

That You May Know What Is Yours In Christ

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 July 2021

Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] Please be seated. Good morning.

Before we get into our text in Ephesians this morning, I want to say a quick word about sermon length. I first want to apologize for the length of my sermon last week.

Some people say no to you. Thank you. Well, I knew I went much longer than you're accustomed to. But it wasn't until I checked the sermon posting on the website during the week that I discovered it was about 50 minutes.

So much longer than I had even thought. So, I guess I was over-eager. Let me assure you that 50-minute sermons will not be the norm.

But I also want to say that I'm likely to preach a bit longer than you're used to. As Anglicans, we believe God feeds us through the word preached and the sacrament.

[1:12] Now, the tendency of our non-liturgical brothers and sisters is to weigh the word preached as more important than the sacraments.

As Anglicans, our tendency is to swing to the opposite pendulum. Hey, buddy. How are you? Now, as Anglicans, I think our tendency is to swing to the opposite pendulum.

I'm not accusing us of anything, but I think it's generally true of our liturgical churches that we weigh the sacraments as more important than the preached word.

But in truth, both are important and necessary. God feeds his church through his word faithfully proclaimed and the sacraments faithfully administered.

And it is my hope that as a church we will value both equally. So, last thing about the sermon length. I want to thank you for being gracious to your new rector.

[2:24] Not one single person complained about the length of my sermon last week. Knowing now how much longer I went, I know that was no small grace extended to me.

So, thank you. So, this morning, we begin where we left off last week in our studies in the series in Ephesians. Paul continues.

If you have your Bible, you might want to open to Ephesians chapter 1, verse 15 to 23. If you don't have one, there should be a pew Bible in the pews there that you can get a hold of.

So, Paul continues in verses 15 to 23 of chapter 1 with a prayer of thanksgiving for these saints. He says that for this reason, it begins in verse 15.

For this reason. The reason being that the blessings that is bestowed upon us by God that is enumerated in the earlier verses. He says, for these reasons, by nature or by union with Christ.

[3:30] It's quite remarkable to read Paul's words in these verses. These innumerable great gifts that are bestowed upon us by the Father. Through the Son's merit.

In the power of the Holy Spirit. In effect, He's revealing to us the complete work of the triune God regarding our salvation. And all of it, all of this work of salvation is for the praise of His glory.

Now, this is the heart of our testimony as Christians. The heart of our testimony is that we were once a people enslaved to sin. And in Christ, we've been set free.

The change in our status is drastic. We, who were once slaves to sin, can now claim God as our Father.

We are adopted. We are possessors in Christ of all the riches of grace. With all wisdom and understanding.

[4:36] So, Paul says, for all of these reasons. For this particular reason. Paul launches in the next verses of chapter 1. Into another long sentence.

Which is a prayer of thanksgiving. By the way, in the Greek. All of chapter 1 are two sentences. He starts off. In the passages we read. We studied last week. With one sentence.

He took a breath. Then he continued in one full sentence. Of praising God. And thanking God. And then praying for these saints. This prayer of Paul serves as a model.

It's a model prayer for us. The prayer might seem overly spiritual when you read it. Paul might even be accused by some of being one of those Christians. Who are too heavily minded to be of any earthly good.

You've heard that phrase before. But such an accusation actually betrays the mind of people that are making it. Because in truth. If we are tracking along with Paul.

[5 : 39] His whole point. Is that we cannot be too heavily minded. In fact, he's encouraging us to be more heavily minded. He's reminding us.

He reminded us of who we are. In Christ. He reminded us of what is ours. In Christ. So that we can be properly.

We can properly be of earthly good. It is only. When we see who we are in Christ. What is ours in Christ. That we can live in this world.

Properly as followers of Jesus Christ. This unimaginable wealth. That has been bestowed upon us. Is what Paul is saying.

That we need to lay hold of. And be reminded of. And walk into. As Christians. And this unimaginable wealth. Does not diminish.

[6 : 37] It's an inexhaustible. It is inexhaustible. Now. But even more of it we will get. When we possess in the future. That's what Paul. Paul's old thrust.

In these. In these verses. Is aspirational. He's saying. This is our future. As believers in Jesus Christ. This is what we have now. And this is what we can look for.

Forward to. In Christ. It is for this reason. As Paul stays. That he prays for the church. How tragic would it be then.

