

THE INCREDIBLE GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

Ephesians 1:15-23

Warren Wiersbe: In 19th C., Heinrich Schliemann dared go against popular opinion and believe that Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were based on fact and set out to prove it. In 1873 he uncovered the ancient site of Troy and became wealthy, because he dared to believe an ancient record and acted on his faith.

Paul wants us to understand what great wealth *WE* have in Christ.

Alan Bloom: *The Closing of the American Mind*, contends that relativism has closed our minds to the truth. Paul prays that our mind will be opened, so that we can fully comprehend what God has done for us.

Paul received word of divisions within the churches.

The divisions revolve around conflicts between Jews and Gentiles.

Paul writes concerning God's program for the church in this age, to correct the problem.

If God has eliminated the basis for distinctions within the church, they ought to live in a way that reflects what God has done.

A hymn of praise because those who used to be separated have been made members of God's family.

∴, We ought to act like members of a family and live in a way that is worthy of the family to which we belong!

IF GOD HAS ACCEPTED ALL OF US WITHOUT DISTINCTION, WE OUGHT TO ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER IN THE SAME WAY.

PAUL HAD TWO MAIN PURPOSES FOR WRITING:

There's something he wants us **TO KNOW**

There's something he wants us **TO DO**

He wants us TO KNOW what a great job God had done in our lives.

Paul informs us of the direction of God's program in the present age.

What does he want us TO DO? – LIVE LIKE IT!

WHAT A GREAT JOB GOD DID IN OUR LIVES 1-3

Paul's Prayer 1:3-3:20

Prayer of praise presents a summary of God's plan for His people in the present age.

PRAISE FOR GOD'S PLAN 1:3-14

He praises God for His marvelous plan through which He has made it possible for us to receive every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Each Person of the Godhead has done His part to make it possible for us to receive blessing!

We lack nothing!

This is all God's work--He gets all the glory.

We can't add *anything* to it!

PRAISE FOR OUR PART IN GOD'S PLAN 1:15-3:13

Paul praises God because WE (Gentiles) have been included in His plan.

A true understanding of the greatness of what God has done in us will eliminate any basis for pride or divisions.

HIS THANKSGIVING 1:15 *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you . . .*

Paul thanks God for their FAITH in the Lord Jesus

Paul thanks God for their LOVE for all the saints.

Paul knew about their faith and love, and was grateful, but that's just the beginning. There's much more they needed to understand.

HIS PETITION 1:16-23 Petition accompanies thanksgiving for them.

What are his two main requests before God for us?

Paul doesn't ask God to give us something we don't have.

He already indicated we have *all* spiritual blessings!

He asks God to reveal to us what we *already* have.

1) Paul asks that we might know God better 1:16-17 *I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

That God would give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know Him better

God's Spirit is the One who reveals Him to us.

A major purpose in our lives and in studying God's Word is that we might know Him better.

"Beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord. My Spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word!"

2) Paul asks that we might understand God's greatness

—especially the greatness of His plan **1:18-19a** *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*

He wants us to fully comprehend the greatness of God who made this plan possible for us

=> that our heart might be enlightened

He desires that our vision be clarified, that our perspective be widened.

[With what purpose (eis to + inf.)?]

What 3 things does he want us to comprehend?

1) That we might know the hope of God's calling

He has called us out of darkness into light – out of death into life

That calling is basis of confidence in Him, when we can't see whole picture clearly

The fact that we will one day see Christ and be like Him should motivate us to live like Him today.

2) **That we might know the riches of the glory of being His inheritance**

God considers us part of His great wealth.

Just as man's wealth brings glory, we bring God glory.

This is true of all God's people – of all saints

Now we Gentiles are among them – *We are saints!*

God looks on us as His glorious inheritance

God sees *us* this way. *Why do we accept a lower view of ourselves?*

3) **That we might know the greatness of God's power in believers**

What good is it to have great wealth and be too weak to use it?

When we feel weak and powerless, we need to be reminded of the greatness of His power revealed in us.

1:19b-23 *That **power is like the working of his mighty strength**, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Notice the emphasis on power – he uses 4 distinct words:

dunamis – general, includes everything – inherent power

energeia – power at work, in operation, – manifestation, function

kratos – power to accomplish a job being attempted, or the dominion needed to rule

ischus – possessed power – strength, force, capacity

All that power is directed towards US!

God did it in Christ, – It was that kind of power that raised Him from the dead!

Now He shows that power in us, – the same kind of power! – - because we are in Him.

God's power is at work in us, giving us new life!

Notice the importance of 1:22-23 *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

How does this power relate to His church?

Jesus is its HEAD

Notice what Paul says about the church: it is *the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

What does that mean?

The church is the fulfillment, the completion, of the One who completes (perfects) everything

Notice Paul's descriptions of how God does this:

*Eph 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—**that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

*Eph 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, **in order to fill the whole universe.***

*Eph 4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, **attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.***

*Col 2:10 and **you have been given fullness in Christ**, who is the head over every power and authority.*

This is what He does best, and He's done it in us!

THE CHURCH IS THE EPITOME OF HIS WORK!

It's the fulfillment of it all – the completion, the climax of all that God wants to accomplish in the world!

What does this mean in our lives?

Paul's two prayer requests for the church:

That we might know God better

That we might understand just how great a work He has done in our life – *that we really understand it!*

– that we might understand the hope of His calling

– that we might understand the riches of the glory of being His inheritance

– that we might understand the greatness of God's power in us

Because we are in Christ, the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us, to live a new kind of life.

Have we understood just what great power is available to us?

Are we taking advantage of His power?

Kent Hughes: School house in Itasca, TX destroyed by fire just before WW II broke out. 263 children killed. After the war they finally rebuilt the school with the most elaborate

sprinkler system ever designed. Tours were conducted of the school to show off the wonderful new system. 7 years later, expansion caused them to add a new wing; they discovered that the elaborate new sprinkler system had never been connected!

God has provided His people with incredible spiritual power.

Are you connected to the source?

Armitage Robinson: **“Paul’s spiritual vision made him the foremost of the apostles.”**

That’s his prayer for us too – that God would open our eyes, like He did those of Elijah’s servant, *to see what HE sees!*

That we might truly understand what a great work He has done in us!

=> “The Wonder of It All”