

## Ephesians 1:15-23

Week 2

3/28/21

### Introduction

Tim. Pastor. Happy Palm Sunday! **Ephesians 1:15-23**. PRAY.

Here's where I want to start us this evening - **There is a difference between knowing about someone or something, and actually knowing someone or something.**

**Steph Curry.** For instance, in 2008 I became a huge fan of the greatest basketball player to ever play the game, a guy named Steph Curry. He's from Charlotte, you should like him too. If you asked me if I "know" Steph Curry, in one sense, the answer is yes. I know his real first name is Wardell. I know he has a wife named Ayesha, three kids - Riley, Ryan and Canon. I know he's a three-time NBA Champion. I know that in 2016 he broke an NBA record for 3 pointers in a season with 402.

So in one sense, I *know* Steph Curry. In another sense, I don't know him at all. I've never gotten to know him, I don't really know what he's like in person, we're not familiar with each other at all. We've never even met. So in one sense I do know him, and in another sense I absolutely don't.

Some of us do this with other things:

- For instance, my wife with Joanna Gaines. I watch her shows, I read her magazine, I just feel like I know her.
- I've shared before about how much I enjoy documentaries about crossfit. I follow crossfit accounts on instagram. I feel like I know so much about what it takes to be a crossfit athlete, I've never done crossfit **once**, not even **once**, in my entire life.
- You can have facts about how good the lasagna is at Mama Ricotta's, but until you actually try it, experience it, you don't actually **know**.

**There is a difference between knowing about someone or something, and actually knowing someone or something.**

Here's why this matters for us today - if you missed last week, Paul dropped this gospel bomb right out of the gate to the church at Ephesus. He lays out all of the many spiritual blessings that are ours **in Christ Jesus** - we're chosen, adopted, forgiven, redeemed, sealed. All these beautiful things.

Now, here in the second part of chapter 1, he's going to make a turn from **praising** God, to **praying** for this church. And his prayer specifically is that they wouldn't just **know about** these blessings, that they wouldn't just **know about** God. That they would **know** on a deep level who He is and what He has done for them. That they would actually experience it in such a way that it would affect everything about them. That, as we talked about last week, they would realize and learn to live into the reality that they have union with Christ. That they are in fact united to Him.

Let's get into it, and see what we can learn.

### Ephesians 1:15-16

**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,**

First, Paul says I want you to know I love you, I'm thankful for you. I'm praying for you. Now, here's what I'm praying:

**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**

Let's pause here and chat for a minute. Paul prays that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge* of God....and then he says - "That you may know".

He's actually using two different Greek words to talk about knowledge here.

1. "Knowledge" of Him - Gk. word **Gnosis** - knowledge gained through experience or relationship
2. That you may "know" - Gk. root **Oida** - knowledge gained through presence and beholding.

So when Paul says I want you to have a knowledge of God, when I want you to know - He doesn't just mean check the theology box. He doesn't just mean get your facts straight. **He means get in the presence of God such that you experience Him and what He has done for you on a deep personal level.** I don't want you to just have a cognitive awareness of this stuff. I want you to experience deep down within all the nooks and crannies of your soul such that it actually affects everything.

Here at Citizens, sometimes we will distinguish this by talking about a **head knowledge** vs a **heart knowledge**. What we just cognitively believe up here, and what actually gets into our hearts. And this is helpful, but actually in Greek culture, there was no separation for them between head and heart. For those in the time of Paul's writing the heart was seen as the center of physical, spiritual, **and** mental life. In other words, if it didn't hit your heart, it didn't matter. The Greeks didn't have a concept for just simply affirming something mentally.

**If you actually knew it, that means it got down into your bones.** You experienced it, you gazed on it, it wasn't just facts - Joanna Gaines lives on a farm in Waco, TX with her husband Chip and their 5 kids. That's great. That doesn't affect you at your core.

Paul says → I want you to **know**. I want you to behold God, experience what He has for you on a deep, personal level.