To have these blessings. All these blessings that Paul talks about. And fail to utilize them. In our lives. So this is why Paul repeats.

In verse 15. As he prays for it. He says. I've heard of your faith. The apostle adds. That included in his hearing. Is the knowledge. That their faith.

[7 : 33] That is the Ephesians faith. And the other churches around it. That their faith is exhibited. In their display of love. Towards the saints. The two go together.

Right. One cannot have faith in Jesus. Without growing in love for him. And his church. Do you see that? Faith.

And the display of that. Love. For Jesus. And love for his people. Go together. You cannot have faith in Jesus. Without growing in love for Jesus. And. Jesus' church.

Is bright. Those who have genuine love for Jesus. Exhibit. That love. By displaying. Christ-like love. To their fellow believers.

Jesus. So Paul. He gives thanks to God. For the display. Of genuine faith. That is clearly exhibited among them. And then he.

[8 : 29] Intercedes for them. He says that God will give them. The spirit of wisdom. Of revelation. In the knowledge of him. Paul is here.

Talking to believers. Jesus. So he's not praying. For the spirit indwelling. He's already spoken. In the early verses. Of the Holy Spirit.

Being a seal. Which occurs. Which happens. At the moment of faith. And trust in Jesus. So they already have the Holy Spirit. But here he's praying. That the Holy Spirit.

Will be. Their ongoing teacher. Leading them. Into all wisdom. Giving them. The fear of the Lord. Of which the psalmist says. Is the beginning of wisdom. But the goal is not. To remain. At the beginning stages. The goal is. To grow. Into that wisdom.

[9 : 24] To grow. In that wisdom. Precisely. Wisdom that we. The kind of wisdom. That we illuminate. Illumine. The revelation. Of God.

Revealed in Christ Jesus. It's not a. Private revelation. That he's talking about. Like. Each one of us. Gets our own. Individual private revelation. He's talking about. The revealed.

Plan of God. Of salvation. In Christ Jesus. That has been. That has been. Decided. Before the foundation. Of the world. That they would know it. And this is the kind of.

Knowledge. That is not just. Cognitive. Like you know. Knowing math. Problems. Right. Knowing history facts. He's talking about. A knowing. That is. Experiential.

A knowing. That is. That is. Vital. To every being. Of their body. Or who they are. This is the kind of. Prayer. That it. That it will grow.

[10 : 19] In that knowledge. And wisdom. And revelation. So that they may have. The necessary. Understanding. To make God. The constant.

Object. Of their reverence. And their devotion. And so that they may be. Committed. To the ongoing work.

Of God. In them. And through them. And so that their commitment. To God's. The Holy Spirit's work. Will be unshakable. People. Even in the world.

That hates. And persecuted. Them. As followers of Jesus. Can you identify. With Ephesians. In this. In this. In this. In this language. That they will stand firm.

By. By those. For it. Helping them. To know. In wisdom. And revelation. The plan of God. So that. That knowledge.

[11 : 12] Will lead them. To be able to stand firm. In the midst of all. That can assail them. As Christians. In the following verses. Paul prays then.

That God will give. Them. The church. The Ephesians. And he's praying that for us too. The church of God. Pray that God will give them. Three key insights.

And he reminds them of. Of these insights. At the end of this. Of this passage. He reminds them. About the reigning. And ascended Christ. Whom they're joined together with.

So the first object. Of the apostles prayer. Is that we will know. The hope. With which we've been called. The hope.

With which we've been called. So. Biblical hope. Specifically. The hope. That Paul prays for here. Is quite different. From our day to day.

[12 : 09] Use of that word. Our day to day. Understanding of. And use of the word. Hope. Involves. An expectation. Or wish. That things might.

Turn out well. You might hope. In the beginning of the season. That your favorite sports team. Might win the championship. That's hope. But there's no assurance.

That that will happen. If you're like me. And your team is. The New York Knicks. Or the New York Mets. That's very likely. That that will not happen.

Or if some of you are Bills fans up here. So. That's. You know. It's not very likely either. Although I think they're doing better now. So. I'm touching the third rail.

You might even hope. That that's. That might seem. Insignificant. You might even hope. That a loved one. Who's precious to you. Who's seriously sick. Might get better.

[13 : 09] But even that. It's a good hope. Even that. There's no assurance. Of. Of. Being healed.

