

May You Know This Power

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[0:00] Our sermon passage today is Ephesians chapter one verses 19 through 23.

! Today we reach the end of chapter one of Ephesians and it's packed full of rich gospel truth.! What a joy.

Even though our passage is only verses 19 through 23, I'm going to read in the flow of his prayer. Beginning at verse 15.

Here God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, sufficient, powerful word for you and me, his church. Ephesians one, starting at 15.

Therefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

[0:58] That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling. What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints?

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all the word of God for the people of God.

[2:07] Thanks be to God. Please be seated. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

Please pray with me. Lord, I praise you for these dear brothers and sisters here, this beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ and our visitors, those you've brought here by your providence to hear this word today for your purposes in their lives.

Lord, we pray that your Holy Spirit will enlighten our understanding, shine your light in our hearts, cause us by faith to see your glory and the powerful person of Jesus Christ.

And how he pours out his same power onto us, his church, Lord, help us to receive this to be filled by the working of your Holy Spirit in and among us, your church.

We pray, Lord. Amen. Amen. Well, there is a type of power, a vastness of power that we can't even begin to imagine, but we get little glimpses of it here on earth, I believe, so that we will trust by faith.

[3:41] It's real. Have you experienced a power that was so overwhelming? You stand before it, you almost feel dizzy, wobbly in your knees, because this power is so much greater than you knew even existed.

I got to have that type of experience when we traveled to South America and we saw between the borders of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, a waterfall called the Iguazu Falls.

And all this water from all these rivers converging on this one point. And where these waters build up, they constructed this dam that set a world record in the year 2016.

It's called the Itaipu Dam. And it did what no one thought was possible. This dam, serving as a hydroelectric plant, it generated and captured more electricity than the massive Three Gorges Dam in China that no one thought could beat its record.

It was a perfect year where the waters were flooding. And when the waters flood in this region, the waterfall near this dam is five times the size of Niagara Falls in volume.

[4:57] And it generated so much electricity, and it still does every single year, that if it only captured electricity for 17 weeks, the Itaipu Dam could power the entire nation of Paraguay for an

entire year.

Can you imagine standing before this kind of power? The way that the Apostle Paul is writing to the churches, he has seen something of God's power that he wants them to know.

He's bearing witness by the inspiration of the Spirit, and they're receiving this letter as Scripture.

And the Spirit is using this ministry of this Word of God, this letter, to cause their faith to expand.

In 2 Corinthians 12, verses 2 and 4, Paul tells of how God allowed him to experience what he called the third heaven.

Above the third heaven, above the third heaven, the spiritual realm.

[6 : 15] And even there, above all the angels of the spiritual realm, where Christ, in his resurrected body, sits enthroned, the Ancient of Days, the Son of Man.

And from there, he rules in power over all the earth. Paul tasted a power that no uninspired earthly words could ever describe.

And I think this is what he's praying. The Spirit will cause the church to know. He prays that the church may know more of this power and that it's at work in you, church.

That's the title of our sermon today. May you know this power. Following his words, I hope to open this up on four different emphases that Paul gives on this great power of God so that you, church, may know this power as well.

Here's the first emphasis. May you know the exceeding greatness of this power. May you know the exceeding greatness of this power.

[7 : 32] You remember how Ephesus was a hub in all of Asia for magical incantations and what they thought were powerful spells that would invoke cosmic powers.

And Paul says in verse 6, 16, I pray for you. Verse 18, that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you may know.

Look at verse 19. What is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe? According to the working of his mighty power, may you know this exceeding greatness.

The verb here is to know. This is your application. Know this. Know this, church. And who is it that he prays will come to know this?

Well, look at your Bible. It's those whose hearts have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Verse 18.

And what does he want them to know? To know what?

[8 : 38] Verse 19, that they would know the exceeding greatness of God's power. And this word for power, it's not referring to something that's latent, dormant or potential.

It is an active, flowing current of energy. What you need to know about it has been translated in several different helpful ways in English.

You need to know that it's an exceeding greatness. It's not just what you expect. It exceeds what you would expect. You need to know that it's an incomparable greatness.

You try to compare it to the Itaipu Dam. No, no, no. You can't compare the greatness of God's power. It's an immeasurable greatness. You can calculate how much electricity is generated by something very powerful.

You cannot calculate the amount of power that God has at his disposal that's channeled through Christ to you, church. This is what you need to know. God's active power.

[9 : 45] It's in force. It's being wielded. God is superintending, upholding and working all things by this power. For his glory and for the good of his church.