Then Paul is going to lay out specifically what he wants them to experience and know:

**18 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**

Paul is specifically praying for them that they would **know** three deep truths about being in Christ:

**They would know:**

1. The hope they have in Christ.
2. The treasure they are to God.
3. The power God has to save.

I want to spend the rest of our time talking about these three. Here we go:

1. **The hope they have in Christ.**

**18 - that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you**

### **Your salvation has a past, present, and future reality:**

- We talked about this last week - in eternity **past** God called us, He chose us.
- Then in the **present** we believed and still believe. We hold fast as the Scripture calls us to.
- But our salvation also has a **future** dimension.

We have something we are moving towards. We are not wandering about saved but meaningless, saved but purposeless. We are moving towards something, namely - **God redeeming and making all things new in Christ**. Because of this our salvation is, or should be, marked by massive hope. God has called us to a distinct way of life with a glorious future.

Here's why this is important → Hope is not an abstract emotion. Hope is not wishful thinking. **Hope is confidence in something that is unseen but certain**. Or let me put it this way - **Hope means letting your certain future shape your uncertain present**.

**Zaxbys + Maggie's Dad**. Last week we were at dinner after the Gathering, and Bethany Simpson, who's our deacon of hospitality, was telling us a story about their really good friends who live in Tennessee. And she told us about how her friend's father, when he was in college, was approached one day by his roommate. And his roommate said - "Hey man, I'm going to start a fried chicken restaurant. It's going to be awesome and I want you to be my business partner. Do it with me." And her friend's dad was basically like "hey dude, that's a really bad idea. It's not going to work. No thanks." **That restaurant is called Zaxby's**.

And so of course we're all freaking out at the table like - "How do you turn down a partnership in Zaxby's? It's all over the country, how could you miss that?" But here's the thing, we know the story now. We know what happened. He didn't. If someone approached you with a business venture, or a financial investment, or a stock market opportunity and you knew - this is going to kill. Like it's going to do so well, you would invest. **If you knew the future was certain, it would impact your present**.

### **How much more beautiful and glorious and wonderful is our guaranteed future as followers of Jesus?**

And so when Paul says I'm praying you have hope, he doesn't mean some fleeting emotion or some riled up confidence, he means a deep rooted belief in what is unseen but certain - **God has called me into His family. I'm His forever. He's making all things new. This world is not my home**.

**1 Peter 1:13 → Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will (not might...will) be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Hope means setting your heart firmly → Jesus is going to come back. This isn't going to last forever. Hope is taking that certain future and letting it impact everything about the present.

We know where the world is headed. We know God is uniting all things under Christ. We know God is making us new and making all things new. We know we have a future promised redemption and eternity celebrating Jesus. Hope is central to our walk with Christ.

This is how Paul talks about it in **Romans 8:22-25 - 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.**

I love that - we wait for it with **patience**. Not fear. Not worry. Not anxiety. Not doubt. Not uncertainty....**Patience**.

**When this gets down deep into our soul, that we have a rich hope in Christ, this is absolutely crushing to us in the most beautiful way possible.**

**Control** - Knowing the hope that is on offer in Christ absolutely dismantles my need for control in the most beautiful way possible. When I have a sleepless night like I don't know last night, where I'm up worrying and wondering about the future and what's going to happen - with my family, with this church, with some of you and what you're walking through - and it wakes me up at 2am, 3am, and my mind just feels like it's spinning out of control and I feel like it's all on me to make everything happen according to my plan. I gotta push myself back towards hope, towards the reality that I have a rich hope in Christ that is a guaranteed inheritance for all eternity. Even if it doesn't go how I would like or would decide on my own right now.

**Comfort** - Knowing the hope that is on offer in Christ crushes our need for false and immediate comfort right now. Part of why it's so hard for us as modern Americans to let the future impact our present is because the future feels so far away. We don't do well with delayed gratification. We want the promised future now or no go. Bring relief now God! Fix it now!