From a. From a debilitating. In illness. But the hope. That Paul. Talks of. Here. Is. It's.

It talks of a confidence. That is. In a fixed. Unmovable reality. This hope. This biblical hope. Is talking about.

A firm conviction. That you're sure. Is going to happen. Is going to happen. And. Now you look forward. To its fulfillment. Do you see the difference.

Between the biblical hope. Here. There's a. It's a fixed. Immovable reality. That you. Put your confidence in. That you look forward. To its fulfillment.

[14 : 04] That is the biblical hope. That of which Paul. Is praying for. That they would know. This hope. Is tied. Intimately. To God's call. That is.

God calling them. Remember. In the previous verses. God calling them. From before the foundation. Of the world. To save them. To save you. To present you.

Holy and blameless. Before him. This hope. Is tied to that call. That which God. Has began. Before the foundation. Of the world.

He will accomplish. Although this is a future hope. The Holy Spirit. Abiding presence. In us.

Is a down payment. Of the certain completion. Of God's work in us. Now. How are we to know.

[14 : 59] This hope. Which we have been called to. How are we to know it. And to live into it. Paul says. It is by having. The highs. Of our heart.

Enlightened. This is important. For everything else. That he says here. Including the hope. And also. That they will know. The riches of his glory. And inheritance. As it goes on. All of this.

They are able to. Know. And attain. By having the eyes. Of their heart. Enlightened. That's a curious statement. Isn't it? Eyes.

Are usually. In our head. And connected. To our brain. At least. I think that biologically. That's how it works. So it would have made sense. For Paul to say.

That the eyes. Of their mind. Perhaps. To be enlightened. Since what we see. Is processed. By the brain. That seems to be.

[15 : 55] The natural progression. Of things. But as scripture tells us. In Romans 1. We are naturally blind. To the things of God. Our mind.

Our intellect. Left to itself. Cannot know God. Since it is blinded. By sin. And darkened. By sin. So this. Unchanging.

Inclination. To sin. That is. Inerrant. In us. This unchanging. Inclination. To darkness. Sets us. Firmly. Against God. And using the words.

Of the apostle. It makes us. Dead. In our. Trespasses. And sins. Paul is not. Praying there. Though. For their conversion.

Here. They are already saints. They are already. Recipients. Of God's grace. True faith. In the Christ. In Christ. Redeeming work. So.

[16 : 54] In terms. In terms. Of talking about. The hearts. Of their minds. Being enlightened. Is referring. To. The very. Essence. Of who they are. That they will know.

Again. It's. It goes beyond. Just the faculties. Of their mind. It goes to the. To their very soul. That they will see. God. Truly. So the prayer.

Is for the Holy Spirit. To help them. To see. God's plan. For them. As redeemed people. And that the power. Of God. That is available.

To them. That they will be able. To see that. They will be able. To take hold. Of that. We need. The Holy Spirit. That's what Paul is. Cluing us to hear.

We need. The Holy Spirit. The Spirit of wisdom. To continually. In our walk. With Jesus. To continually. Illuminate. Our hearts. And draw us.

[17 : 49] Nearer and nearer. To Christ. In whom. Are all the treasures. Of wisdom. And power. That we need. Without the power. Of the Holy Spirit. Doing that in us. We can't lay hold.

Of all the blessings. That Paul had talked about. Earlier. In verses 1. 3 to 14. So it should be. Our constant prayer. Alongside Paul. That the Holy Spirit. Will open our eyes.

To clearly see. Christ. As he is. How is he? He is our risen. And ascended king. Who. Is the power. And the wisdom of God. That we will see him. As he is. Risen and ascended. He. Is the power. And the wisdom of God. So the apostle goes on.

He prays them. For them. For the believers. He prays that they will be. Know. Their worth. To God. The riches of his glorious inheritance. In the saints. But the inheritance.

[18 : 45] He talks of. Here. Is not. Ours. Remember. The language he uses. In the previous verses. About inheritance. The passage. Here he says.

The riches. Of his glorious inheritance. In the saints. Isn't that interesting? God. God. God. Who can speak anything. Into existence. God.

Who needs. Or wants nothing. He has a glorious inheritance. Coming to him. What is that glorious inheritance? You.

