

Eph. 1:15-23 “Seeking Knowledge”

For the Children: As a young person you spend a fair bit of time studying. Some study simply because they have to. Others because they want to pass exams. Some study as little as possible. Others study so they can learn how to do various things in life – read, do sums, learn about God’s world, prepare for getting a job in later life. For the last group, the study is especially useful. Similarly with studying God’s Word. The knowledge we get from it is meant to be *useful* – for leading us to the Lord Jesus and a saving relationship with Him; teaching us to praise, thank, trust, and obey God; and to create in us Christian hope and joy. **Questions:** Why do you read God’s Word? What did Paul pray when he prayed for the Ephesians? What kind of knowledge did he want them to have?

Introduction:

First Point: Paul’s Prayer for the Ephesians

- 1) Plenty of Prayer: The apostle prayed regularly for the Ephesians – and for many other churches and individuals (Rom. 1:8-10; 1 Cor. 1:4; Phlp. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2-3. 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3). This indicates a great amount of time spent in prayer for the churches and for fellow-believers.
- 2) A Prayer of Thanks: Paul gave thanks for the Ephesians – for their faith in the Lord Jesus and for their love of all the saints.
- 3) A Prayer for Enlightenment: In addition to thanksgiving, the apostle petitioned the Lord, asking for Him to grant the Ephesians a spirit of wisdom, revelation in the knowledge of God and enlightenment of the “eyes of their heart” – an inner, spiritual knowledge rather than merely collecting doctrinal facts. These are gifts supplied by God’s Spirit. Paul’s prayer itself displays faith in Jesus and love of the saints.

Second Point: The Kind of Knowledge for Which He Prays

- 1) Knowledge for Hope: That true knowledge is not merely a collection of facts – for example, concerning what happens to us when we die - is seen by its results: such as the creating of *hope* in the believer (v. 18). Hope is a confident and joyful expectation and anticipation of something promised, but not yet seen. Hope is so much more than mere assent to truths about our future.
- 2) Knowledge of Wealth: The apostle sees true knowledge as resulting in trust, certainty and joy in the richness and glory of the inheritance we have through Christ’s saving work. Again, this is much more than assent to the fact of our inheritance.
- 3) Knowledge of Power: One may accept that God’s power is demonstrated in His works. One may also desire power for selfish reasons. But true knowledge leads to the praise of God for the *surpassing greatness* of His power toward believers (v. 19).
- 4) Knowledge in Christ: True knowledge, unlike false enlightenment, leads us to Christ – to faith in Him, trust, gratitude, obedience and joy. For the hope, wealth and power all derive from His Persona and work (vss.19bf). God’s might is seen in Christ’s resurrection and heavenly session. He is far above all rule, authority, power and dominion. Everything is in subjection to Him. This is the One who is the Head of the church. The church, His bride, is the “fullness of Him who fills all in all” – He who is complete in Himself, condescends to speak of the church as completing/filling Him, as she carries out His work on earth, with His Spirit’s aid. This is the basis for the analogy of marriage, in which the wife is the “complement” of her husband. Here again, we see doctrine – of Christ and of the church – leading to the fear and love of God, to praise, gratitude, obedience, trust, joy and hope.

Conclusion:

