

Ephesians 1:15-23

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: 31 March 2024

Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0:00] Amen. Today's scripture reading is Ephesians 1, 15-23.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him.

Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, 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, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might, that 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 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.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. I'll say that one more time.

This is the word of the Lord. Heavenly Father, what a great day today is. We celebrate the resurrection of your son, Jesus Christ.

[1:41] God, I ask that you would help us to know the things that you have shown us in your words, specifically the things here in Ephesians chapter 1, that we would know the glorious realities that belong to the saints in Christ, in Christ, the risen, ascended, exalted Lord and Savior.

So Holy Spirit, would you now, as this prayer asks, would you enlighten us, open the eyes of our hearts to see with spiritual vision, to know and perceive and understand and take to heart the things of your word, the things of Christ and the gospel.

Would you change us today, we pray, for the glory of Christ, our King and our Savior. Amen. Well, good morning, church. My name is Mike.

I'm one of the elders here at Shoreline. And before we get started, I just want to say, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. All right, that was the best one. Yeah, we had three chances to say that.

If I happen to say Christ is risen during the sermon, that's your cue again, to say He is risen indeed. He is risen indeed. So this morning, we're taking a break from the gospel of John.

[2:57] We've been in John for about a year and a half now. And we're going to look at this prayer from Paul in Ephesians chapter 1. Now, why are we going to Ephesians chapter 1?

A few reasons. One, the ladies have been in Ephesians, right? Throughout your quarterly meetings, you've been going through the book of Ephesians for the last few months. Also, this prayer is awesome.

I don't know if you knew that. This prayer in Ephesians chapter 1 is one of the Apostle Paul's great prayers for the church. In it, he talks about the resurrection and ascension of Christ. So that's another reason why we're looking at it today.

But really, one of the chief reasons is the core of this prayer. The core of Paul's prayer is that the Ephesian believers would truly know, right? That they would know the spiritual blessings that are theirs in Christ.

Not know in the sense of just head knowledge. Not know in the sense of just intellect. But in the sense of experiential, life-transforming knowledge. That they would live in the light of the abundant riches that belong to them in Christ.

[4:05] Now, by and large, when I thought about this church and what we should hear on Easter Sunday, Shoreline does not need to be convinced of the reality of the resurrection.

And praise the Lord for that. Most in this church don't need to be convinced that it was a historical reality. Like Rob just said, it really happened in space and time. Jesus raised bodily from the grave. And I know that most of you in this room believe that. But we do need for our lives to be increasingly transformed by that reality. Do we not?

I need my life to be increasingly transformed by the reality of the resurrection. And that is what Paul is praying for in Ephesians 1. Now, just as a side note, this prayer in Ephesians, the book of Ephesians, the prayer that Paul prays, this sermon, it's for believers in Christ.

It's for believers. I'm preaching to the saints. And if you're here this morning and you don't believe in Christ, I want you to listen in on this conversation. And I pray that you would be compelled to faith in Jesus as you hear of the riches and the glory that belong to the saints in Christ.

[5 : 17] So in verses 3 through 14 of Ephesians chapter 1, Paul enumerates these glorious spiritual blessings, right?

You know what Paul says? Paul says of the saints that we've been chosen by God from before the foundation of the world. Paul says that we've been adopted into God's family. We've been redeemed, purchased by the blood of Christ.

We've been forgiven our sins. We've been lavished with love and grace. We've been shown the mysteries of God's eternal will, brought into understanding what God had planned from eternity past.

We have been united to God in Christ. We've been given an inheritance, a glorious inheritance. We've been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

what abundant riches belong to the saints in Christ. And then Paul moves into a prayer for the Ephesian believers, and by extension, all believers, right?

[6 : 19] That they may know, that they may truly know of the abundant riches that are theirs in Christ. And that is my prayer for us today, that we may know.

That's my prayer for each one of you today. That's been my prayer this week as I've prepared, that you would know, that you may know. By way of illustration, on March 30th, 1867, maybe some of you kids are learning this in your history classes, the U.S. Secretary of State, William H. Seward, signed an agreement to purchase the 370 million acre territory of Alaska from Russia.