So we have to put ourselves back towards hope in God - wait on His plan with patience. We hope in that future eternal redemption. **Even in the suffering of now.**

Cause listen - **it might not get better right now.** It might still be hard. It might still be painful. **Jeremiah 29:11** - everyone's favorite Bible passage - **"I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope."** You know what He says literally right before that? You're going to have 70 more years of exile under the oppression of a foreign nation. BUT in 70 years I'm going to return and fulfill what I have promised.

Hope doesn't alleviate the pain and brokenness of living in a fallen world, it just promises and roots itself in the fact that we serve a King who is not dead but is ruling and reigning and is going to return and establish His forever Kingdom where evil is no more, death is no more, sin is no more, pain is no more, suffering is no more. This gives us true comfort only found in Christ Jesus.

Paul says I'm praying that you have **HOPE in Christ to which he has called you.**

## **2. The treasure they are to God.**

### **18 What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,**

At first glance this seems like a rehash of last week - Paul's addressing again the inheritance that is ours in Christ Jesus. A future kingdom, a glorious eternity with Christ. But actually, Paul's not talking about our inheritance here, He's talking about God's inheritance. Notice what he says → The riches of **His** glorious inheritance in the saints.

What is God's glorious inheritance, what is His? **The saints!** You and me! The Church! What does that mean that we are His inheritance? It means **all who trust in Christ are God's treasured possession forever.**

Now, this is going to mess with some of y'all. And I know that because it messes with me. Because we wrongly think:

- God tolerates us.
- God begrudgingly deals with us because He has to.
- God is impatient with us.
- God regrets saving us, loving us.

That's not the message of the Bible! God calls you His treasured possession, and that's true whether you feel like it or not, whether you've lived like it this past week or not. Here's how I know that → **Because you being a treasured possession is not about you and it's not based upon you, it's based upon you being united to Christ.**

**Let me show you this:**

**Exodus 19:5-6** (God has brought the Israelites out of Egypt, gave them the 10 commandments. Here's what he says to them) - **5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**

God says to His people - if you obey me, you will be my treasured possession. Well if you read the Old Testament, you know that for the most part they're not so great at following God. But in all of it there's this trajectory, this plan God is writing and unfolding and establishing where God is going to have a people who are His treasured possession and it's going to be based both on God's faithfulness and the peoples' faithfulness.

Skip ahead. Jesus, God's Son, comes to earth, lives a perfectly faithful life to God that none of us can live. Dies on the cross for our sins, resurrects three days later defeating satan, sin, and death.

Now, what does this have to do with us being a treasured possession?

**1 Peter 2:4-5 - 4 As you come to him (Jesus), a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood...**

Peter says Jesus is the one who is chosen and precious. But skip down to verses 9-10:

**9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

God from the very beginning was after a people for Himself. A people who would be His and enjoy Him and His glory forever! A treasured possession. But in order for us to be God's treasured possession we must be faithful to Him. But we can't do that. So what did God do? He sent Jesus - who was chosen and precious, to be on the one-time perfect sacrifice for sins, and now through our faith in His life, death, and resurrection - His faithfulness is counted as our faithfulness. His righteousness is counted as our righteousness. Him being chosen and precious now means that we are chosen and precious.

**We are united to Him, meaning we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a treasured possession - despite of our unfaithfulness, because of the faithfulness of Christ on our behalf!**

Because you are united to Christ - God delights in You! He delights to save you, to forgive you, to redeem you, to love you. For all eternity God the Father and God the Son have been glorifying and loving one another, and when we put our faith in Christ we are caught up into that cosmic forever, indescribable love! What joy!

**You know why this is good news?**

**Approval** - Because so many of us are looking to others to tell us that we're a treasured possession. So many of us are trying to seek our validation and worth and belonging in what others think about us - am I funny enough, skinny enough, caring enough, available enough, wise enough?

- We show up to **church** - what are they gonna think about me?