And who is it toward? It's toward us who believe. If you believe in Jesus Christ, if Jesus Christ is your Lord, then this power is directed toward you for your good.

God's power. God's power surges unceasingly to strengthen and sustain the life of his disciples.

Every person who is a believer in Jesus is a recipient of this power of God through Jesus, our mediator. It's the same exceeding power of God that had toppled over the worship of demons in the city of Ephesus.

This is the same immense power of God that caused spiritually dead sinners to believe the gospel of Christ. It's for you. And it's the same immeasurable power of God that sent and sustained Paul and the missionaries who traveled there and preached the gospel to them and through whom God planted this church.

[11 : 03] May you know the exceeding greatness of this power, church. Well, here's the second emphasis. May you know the dependability of this power.

May you know the dependability of this power. This is something you can count on. Rather than piling on other examples of how God is powerful, though Paul is an expert of God's word, he could have drawn hundreds of these.

Notice how Paul next in verse 20 goes straight for the most forceful, the most irrefutable, the most undeniable, the most dependable argument of all.

He says, I pray that you, church, who believe that you will know by your own experience the working of that same power. Look at verse 20, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

This is how dependable the power of God is. It's so dependable that Christ. Factually trusted his life to God's power.

[12 : 18] The creator of all who took on flesh. The giver of life who was born of a woman.

According to his human nature, laid down his life. Physically died for his church. He truly died.

I look this up a little bit to try to understand. Maybe it's because I was helping one of my my children prepare for a microbiology test about how the cells work. So I know we've got we've got a lot of really advanced scientists in the room.

And so please just be gracious to me. I don't know much about this. Here's what I learned, though. And it helped me to appreciate this verse. That's why I hope it does for you as well. Here in the physical realm where we live, the moment that a human heart stops oxygen delivery through the circulatory system to every cell.

Children's cell is the smallest element that tissue is made of in the human body. It stops.

[13 : 39] It causes the skin to turn pale as blood drains from tiny blood vessels near the surface and gravity pulls that pooled blood to lower parts of the body.

When a body is dead, it's deprived of its own natural heat regulation. So the body begins to cool down to room temperature.

Our Lord Jesus, when he died, the Apostles Creed emphasizes he was also buried. He was buried in an ancient stone tomb.

And those bodies, I learned they they're prepared with spices, not not to try to mummify them. No, they're just wrapped in cloth. It's actually to to allow the decay to happen naturally.

It's not an airtight chamber. They are expected to totally be reduced to nothing but bones in just a year. So the goal is not to preserve the flesh on the bones.

[14 : 38] The goal of burial in this ancient world was was decay. From Friday afternoon, when our Lord Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins to Sunday morning.

Every muscle and organ and skin. The body of Christ would have become stiff. And the the the term is.

Rigor mortis, it would have reached its peak in that amount of time. Cells are breaking down now.

There is bacterial decay that has begun on all the soft tissues of that body.

You see what Paul is saying? It's the same immeasurable, exceeding power of God that worked to raise Christ from the dead, from his burial.

That's working in you, church. Christ's body was buried. Three days later, Christ truly, factually came back to life.

[15 : 51] He resurrected the creator of all recreated the body of God, man, Jesus Christ. Think of this powerful work of God on the body of Jesus.

That soft tissue that had begun to decay throughout his whole body immediately stops. Every cell of his brain and heart and muscles, his bones, his skin is not only made to work again, but it's now also translated into a totally new, never before type of body that belongs to the age to come.

This is what the powerful work of God did in raising Jesus from the dead. Every transformed new creation cell of Christ's resurrected body is made of real matter.

It's his same body. It's his same body. But also in a way that our natural minds cannot currently comprehend.

His physical body now has a new supernatural quality to it. In his resurrected body, Christ is recognized by over 400 witnesses who saw him and heard him teach about his kingdom after he rose from the dead.

[17 : 14] With his glorified new body, Christ ate meals made of physical food. But then he was able to walk through a wall in his glorified body.

Jesus taught how all of the scriptures pointed to him. Then in the same body, he ascended from earth to heaven where he dwells physically with God, who is spirit.

When you and I wonder if God's power is dependable, Paul says, look to your risen savior, Jesus Christ. This is the most dependable evidence of God's power that powerfully works in you.

This is what he wants the church in Ephesus to know. And this is the power that Christ now in his glorified body prays. You will personally know is working in you as well, church.