Yeah, we've got some native Alaskans here. Or one. 370 million, you had a lot of land to explore, Laura. Now, in today's dollars, that's about, so they purchased it from Russia for the bargain price of \$7.2 million.

Now, in today's dollars, that's about \$125 million for 370 million acres, so that is three acres per dollar. Imagine if you could get that piece of land in Connecticut.

Now, the U.S. government was ridiculed for this purchase. As you probably all know, the deal became known as Seward's Folly. And I found this out this week, this is funny, President Johnson's polar bear garden.

[7 : 40] That's what Alaska was known as. Now, because the land was seemingly so unusable, right, it was seemingly so uninhabitable, and for a few decades, the United States just basically sat on their purchase and didn't really do anything with it.

they did not realize the vast supply of gold and of oil and of countless other natural resources that it now possessed, right? Our country owned this abundant supply of riches, but they weren't living like it.

So the question for us, in Christ, we have been given an abundance of spiritual riches from God. are you, am I, are we living like it?

Are we living like it? The main point for today is this, that God longs for the saints to live lives transformed by the reality of His calling, riches, and power as they know Him more fully, as we know Him more fully.

He longs for the saints, He longs for you and me, to live lives transformed by the reality of His calling, riches, and power as we know Him more fully.

[8 : 50] So that's what we're going to unpack for today as we work through this beautiful prayer together. Now the first supporting point is this, the saints are marked by faith and love.

The saints are marked by faith and love. Verses 15 and 16, For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Now Paul spent three years, you can look at this in, I think it's Acts 18, is it 18, Jules? Paul spent three years in Ephesus, ministering there, but now when he's writing these words in imprisonment in Rome, it's been about five years of separation, so there's been some time, but Paul is hearing the report of what's going on in the Ephesian church and in the surrounding area, and he's hearing reports of their faith, their faith in Jesus.

He's hearing reports of their love toward one another. Now isn't that a beautiful thing, right? For Paul, who ministered there, who poured out his heart and soul in Ephesus, to now five years later be hearing about their faith and their love towards one another.

As we've seen in the Upper Room discourse, that's what Jesus desired for his disciples, was it not? To be known by their faith in him and their love for one another.

[10:10] We've seen in the Upper Room discourse how the faith-filled believer manifests that faith in love towards God and towards the saints. So the Ephesian church is giving evidence to their faith in Jesus.

Now because of this good report regarding the Ephesian church, the first thing that Paul does is give thanks, right? He gives thanks to God for them. Now if you look at Paul's letters throughout the New Testament, this is the thing he does first almost every time.

He gives thanks for the saints. And I just want to say, may our dominant disposition to God regarding one another be one of thankfulness.

Like look around the room for a second. Look at your brothers and sisters in Christ and be thankful. Be thankful that we have one another in Christ. And so make it a habit to pray prayers of thanksgiving for your fellow saints.

But then Paul moves. He moves from thanksgiving into supplication because there is more that he desires for the Ephesian church than just being marked by faith and love.

[11:17] There's more that he desires. Now I want you to see the logic of this verse. You can go back to the previous slide. As Paul is moving us into his prayer, he says, for this reason.

Now for this reason, it's connecting back to verses 3-14. In light of all of the spiritual blessings that are yours in Christ. For this reason, in light of that, having heard of your, he says, because I have heard, or having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints.

So how, you know, these blessings that belong to the saints in Christ, they belong to you because you're manifesting your faith. You're giving evidence to your faith in Christ. Therefore, you are a true believer and these blessings belong to you.

And then he says, I do not cease to give thanks for you remembering you in my prayers, right? So basically, I don't stop praying for you. I don't stop. In other words, if we look at what he's doing here, because I am assured that you belong to Christ, right?

Because I know what riches are available to you, to the saints in Christ, this is what I am praying for you. And then he says this, 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, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.