The church of God. Jesus came to ransom us. For himself. We are his inheritance. This is. This is covenantal language. That Paul is using here.

We find echoes of it. In Malachi 3.17. Where. The Lord of hosts. Jesus himself. Says. They shall be mine. In the day.

[19 : 40] When I make up. My treasured possession. He's referring to his covenant people. So. As God's covenant people. We are his treasured possession. Of course.

The very fact. That we are God's inheritance. Chosen by him. As a display. Of his glorious grace. Means also. That we have.

An inheritance. In him. To be. His possession. Is to also. Is to have. As we have said before. Rights of sonship. To be.

His possession. Is to have. Rights. Of sonship. Rights of inheritance. So that we can boldly. Say. We have access. To the riches. Of our father.

That is what Paul wants us. To see here. So if you are ever. Endowed. Of your worth. To God. Look in these verses. Brothers and sisters.

[20 : 36] What Paul wants us to know here. Is that we. Are a precious possession. A glorious. Inheritance. To God. You've been. Dearly ransomed.

By Jesus Christ. This is a. Dignity. Dignity. And worth. That no. Accomplishment. In this world. Can rival. And it should dictate.

How we in turn. See. Ourselves. It should dictate. How we in turn. See. Our fellow brother. And sister. In Christ. As fellow. Inheritors.

Of the riches. Of our father. This is why Paul can say. Later on. And in his other epistles. This is why he can say. There is no slave. Or free. Jew.

A gentile. Not that those things. Are not true about them. But he says. In Christ. You are all inheritors. On equal footing. Before God. You are one in Christ.

[21 : 36] So lastly. Paul goes on. And he prays for them. He prays that they may know. The power. That they have in Christ. He prays that we.

May know the power. That we have in Christ. What is this power? It is the same power. Paul says. That God used. To raise Jesus.

From the dead. How wonderful to know. That the power of God. Has provided. The power that God has provided. For us to live. Is the same resurrection power.

That raised Jesus Christ. From the dead. I'm going to repeat that. How wonderful is it to know.

Brothers and sisters. That the same power. That is available to you and I.

Is the same resurrection power. That raised Jesus Christ. From the dead. How great is the power. That is working in you. Assuming you are a believer.

[22 : 33] In Jesus Christ. It is the power of God. The Holy Spirit. Which raised Jesus from the dead. And exalted him. Paul says. To the place of dominion. To the place of authority.

In the heavenly places. Let's not lose sight. Of what Paul's emphasis. Let's not lose sight. Of Paul's emphasis. At the end there. His emphasis. At the end of his prayer.

In describing Jesus' exaltation. Our resurrected Lord. Sits. At the right hand of the Father. That's. Sort of. Technical language. Sits. At the right hand of the Father. The right hand of the Father. Is a seat of power. It's a place of authority. Our resurrected Lord.

Sits at the right hand of the Father. And he goes in. He says. He's far. Jesus Christ. He's far above all authority. And power. Both on earth. And in heaven.

[23 : 31] In essence. Paul wants us to know. That Jesus' power. Is matchless. In the universe. Jesus Christ. Is uniquely powerful.

To save. Is uniquely powerful. To save. Is uniquely powerful. To save you and I. Is uniquely powerful. To save. All the lost.

In our neighborhoods. In our vicinity. He only. Can do it. Is also uniquely powerful. To sustain you. To keep you. And is uniquely powerful.

To bring you. To the blessed hope. Which is promised. Christ. If you ever wonder. What Jesus is doing.

In that place of authority. At the right hand of the Father. If you ever wonder. What he's doing. Paul wants us to know. Know this. Brothers and sisters.

[24 : 30] He is ruling. Over all things. For the sake of the church. Isn't that wonderful? He has all these power. Above all principalities. And powers. And dominions.

And he's ruling. For the sake. Of the church. That's. That's you and I. That's us.

Got it here. Christ rules. And he's in place of authority. And power. And dominion. For her sake. This church. This resurrection power.

This universe ruling. King of heaven and earth. Is working. All things out. For our good. All right. Do you know the nature and purpose.

For which God has called you to himself. Are you allowing the Holy Spirit. To be at work in you. Opening the eyes of your hearts.

[25 : 29] The thinking and decision making element. In you. To long. For that future. That Christ has secured for you. You have a longing for it.