Brothers and sisters, today your body and mine is dying. One day soon, Christ prays you will personally know the glory of the resurrection as he does.

[18:21] Today, your faith and mine, it wavers. And one day soon, our faith will be made sight. God will accomplish all he has promised by his almighty strength.

Today, your hope and mine is fragile. One day soon, our hope will be realized. God pledges himself to see this realized by his own immeasurable power, working all things to make it so.

The same power that was working in raising Christ from the dead. That same power is to be your experience and mine by faith. In Christ Jesus.

Church, may you know this power. May you know the dependability of this power of God working in you. Here's the third emphasis. May you know the infallible source of this power.

May you know the infallible source of this power. I'm using a word fallible or infallible. Let me let me explain that with an illustration.

[19:33] We've all had power failures. Sometimes there's a big ice storm. Some of you live a little bit more in the country and the power goes out. The power fails. It's because there's a problem on the source of the power before it even gets to where you are.

Well, Christ is the source of the power of the church and he will not fail. This is what Paul proves next. If you fail, it's because there was something greater than you.

You know, the ice was greater than the electrical box that was channeling it to your home. Christ cannot fail because there's nothing greater than him. He is the source above all else.

That's what he says in verse 20. God seated him, Christ, at his right hand in the heavenly places. This is what Paul got a glimpse of far above.

That word means way beyond or exalted to the highest degree. And now he piles it on. What is he higher than? Above all principality.

[20:40] That word is also translated as rulers. Above all power. That word can be translated as above all authorities. In the Ephesian culture, people would travel from all over the world.

And part of their worship included wrong ideas about astrology and the planets. And they would even worship these created things, these lights in the skies. People believe that demonic rulers governed human destiny from the stars.

That's where they rule from. No, Paul says Christ is seated in ruling above all of those far above any other might and dominion. Every name that is named.

That's everything. And then he says not only in this age, but also in the age to come. Verse 22. God put all things under his feet.

All things under his feet is a military term. It means God has arranged everything. Everything is subordinate to Christ. Everything has been brought into obedience to Christ.

[21:53] Here he's drawing from Psalm chapter 8, verse 6, where God says that to this man, Christ, he will give dominion over the works of his hands.

Everything creaturely. And you put all things under his feet. This is the custom where a victorious general would line up the general of the opposing army.

And in front of both armies, he would put his foot on the neck of that general who was conquered. Christ has all of his enemies at his feet.

He's crushing them. He's trampling upon them. Nothing can stop him. He rules supremely. All powers, all angels, all demons, all kings, all those cosmic forces are in direct and complete submission under the feet of Christ.

He has prevailed in power over every temptation of sin already. And that's what makes Christ unailing, infallible as our source of power.

[23:04] Nothing can overcome him. Well, we believe by faith Christ holds this position. And in his sovereignty, he leaves us here in these bodies, trusting by faith.

He leaves us in this world where he says you will have trouble and his disciples will be martyred. We will suffer in this life. But soon his church will be done battling against temptations to sin from

the flesh, the world and the devil.

Christ has crushed the serpent's head on the cross already. And soon his church will trample Satan under our feet with him. Christ has defeated the curse of sin on the cross already.

Soon his church will experience the curse of sin no more. Christ rose from the dead in his glorified body already. And soon his church will be translated into our glorified bodies as well.

Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he rules spiritually already. Soon his church will dwell and rule with Christ over the new heavens and the new earth consummately.

[24 : 20] Christ's power in us will never dry up. Christ is the unstoppable spring. It'll always keep coming.

Christ did not fail. Christ cannot fail. May you and I know the infallible source of this power in Christ himself by faith.

Well, the fourth and final emphasis for today is this. May you know your relation to the source of this power.

May you know your relation to the source of this power. Look at verse 22. Paul writes next that God gave him Christ to be what?

To be head over all things to the church. What is your relation to Christ, the source of God's power? He is the head.

[25 : 25] Over all things given to the church. The language of head and body. Filling and fullness that he writes about next. These describe our union as Christians.

The union between Christ and his church. As we read the rest of this letter, we get to chapter 5 and it proves this conclusion. It describes the bond between man and wife as head and body.

Where the relationship between Christ and the church. That's the supreme reality to which the picture of marriage and marriage relationship is pointing. This is wonderful language for us to appreciate.

Christ as head given to the church. In the ancient world, to be the head of a household. A patriarchal head.

The Latin term was pater familias. It means that that man holds total legal authority over those in his household.