[12:40] So second point here, the saints gain experiential knowledge of God and his wisdom by the Spirit. The saints come to actually know God and know him more, right?

And his wisdom by the Spirit. That's the second point here. Now here in verse 17, this is amazing. We see the trinity of our God, right? Father, Son, and Spirit, three in one, each playing a distinct role in the redemption of the saints.

But what is Paul actually praying for here? What is he praying for? I want to work through this here. He says that God may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation.

Spirit of wisdom and of revelation. Now, in the ESV, spirit is capitalized. You may have a translation where it's not capitalized. Now, spirit is the Greek word *pneuma*. And in the Greek, they did not use capitalization.

So it's very contextually based, whether something is capitalized or not. And as you see, some translations capitalize it, some don't capitalize it. So which is it, right? Is Paul talking about the Holy Spirit or is he talking about, you know, our spirit, our inner being?

[13:54] Well, let's look at what else the verse is saying. Paul's asking for the spirit, the *pneuma*, of wisdom and of revelation. As one commentator writes, wisdom is insight into the true nature of things, right?

Wisdom originates in and from God. How can you have insight into the true nature of things apart from God who is the true nature of things, right? The Proverbs says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, right?

The fear of the Lord. Only in relationship with God do we have insight into the true nature of things. Wisdom and revelation. Revelation is an unveiling, right?

A revealing, unveiling of whatever the object is that's being discussed. Paul wants God to unveil spiritual things to the saints in the knowledge of him.

All right? In the knowledge of him. Now that Greek word for knowledge here is epignosis. Epignosis, which is an experiential, relational knowledge.

[14:56] It's not an intellectual knowledge. Paul is talking about the saints knowing God in personal, intimate relationship. So if we put that together, Paul is praying that God would enable the saints to see and to perceive deep spiritual realities as they grow in intimate relationship with him.

That's what Paul wants for the church. Now how does that come about? How do you see and perceive deep spiritual realities in relationship with God? Through the Holy Spirit. Right? It's through the Holy Spirit.

There's no other way. See, Paul, whether Paul intends to refer to the Holy Spirit or to our human spirit, meaning our inner being, the wisdom and revelation of God in relationship to him only comes through the work of the Holy Spirit.

So I don't know if we care whether it's capitalized or not. It is through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit we're going to see next week in John 16 is the Spirit of truth who will guide you into all the truth, Jesus says to his disciples.

The Spirit will take what is mine, what is Christ's, and he will declare it to you, right, to the disciples. Paul would tell the Corinthians that the Holy Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

[16:10] And then he enables the saints to understand the things freely given us by God, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. That's 1 Corinthians 2. Picture a diver, right, diving down deep into the ocean and bringing up treasures and then bringing them back to the surface, right?

Except picture that the ocean, right, the Holy Spirit isn't just a diver. He is the ocean. Like the Spirit is the ocean and he's bringing up treasures of God and he's presenting them to the saints. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.

The eyes of your hearts. Now the heart in Scripture does not refer just to our emotions, which is how we use the word today. The heart is the very center of one's being.

It's the seat of the mind, the emotions, and the will, the very center of your being. So for our hearts to be enlightened, it means for them to have spiritual vision. It means for us, for our hearts, to be made consciously aware of spiritual realities.

It's the renewal of our minds in the truth of God. It's the awakening of our affections to respond to spiritual things. It's our very wills being calibrated to God's will.

[17:34] So this, this enlightenment of our hearts, this granting of spiritual vision, it's a work of the Holy Spirit, is it not? This is a work that the Holy Spirit does in the saints. Now the verb here, having, having, it's in the perfect tense.

So it's a past action with continuing results because Paul is writing to believers who have already been enlightened, right? They have been enlightened, they've been granted spiritual sight to see the deep things of God.

But our spiritual vision, it needs constant correction, right? It needs constant refining by the Holy Spirit. So through the Holy Spirit, we come to know God.

Through the Holy Spirit, we come to know God more and more, right? And we come to see and perceive all the more clearly the deep things of God. We come to be made more consciously aware of His wisdom and His revelation and that is what Paul is praying for the church.

