in charge of running the universe - everything from galaxies to governments, no name nor power is exempt from his rule

- And he's not just in charge for the time being - but forever
- He is charge of it all - and has the final word on everything
- And at the centre of all this Christ rules his body - the church - that's us
- The church is not peripheral to the world - the world is peripheral to the church.
- The church is the fullness of Jesus and He fills it
 - The church is the branches - Jesus is the vine
 - The church is His sheep - Jesus is the Shepherd
 - The church is His body - Jesus is the Head
 - The church is His bride - Jesus is the bridegroom

So the final challenge for us this morning

[Powerpoint 9-Praise Challenge]

- Are we praising Jesus - the King of Kings and Lord of Lords
- Are we praying for His church - not just St. David's - but the worldwide body of Jesus - the body of fellow believers - praying that it grows and grows and more people come to know Jesus
- Are we praying for more and more people to submit to Jesus' authority contained in His holy word and to submit to his rule over all things

(pause)

Conclusion

Let me finish with another true story

There was a Godly man who lived nearly 3000 years ago

Who prayed every day to God

Even when the King of the day made a new law - that no one could pray to any god or human being - and could only pray to the king himself -

This Godly man continued to pray to God

So this Godly man was thrown into a lions' den

This man is?

Daniel - of course

Daniel's faithfulness to God in prayer was rewarded

That's the power of God - that's available to us

Daniel was preserved from being cat food

And he said this to the King:

[My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. \(Daniel 6:22\)](#)

It's my prayer this morning that

Each one of us here - realizes that we are connected to the incomparable power of God - and that as we pray - God shuts the mouths of any "lions" (whatever form they take) that are trying to eat us up.

Let's pray...