[26 : 29] Imagine a poor woman in the ancient world. She would be vulnerable. She would have no rights. She would be unsafe. They would be commonly abused. Jews knew this as well.

Jews knew how much Ruth was blessed in marrying Boaz. In Ephesus, life would be radically better for a slave woman who finally got to become the bride of a Roman pater familias.

So this is the perfect term to describe the relationship between Christ and his church. Christ is our loving provider. Christ is our responsible caregiver.

Christ is our legal guardian. Commentator William Hendrickson wrote, What is emphasized in the head body symbolism is the profound, boundless, steadfast, intimate, indissoluble, unfathomable, loving bond between Christ and his church.

Since the church is Christ's body, he is united to the church. Christ exercises his infinite power in causing the entire universe with all that is in it to cooperate, whether willingly or unwillingly in the interests of his church, which he loves so much for his glory.

[27 : 52] That's the end of William's quote. Brothers and sisters, think about your own body. Think about how much you worry if one part of your body has pain.

Think about how your head and your body commands all that your other symptoms need.

You know if you're deficient in a certain nutrient, the head tells the body, eat this, and it helps, replenishes. Think about how often we feed our bodies, we wash our bodies, we rest our bodies. And then think about the other way around in that same relationship. How long would your body last if your body got separated from your head? If we were decapitated, life is over.

That's how much we depend on Christ, our head, as his church. This is your relation to the source of this infinite power. But next, our relationship to Christ is pushed even stronger.

[28 : 59] It's like Paul's trying to use all of the available language to communicate this great truth. First, he says in verse 23 that the church, his body is the fullness of him.

And then he says that Christ fills all in all. Let's take them in reverse order. Christ fills all in all. Well, this we know from all of God's word that God is complete, full, perfect.

God is self-sufficient. God lacks nothing. And Jesus Christ, according to his divine nature, is complete, full, perfect, self-sufficient, lacking nothing. So Christ fills all in all according to his divine nature.

But the second statement is tricky. In verse 23, he says the church, Christ's body, is the fullness of him.

How is it that we, the church, can also be Christ's fullness? The work of his first coming is finished. Jesus, on the cross, kept God's law, paid the price his people owe, died, was buried, and rose from the dead.

[30 : 14] He is seated in heaven. His work is finished. The work of his first coming. But in heaven, Christ is not passive. He's not stopped. He is still ministering.

As our redeemer, as our mediator, as the one who lives to pray for us, Christ is still fulfilling his ministry. Every day, every hour.

In becoming our head, Christ delights to receive still today the fullness of his body. Those who depend on him for life.

In becoming our shepherd, Christ delights to receive the full number of his lambs. Those who hear his voice and follow him. He'll go after every single last lamb that is his.

In becoming our bridegroom, Christ delights to receive the fullness of his bride. Those who love him because he first loved us. And in becoming our vine, Christ delights to receive the fullness of his branches.

[31 : 18] Those who abide in him and bear his fruit. You see why Christ will not stop mediating or interceding or ministering until the full number of that great multitude of souls.

Those 10,000 times 10,000. Thousands upon thousands that he purchased with his precious blood are with him. Only then will this age have fulfilled all of God's purposes.

This is your relation to Christ. The source of God's power. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus. May the Holy Spirit work with Christ's power in you.

And make you know that Christ abides with and leads his church militant already. In this age and soon in the age to come.

His church will abide with him and march after him victoriously. May you know that Christ calls his sheep by name and speaks by his spirit.

[32 : 20] Spiritually he's doing this already in this age. This has been a wonderful truth. I've appreciated this week like never before.

Soon. In the age to come. Our glorified bodies will hear Christ speak. His gracious words.

Out loud to us. God will recreate our ears. So that they will be capable of hearing. That most lovely sound of Christ.

Truly divine. Truly human voice. The Bible says Christ will rejoice over you. His church. With singing. In the age to come.

You and I will get to hear. And be moved by Christ's own singing. His most moving melody. His most pure lyrics.

[33 : 16] His most heartwarming tone. We will hear this. We will know this is my creator. And this is my redeemer.

Who is singing over his church. His precious bride. So my prayer is and has been that you and I will know. That because we are bound to Christ.

His power is always flowing toward us who believe. And always working powerfully in us. And in all the world. So that all of his promises will come true.

Let's praise our Lord. Our great redeemer. Father we thank you. For the. Immeasurable power. By which you rose Christ from the dead.

That is now working in us. Who you have led to believe in Christ. And to receive from him may you be glorified in the life of this church father. Amen.

[34 : 16] Amen.