That's what I'm praying for us today. Now specifically, the wisdom and revelation that Paul wants the saints to be made more consciously aware of, right?

[18:43] As they relate to God, as they're in intimate relationship with God, is the life-changing reality of the spiritual blessings that he talked about, right? The blessings that are theirs in Christ.

That's what Paul wants the saints to know, to be made consciously aware of. And that moves us into the next part of the prayer. Three life-changing realities for which the saints need spirit vision. Now what Paul is about to do, he basically takes the list of verses 3 through 14, which I listed 9 before, but you could probably pull out a few more even.

And he summarizes them into three. To help us remember, he summarizes them into three. God's calling, God's inheritance, and God's power.

Or God's calling, God's riches, and God's power. Now we're going to be devoting extra time to that last one, God's power, because Paul does so in his prayer, and because today is Easter Sunday, well let's consider each one of these in turn.

[19 : 50] So the first one is God's calling. Paul is praying that the Spirit would enlighten the eyes of their hearts, that you may know, that you may know, that's what he's after, that you may know, really know, truly know, what is the hope to which he has called you.

Or your translation might say, the hope of his calling. The hope of his calling. Now hope is a funny word, because it means something so very different when we use it in everyday speech than when the Bible uses it, right?

You might say, I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow, right? You might say, I hope I get a raise this year, a good raise. I hope whatever it is expresses uncertainty, right?

It usually expresses uncertainty. But that's not, that's not what the Bible does when it's using the word hope. It expresses certainty in the future, right? It expresses a certainty in what God has said because of his track record.

He has been perfectly faithful, right? Phil was just saying on Friday that Joshua, or it says in the book of Joshua, that not one word of all the promises of God failed to come to pass, right?

[21 : 01] Everything God promised Israel came to pass. And it will come to pass. Now biblical hope is this, like, definition, hope, the confident expectation and desire that all of God's promises will come to pass.

That's hope in the biblical sense, right? So to what hope, then, has God called the saints? To what hope? Well, again, it's basically the whole list of spiritual blessings in verses 3 through 14.

It's the hope of our sins being forgiven. It's the hope of being holy and blameless before God. It's the hope of being adopted as God's children. It's the hope of being united to God in glory.

This is the hope of God's calling to which He has called the saints. And those things for which we hope, right, one day, they will come to complete, final fulfillment, but those things break forward into the here and now.

Do they not? They break forward into the here and now by the abiding presence of God, by His Spirit. Paul says in verse 14 that the Spirit is the guarantee or the deposit, the down payment of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

[22 : 13] And I just want to stop briefly to ask, what would our lives look like if the Spirit daily renewed our vision to know the hope of this calling, to know the hope of God's calling?

What would your life look like? How would we approach frustrations at work, right, or relational conflict, or the upcoming presidential election if we lived in the conscious awareness of this sure and certain hope?

God's calling, the second thing is God's riches. Paul says that you may know what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

The riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints. Now, this phrase is a little ambiguous. Is Paul talking about God's inheritance of the saints?

The saints are His inheritance. Is that what Paul's talking about? Well, this would be consistent with Old Testament language. Exodus 19, verse 5, Now therefore, this is God speaking to Israel, If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples.

[23 : 24] God talks about Israel that way all throughout the Old Testament. This would also be consistent with some of the language in the book of Ephesians in 3-14. Is it the saints' inheritance from God?

To be received from God? Well, that would be consistent with the use of the word inheritance in Ephesians and throughout the New Testament. That would also be consistent with this very petition.

God, Paul's praying for the hope of His calling and then he says His inheritance and then he's going to say His power and those are things the saints receive from God.

I just want to ask, aren't both true? Right? Aren't both true? And perhaps Paul left it ambiguous so that we would ponder these things. The saints, church, the saints are the treasured possession and inheritance of God.

Now this underscores the precious value that we are to God, that God places on us. It also underscores the fact that we are for the glory of God, for His possession.

