

PRAYING WITH PAUL

Message #3, Ephesians 1:15-23

September 20, 2020

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened
in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you*
Ephesians 1:17

Why Paul prays

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people,

¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers

Ephesians 1:15 (see Philippians 1:3-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; Philemon 1:4-7; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; Col. 1:3-14)

1) Paul's reason: all those spiritual blessings in Christ in the heavenly realms

2) Paul's subject: the saints → it's an encyclical letter so he prays for me!

When Paul started praying

¹⁰ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹ And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Acts 9:10-11 (KJV, where Spurgeon gets his sermon title)

1) Prayer is the test of Paul's sincerity

2) Prayer is the sign of God's sovereign work

The prayer (better take a deep breath before reading this prayer!)

¹⁷ [I keep asking] that the God [subject, not object] of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better [or, “in the knowledge of him”]

¹⁸ [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be enlightened [or, “having been enlightened”] in order that you may know [or, “toward your knowing]

[what is] the hope to which he has called you,

[what are] the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

and [what is] his incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is the same as the [better, “according to the working of his”] mighty strength ²⁰ [which] he exerted when he raised Christ 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 name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And [God] placed [better, “subjected”, *hupo + tassō*] all things under his feet and appointed him to be [better, “as”] head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 1:15-23 (with special help from D.A. Carson’s *Praying with Paul*)

1) Knowing God is a work of the Spirit (yes, “S” not “s”)

2) The three “whats”

■ what is the hope of His calling?

■ what are the riches of his glory?

■ what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe?

3) Thinking about that power (hint: you better know the Jesus story!)

Praying with Paul for all the saints

¹⁸ *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

Ephesians 6:19

- 1) Paul celebrated faith and love

- 2) Paul made his prayers for the saints public (but private prayer is good, too!)

- 3) Paul made his prayers about knowing God, not being happy (but it made him happy, Philippians 1:3-8)

Prayer challenge

Choose one person, then pray these prayers of Paul for this person each day this week. We left enough room for each day to include what the Spirit of wisdom and revelation teaches you about knowing God and loving your prayer person.

My person: _____

Monday: Philippians 1:9-11 (vs. 3-8 set the scene for this wonderful prayer)

Tuesday: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (probably Paul's earliest prayer for the saints, vs. 4-10 reveal Paul's heart)

Wednesday: Philemon 1:4-7 (Paul reveals his reason for praying in verses 8-11)

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 (Paul's focus is on God's faithfulness)

Friday: Colossians 1:3-14 (This prayer is longer, but worth it! Paul again celebrates faith and love.)

Saturday: Ephesians 3:14-21 (This is the power prayer!)

My working outline of Ephesians

Overall Theme:

Chapters 1-3 The Glory of God in the Church

Chapter 1 The glory of God in redemption

Chapter 2 The glory of God in reconciliation

Chapter 3 The glory of God in the revelation of the mystery of the church

Chapters 4-6 The Glory and Pleasure of God through the Church

Chapter 4 The glory of God in the unity and growth of the church

Chapter 5 The glory of God in the imitation of Christ by the saints

Chapter 6 The glory of God in victory of Christ

Resources for further studies of Ephesians

For studying Paul’s prayers, Pastor Fakkema suggests:

Surgeon’s “Paul’s First Prayer” at <https://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/0016.HTM>

D.A. Carson’s *Praying with Paul* (Baker Academic, 2014)

A.W. Pink’s “Gleanings from Paul” at <https://www.monergism.com/gleanings-paul-study-prayers-apostle-ebook>

This is a wonderful Bible Project introduction on youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=12&v=Y71r-T98E2Q&feature=emb_logo

Bob Deffinbaugh’s Ephesians series is at <https://bible.org/series/ephesians-glory-god-church>

Spurgeon’s series of messages on Ephesians are at http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/index/r_eph.htm

Kim Riddlebarger’s sermons on Ephesians are at <http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/sermons-on-ephesians/?jsessionid=3799445CA50CA06F2F395D4FBE89D586.v5-web017>

ThirdMill has produced “Paul and the Ephesians” at <https://thirdmill.org/seminary/lesson.asp/vid/19/version/>

Desiring God, John Piper’s media ministry, has some wonderful resources at

<https://www.desiringgod.org/scripture/ephesians/1/messages>

Mark Johnston’s “Preaching Ephesians” at <https://www.reformation21.org/articles/preaching-ephesians.php>

Doug’s favorite commentaries are John R. W. Stott’s *The Message of Ephesians* (IVP, 1979), William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Ephesians* (Baker Book House, 1967); Ephesians in the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1981) by A. Skevington Wood; and, much shorter, F. F. Bruce’s *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Revell, 1961).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones has a wonderful seven volume series on Ephesians (Baker Books, 1978).

The text we spent the most time on in Darrell Johnson’s class was Timothy Gombis’ *The Drama of Ephesians* (IVP Academic, 2010)

The Gospel Coalition has some wonderful resources on Ephesians at

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/ephesians/>

Alexander Maclaren’s commentary on Ephesians 1 is at

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mac/ephesians-1.html>

F.F. Bruce’s paraphrase is available at https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/1962-3_163.pdf

	a.d.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30])†		■										
Paul’s conversion (33/34*)		●										
Paul’s first Jerusalem visit (36/37*)			●									
Paul’s second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)				■								
Paul’s first missionary journey (46–47)					●							
Paul’s third Jerusalem visit (apostolic council) (48–49*)					●							
Paul’s second missionary journey (48/49–51*)					■							
Paul’s third journey (incl. 3 years in Ephesus) (52–57*)						■						
Paul, under house arrest in Rome, writes to Ephesus (62*)								●				
Paul martyred in Rome (64–67*)								■				