It's very tempting. To be so wrapped up. By the events of our present age. We can think that our hope. Lies in the turn of the market.

We can think that our hope. Perhaps. Lie in the party. That sits in power. In Washington. It's easy. To be gripped.

By fear. And anxiety. In this world. To feel the weight. Of the loss. Of all that is around us. As we inhabit. A world that is. Increasingly. Hostile.

To Christ. A world that is. Increasingly. Alienated. To the common. Judeo-Christian. Value. That was once. A given. In our society.

[26 : 27] In our land. And as we look around us. It's very easy. To say. What world do I live in? Let me tell you about the Ephesians.

That Paul is writing to here. They know nothing. Of a Judeo-Christian value. They live in a pagan culture. And Christ. Paul writes to them.

And using these languages. To fix their hope. In Christ. That they will know the hope. That Christ is powerful. The Ephesians live in a world where.

In the world that is gripped by the power of the occult. In the worship of the goddess Artemis. They had a temple. In Ephesus.

That is. Considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. Much bigger. Than the Parthenon.

This is. This is the religion. If you go to Acts 19.

[27 : 24] You can see Paul's ministry. And among the Ephesians. When he. When he delivered. A young woman. That is. That was. An instrument. For the. For the. Priest of Artemis.

And. And. And when these people. These Ephesians. Came to Christ. What did they do? They. The things they used. The. The sort of. The scrolls. Of incantations. And.

And. Devil worship. Really. They burned it. They threw it into the fire. When they came to Christ. These is the context.

Uh. That he's writing to. These are the people. This is their context. These are people. That are. That live in the world. That is committed to the worship.

Of Caesar. The Roman emperor. As lord. The Roman emperor. The Roman emperor. The Roman emperor. The Roman emperor. But here Paul says. To these church. That is besieged.

[28 : 18] And being persecuted. He says to them. You share. In the resurrection power. That raised Jesus from the dead. And he's saying that to us as well. As we live in the world besieged.

Under. Under. Under duress. As we feel. We're under duress. As Christians. In this world. As we see. The values that we owe to. Being.

Deteriorated. As we feel like. We need to make a stand. That will cost us. As Christians. And we feel the loss of power. And the loss of influence.

Paul says to us. You share. In the resurrection power. That raised Jesus from the dead. Cling to that. Fix your eyes. On the future hope.

To which you've been called. I think. This allows us. If we fully take a hold of it. Grasp it. See what Paul is saying here.

[29 : 16] This allows us. The needed grace. To face the hardship. Of our present circumstances. When we know. That our work here and now. Even our suffering.

Here and now. Is not in vain. When we know. Of that fixed future. When we put our hope in it. And when we know.

That because. We are precious to God. We can be assured. You and I. Can be assured of his love. For us. We can be assured of his power.

To keep us. To preserve us. Until the end. Odds are. There are many among you. This morning. In pain.

In experiencing. One loss. Of some kind. In the end. I want you to hear. The comforting word. Of your Lord. You are his portion.

[30 : 17] Your Christ's. Precious. Possession. Not even death. Can keep you. From him. Who has ransomed. Your soul. I also want you to know.

That we are in a battle. Yes. We are. It's not new. It's always been. For the people of God. And yes. Sometimes. In that battle.

We might be weary. From the fight. But know this. Know Paul's assurance. For us. The victory. Is already ours. In Christ.

How can we be certain. Of this. Because our king. Has already been enthroned. And the finality. Of his rule. And reign. Is being established.

All things. All powers. And dominion. Are under his feet. And he exerts. His. Considerable power.

[31 : 18] Over all things. On behalf. Of the church. That is you and I. Let us pray. God of our Lord.

Jesus Christ. The father of glory. We echo. The prayer. Of your servant. Paul. Give us. Oh Lord. A spirit of wisdom.

And of revelation. In the knowledge. Of you. Enlighten. The eyes. Of our hearts. Oh Lord. That we may know. The hope. To which you've called us.
The riches. Of your glorious. Inheritance. In us. And the immeasurable. Greatness. Of your power. Towards us. Who believe. According to the working.
Of your great. Might. That you worked. In Christ Jesus. When you raised him. From the dead. And seated him. At your right hand. In the heavenly places. Far above all.
[32 : 16] 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. We pray.
In the precious name. Of our redeemer. And king. Jesus Christ. Amen.