[24 : 30] It's for His glory. We're made for Him and this should bring such encouragement to our hearts knowing that our joy is bound up in the glory of God.

If we're His inheritance, that's for our joy and our joy is bound up in His glory. It is a wonderful thing that we are God's inheritance and we also are co-heirs with Christ of God's inheritance.

Are we not? Of His eternal inheritance. Now this truth underscores the vast wealth that is laid up for the saints. This underscores the guarantee that we have of this inheritance.

God secures it for us. It's a guarantee. And therefore, our hearts should be flooded with encouragement knowing that God is giving us a rich and glorious inheritance.

John Piper combines those two ideas in concluding that we should think about these riches as doubly rich because they are going to be riches that God creates in us for His own enjoyment and they are riches that we will experience by being glorified in the likeness of His Son.

[25 : 38] And I just want to stop and ask, Church, what would it look like if we lived in the conscious awareness of the riches of God's inheritance in the saints? Right?

If our hearts, if your heart was awakened to see and to perceive this reality, how would that alter your response to the offenses that people commit against you?

Like, how would that alter your response to suffering if you knew, really knew of your inheritance, of God's inheritance in the saints? God's calling, God's riches, and the third thing is God's power.

God's power. Paul prays that you may know what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe.

The immeasurable greatness of His power. Can you actually say that with me? The immeasurable greatness of His power. Kids, lift up your voices. The immeasurable greatness of His power.

[26 : 48] Paul is compounding power words, words of force, of potency to convey this truth. The immeasurable greatness of His power. You could say it's the surpassing magnitude of His might or the transcending vastness of His strength.

These words, actually, immeasurable is the word from which we get hyperbolic, not as in like a hyperbole, I don't remember math, but like huge, exaggerative, but it's not an exaggeration. Immeasurable. Greatness is the word from which we get mega, and power, the word from which we get dynamite. He's using these big power-packed words. God's power is inconceivably, abundantly, unfathomably great.

It is boundless and infinite. Church, any other power, any other power, think about this, in the world, in history, it can be measured.

Right? It is finite. It has a limit. Whether it's the power of the sun, which is vast, it is still limited power. Right? Whether it's the power of a nuclear warhead, immensely powerful, it is limited, it is finite.

[28 : 00] Whether it's the power of a dictator, right, that wields with an iron fist, or the devil, or his demons, all of those things have a finite amount of power, but not our God.

His power is boundless. It's boundless. But Paul, he doesn't just want us to know that this power of God exists.

Right? Like, that's useful knowledge. That is knowledge that instills fear and reverence, which are right responses to a holy, all-powerful God. But that's not Paul's aim here.

Paul wants the saints to know that this unboundedly enormous power of God is toward us who believe. Let me go back one more time.

Toward us who believe. God's power is decidedly toward, for, the saints.

[29 : 00] It is aimed at the saints. It is available to the saints here and now. Here and now. Now, to what end? To what end? In the context of the book of Ephesians, it's power for their good and it's power for them to do good.

Right? It is saving power. It is redeeming power. It is sanctifying power. It is preserving power. It is equipping, supplying power.

See, it's power for the Ephesian believers, for all believers, power for them who were once enemies of God to be raised to life and adopted as God's children.

Right? And it's power for them as God's children to be imitators of God. Here and now. Walking in love as Christ loved us. Right? It's power for their sins to be completely and eternally forgiven.

And it's a power for them to do battle against their indwelling sin and against the enemy right here and now and to be victorious. It's power for them to be eternally united to God in Christ and it's power for them to be united right here, right now to their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

[30 : 19] Right? Despite any difference. Those are just some of the ways that the immeasurable greatness of His power is toward us who believe. But Paul doesn't stop there.

Right? Paul spends the next four and a half verses, the rest of the prayer trying to help us understand the measure of God's immeasurable power. Right? He's trying to put some concreteness on this abstract concept because he knows we're really bad at applying abstract concepts.