- We show up to **group** - what are they gonna think about me?
- We show up to **work** - what are they gonna think about me?
- We show up to the **hangout** - what are they gonna think about me?

We are constantly putting on a face, trying to measure up, crushed by the weight of needing and seeking other people's approval.

**We want everyone else to tell us because of our performance what God already tells us is true because of Christ's performance → You are a treasured possession.**

We are a treasured possession to God not because we are awesome, but because God is awesome and does an awesome work to redeem us and make us His treasured possession in Christ Jesus!

**You are a treasure to God because you are hidden in and united to Christ!**

### **3. The power God has to save.**

**19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might**

I want you to know God's power to accomplish all He says He will accomplish. Look at these words in verse 19: "Immeasurable greatness", "Power", "Working", "Great Might". Paul goes on to elaborate on this one - showing us how powerful God is:

**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.**

You could summarize verses 20-23 like this → **God's in charge.**

How can Paul say this? Well let's see:

- He raised Christ from the dead. Like Christ was dead, and now He's not. So...that's a thing.
- He seated Christ at the right hand of His throne. Above not only earth but all the heavens. So...He's king.
- He put Him above every rule, every authority, every power, and every dominion. Over all governments, over all principalities and powers, over all evil spirits, over everything. Not only right now, but also all that will ever be.
- And He's not only over them, God also put them under His feet, aka - **all the physical and spiritual things we fear are a foot rest for Jesus.** (Idk what kind of picture you have of Jesus but he's not snuggly and cute in a manger - the powers of evil are His footrest)
- And just in case that wasn't enough - He's also the head over the Church - all of us.

**God's in charge.**

**When this gets deep down into your soul:**

**Power** - You start to grasp - God has all the power, which means I don't have to try to hold my universe together. You're not the one who holds together all things spinning in your world, God does.

- You don't have to be crushed by that time you lashed out at your kid and how that might affect them - because you don't hold all things together, God does.

- You don't have to be crushed by your own inability to love your spouse - because you don't hold all things together, God does.
- You're freed up to do good work at your job even if your boss doesn't give you the recognition you think you deserve, why? Because God's on the throne!
- It means you can put your doubt about God's love for you to rest because God has made the enemies of Christ His footstool and HE reigns over all - you are secure in His hand.

**He has immeasurable greatness and power toward us who believe!** What good news!

### Conclusion

**Ephesians 1 Paul prays for us to *know*, to *experience in a deep and rich way*:**

- **The hope we have in Christ.**
- **The treasure we are to God.**
- **The power God has to save us.**

## **INTRO INTO PRAYER:**

So what do we do? Here's how I want to close us tonight. Look back with me at verses 16-18:

**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,**

**Paul says He is praying for this...why?** Because it is God who must give us the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation. It is God who must enlighten our hearts to this. And so I thought the fitting application for this week more than 3 steps towards knowing this, or anything like that, would be to follow in line with the passage and pray that God would help us to know these things.

**[Invite band up - Enter into a time of prayer].**

I have three prompts for us I'll walk us through, I'll read each one and give you a few moments to ask God for that. If you need to spread out, get your posture right, etc.

**\*\*If you're not a Christian** - These promises are only available to you in Christ. So the one thing I want you to pray is that God would reveal Himself to you and that He would change your heart and you would put your faith in Him for forgiveness of sins and life forever with God. That should be your prayer - **that God would save you from your sins.**

**For those of us in Christ, here's what I want us to pray:** (narrate prompts, lead us into each one)

1. **Pray** that the Spirit would help you know the hope that is yours in Christ Jesus. That this would stop your need for control and give you true comfort in Him.
2. **Pray** that the Spirit would help you know that in Christ Jesus you are a treasured possession to God and you don't have to seek approval or validation from others.
3. **Pray** that the Spirit would help you know that God has the power to save and He's in charge so you don't have to hold your world together and be on the throne of your life.

**Close in Prayer.**

**Communion. Prayer Team. Worship.**