

The Working of His Great Might

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Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, (16) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, (17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, (18) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might (20) that 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 rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (22) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

(15) For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, (16) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

These verses begin a section expressing thanksgiving for the mighty work of God paid for by Christ and applied by the Holy Ghost. Additionally, Paul teaches us to pray for our brothers and sisters in the Lord. We can approach the throne of mercy with prayers of thanksgiving, supplication, adoration, and praise! The Apostle Paul gives thanks for the Ephesians' spiritual life because only God deserves the glory for the miracle wrought by grace alone!

Notice also these two words in this portion of Scripture: faith and love. Where true faith in Christ's finished work abides, genuine love for the brothers is present. Paul's other epistles testify to the relationship between genuine faith in Christ and love for the brethren:

Colossians 1:3-4 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, (4) since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints,

Philemon 1:4-5 I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, (5) because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints,

The Church for which Christ died is a loving body of believers! We will love, as John Gill writes, "unfeigned, fervently, actively, and laboriously." While Scripture teaches us that faith, hope, and charity remain, the greatest of these is love!

Love means telling the truth on ourselves and on Christ! It means being honest about what we are as well as what Christ has done in His person and cross work. Love means bearing one another up in the truth of the true Gospel, restoring our brothers when they slip or if they jump off of one of life's craggy ledges! Since God has predestined us in love, we shall love one another in the Name of Christ.

Beloved, let us endeavor by the power of the Holy Spirit to be a congregation filled with genuine Christian love for God and love for one another!

(17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

God is the "Spirit of Wisdom and revelation" manifest in the flesh in the person of Christ Jesus. "Knowledge of Him" is the very power of the Gospel unto salvation. In this instance, Paul is praying that the Ephesians grow into an even deeper understanding and appreciation of the knowledge of the "Spirit of Wisdom."

And, praise be to God, our Lord is pleased to permit His children to "grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ."

**(18) having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
(19) and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might**

Deeper understanding is alluded to by the phrase, "having the eyes of your heart enlightened." The heart is utilized in Scripture to mean one's seat of understanding. We should never attempt to divide our seat of understanding into "heart knowledge" and "head knowledge." Such a concept can be fraught with theological peril.

To what ends does the Apostle pray for the Ephesians' growth in their understanding of the Gospel?

THAT (WE) MAY KNOW:

1. "What is the hope in which He has called you"

This hope is our steadfast hope in Christ and what He accomplished on our behalf on Calvary.

2. "What are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints."

Our inheritance is to rule and reign as joint-heirs with Christ Jesus forever and ever.

3. "What is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of His great might."

Psa 110:2-3 *The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! (3) Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.*

Romans 1:16-17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

Philippians 2:12-13 *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

The power of God is on full display in the saving of His people. Christ, the sinless Son of God, offered Himself up as a sweet-smelling all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of God's elect. Verse 20 continues the Apostle's thought on the matter:

(20) that 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 rule and authority and power and

dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

The working of God's great might! God's work of raising Christ from the dead is the source of all things for the Christian. Christ is risen - seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places - supremely ruling over all, above every name, for all place and time!

(22) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

"All things under His feet" - As Prophet, Priest, and King, Christ is the head of His church. He fills heaven and earth with His Glory! Christ is exalted and one day every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.

CONCLUSION

Our scripture lesson reminds us to pray with thankful hearts one for another, just as the Apostle did for the Ephesians. We're encouraged by God's Word to love one another, for God is love. In fact, where genuine Gospel truth is taught, preached, and believed, love is never lagging too far behind!

May the Lord be pleased to increase our understanding and appreciation of the great and mighty work of God wrought in the finished work of Christ, even as He keeps us in perfect peace for Christ's own sake. I pray, O God, that you grant your children a more and more profound understanding of the working of Your great power. Through Christ our Lord - Amen.