He knows how prone we are to doubt. And so he compels us to faith by showing us what God's power has already accomplished. The power towards us who believe is according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ.

I'm really getting you in suspense for the resurrection part here if you didn't know. It's according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ. Now according to, it's in proportion or relation to, it accords with.

It's basically saying like, hey, you want to know the magnitude of this power? Let me describe it for you. The working of His great might. It's another phrase just compounding words of power.

[31 : 37] That word working means energy, operation, effectual working. The words great and might are very similar words for strength, power, ability.

We might translate that phrase as the energy of the strength of His might or the effective operation of His mighty strength. Paul is saying, look, the vast enormity of power available to the saints is according to the effectual working of God's power in Christ.

In Christ. When He raised Him from the dead. Right? It's according to the power He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

So according to Christ's resurrection. Church, Christ is risen. Some of you are awake. Christ is risen. See, we crucified Him.

We killed Him by our own sin. Right? By the hands of the Roman soldiers. But God raised Him up loosing the pangs of death.

[32 : 47] Right? Because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. It was not possible. Jesus Christ is risen, saints, and He says in Revelation 1, Fear not.

I am the first and the last and the living one. I died and behold, I am alive forevermore.

Forevermore. What other dead person can say that?

Nobody. Because they're not alive anymore. Christ is alive. He died and He was raised to newness of life forevermore. See, God's immeasurable greatness of power, it was demonstrated in its effective working in Christ to defeat the power of death.

Right? To raise Him to newness of life. And this infinite, death-defying, life-giving power is available here and now to the saints.

Here and now to the saints. Paul says in Romans 8, verse 11, if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you and He does if you believe in Christ, the Spirit of Christ who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you.

[34 : 02] Do you believe that? He's in you, saints. He's in you, the Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead and He will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

What's the greatest display of power that you've ever seen? You know, I forgot that the Summer Olympics are coming up which surprised me because I think they were delayed by a year back during COVID.

But we stare open mouth as we watch these like amazing feats of strength during the Olympics or strongman competitions, right? These, the mightiest men in the world lifting insane amounts of weight that would crush us, right?

It takes a lot of power to deadlift a thousand pounds of weight. That's a lot of power. We have a lot of military folks here or people working in some sense for the military.

We rest very confidently in this nation, right? Knowing that the military might of the United States is on par or greater than every other world power. We boast of cutting edge technology, right?

[35 : 08] Deployed by land, air or sea. We boast of warheads with unparalleled capacity for destruction. The most highly trained servicemen and women in the world ready to execute their mission at any moment.

The U.S. possesses vast and great military might. But can the strongest strongman lift himself out of the grave, right?

Can the United States military with all of its power defy death? death? No. No, it can't. There is a power that infinitely exceeds those powers, right?

An unrivaled power that raised Christ from the grave, vanquishing man's great enemy, the enemy of death and of sin. And that power right now is available to you in Christ Jesus.

death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[36 : 25] It's the power according to the resurrection of Christ. You know, Israel would look back throughout all of their history back on what? The exodus because that was the mighty display of God's redeeming power.

They would look back on that and now we have something so much greater. The resurrection of Christ. Forevermore we will look back on the resurrection of Christ and say look at the power of God to raise Christ from the dead.

The second thing that Paul talks about is the ascension of Christ. Paul says and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. Power according to Christ's ascension.

The immeasurable greatness of God's power towards the saints is like the power of God to bring Jesus up from the earth back to glory in heaven.

Right? Seated at the right hand of the almighty father. The rulers of this world right? They can attempt to give themselves divine-like status.

[37 : 35] Many have throughout the centuries. Right? The rich and the famous they can put themselves in ivory towers right? Far above the commoners. But no one has the power to depart from this world and enter into heavenly glory.

Nobody has that power. That power is held by one. By one. Right? And this mighty Christ-resurrecting, Christ-ascending power is the same power that is available right here, right now, to the saints.

To the saints. In fact, in Ephesians 2, Paul's going to show us this specifically when he says that God has made us alive together with Christ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

God has done that to us, for us, spiritually, raised us up, seated us with Christ. And that power is available to us in so many more ways which we'll get to later.

Now, closely linked with Christ's ascension, it's Christ's exaltation, right? Because Christ has been seated at God's right hand 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 and he put all things under his feet.

[39 : 02] Now, I want to ask, is Paul praying for the saints still or is he just praising Jesus? Right? Yes, he's doing both. This is beautiful. He's breaking into doxology which he does again in Ephesians 3 because he can't help himself but he's also still praying for the Ephesian saints.

See, after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, he was exalted above every other power both now and forever and Paul has in mind here both earthly and heavenly powers.

He's going to talk about some of those heavenly powers further on in Ephesians. Christ was and is exalted by the Father above all human kings and all heavenly beings, right?

Whether angels or demons or Satan himself. He is not only greater than these powers but they're actually in subjection to him, right? It's one thing to have power that's more powerful than some other guy.

It's another thing if that person is subjected to you. All powers are under his feet. Now Christ, he's the fulfillment of a prophetic word penned by King David when David said this, the Lord, Yahweh, says to my Lord with capital L, the Lord says to my Lord, this was a mystery in the Old Testament, it's been revealed to us, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool, Psalm 110.1.

[40 : 34] See, Psalm 110, it pictured a day when the future Messiah from the royal line of David would be exalted to a position of supreme authority over all nations and all powers.

And now, in the risen, ascended, exalted Lord Christ, the prophetic word has come to pass. Right? And that same power, the power to raise and ascend and exalt Christ to that position of supreme, everlasting authority is the power available here and now toward us who believe.

Toward us who believe. Now this, the fact that this power is toward us who believe is emphasized in big, bold font as Paul concludes this prayer.

Now here's the last part of the prayer. And God gave him, gave Christ, as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

from Christ's position of unmatched, unrivaled authority, he rules over the church, right, as the head of the church.

[41 : 52] But this ruling, this rulership over the church, it's not the same way in which he rules over all the other powers, all the earthly and heavenly powers. Like, Paul didn't say that God gave Christ to Satan, right?

He didn't give Christ to human kings and dictators. He gave Christ to the church, which is his body. Now this, this becomes a theme throughout the book of Ephesians.

Christ leading and governing the church for her benefit, right? For her good. Christ giving gifts to the church for her maturity.

Christ building her up in love. Christ nourishing and cherishing the church like we do our own bodies. One commentator says this, the church is not merely an institution ruled by him as president.

It's not merely a kingdom in which he is the supreme authority or a vast company of men in moral sympathy with him, but a society which is in vital connection with him, having the source of its life in him, sustained and directed by his power, the instrument also by which he works.

[43 : 10] So many similarities there to John chapter 15, right? The living vital connection with the vine, the power that sustains and directs us and then uses us in the world.

So the risen, ascended, exalted Lord Jesus Christ wielding the immeasurable greatness of God's power. He directs that unbounded power towards the saints, right?

In connection with himself, power directed to the saints for her good. So much so that Paul says the church is, it's his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The fullness of him who fills all in all. Now this is a profound, lofty statement, right? It's hard to understand, much less to believe. But the Holy Spirit is able to open the eyes of our hearts to perceive deep spiritual realities, is he not?

See, Christ is the one who fills all in all. Meaning, he is the one who is the source, the provider, the sustainer of all things everywhere, right?

[44 : 21] His presence being everywhere. And he is filling all things everywhere by filling the church with himself.

He is filling the saints with his power and his presence, right? He is manifesting his fullness, his glory to the world through the church, through the saints, right?

Through you and me. Filling us with his fullness. This is what he has been doing for the last 2,000 years, right?

This is what he is doing right now around the globe, around the world. This is what he intends to do and to continue to do until that last day when he presents the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

He says in Ephesians 5, this is the power toward us who believe. It's resurrection power, it's ascending power, it's exalting power.

[45 : 31] This is the power that is available right now to the saints for the display of his glory in the world. Do you remember what Jesus told his disciples in the upper room?

That truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father.

After he said those things, Jesus endured the agony of his passion, of his suffering, of the cross, right? To pay for our sins and then he rose from the grave three days later, right?

In resurrection power and he ascended back to the Father's right hand, exalted above all heavenly and earthly powers and from that position of authority, supreme authority, he sent the promised Holy Spirit into the hearts of the saints to be his abiding presence with them, to manifest the immeasurable greatness of his power toward them, right?

So we, the saints, the church, we continue the mission, the ministry of Christ in this world, filling the world with the glory of God as he fills us, as he fills the church, the saints, with his spirit, his very presence and power.

[46 : 58] As we close, I want to ask, what would it look like, church, catch a vision here, what would it look like for us to live in the conscious awareness of the immeasurable greatness of God's power toward us?

The resurrecting, ascending, exalting power of God. The one, the power that defeated death and the grave and sin and Satan, that power, the power that raised Christ from the earth and put him back into glory in heaven.

the power that exalted him above every other name, that power. What would it look like for us to live life transformed by that reality?

See, do we realize if God's mighty power raised Christ from the dead and seated him in glory and exalted him above every other name, that there is nothing he can't do?

Tell me, what do you have going on in your life that is greater than that, that is harder to accomplish than that? Is God's power sufficient to give you victory over your sin?

[48 : 17] Is it? Is God's power sufficient to give you victory over the attacks of the enemy? Right? Over the demons and Satan who are shooting their fiery arrows at you.

Is God's power sufficient? Is God's power able to lift you from the mire of anxiety or despair? Is it enough?

Is God's power strong enough to enable us to love one another when it's hard? Is God's power strong enough to give us unity in our marriages, in our families, in our church, despite so many opportunities for division?

Is it strong enough? Is God's power sufficient to carry you through any physical suffering? Is it enough to help you walk through the maligning of your name, right?

The miring of your reputation? Is God's power strong enough today? Is God's power enough to be able to raise your neighbors or your friends or your co-workers dead heart to life in Christ?

[49 : 32] Is it strong enough? Is it strong enough to make me a faithful, bold witness for him? To testify to the gospel of grace?

Is God's power enough? Yes, it is. It is enough. It raised Christ from the grave. It defeated death and Satan and hell forevermore.

It exalted Christ above every earthly and heavenly power. It is sufficient right here, right now. It is available right here, right now, in Christ, to you.

Child of God, it is available to you, to me, to the church, toward the saints. It is toward the saints, for the saints.

And God wants us to live in the reality of this power, to have transformed lives, living with the conscious awareness of this power, and not just his power.

[50 : 33] We've been focusing on his power because it's Resurrection Sunday and because Paul spends most of his prayer talking about it, but also his calling, right, the hope of his calling, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

God longs for the saints to live lives transformed by the reality of his calling, riches, and power as we know him more fully. In Christ, we now possess an abundance of spiritual wealth.

Let us not sit on this wealth, right, like the United States did for decades on the resource-laden state of Alaska. let us not sit on this wealth.

Oh, that the Spirit would open the eyes of our hearts, that we would know, that we may know God and his abundant blessings, that we would see and perceive, right, with spiritual vision, that we would live in the conscious awareness of these heavenly realities.

Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, these truths are so lofty. They're so lofty.

[51 : 50] They're so deep. And it will take your Holy Spirit to enlighten the eyes of our hearts, to know these things, not just with our minds.

We know them. We read them off the pages. We know them intellectually. That is not what you want for us, just to know things intellectually. You want us to be awakened in our spirit, to live in the awareness, in the conscious awareness of these truths.

You want our wills to be transformed, to desire these things. You want our minds to be renewed with spirit knowledge. resurrection power now.

The power that ascended Christ to glory, the power that exalted him above every other name, available to us in Christ.

God, would you work this truth into our hearts over and over and over again? God, you know how quickly, how quickly I go astray from these things, living in my own power, being dragged into anxiety, being dragged into fear, uncertain of what's to come, when this abundance of riches is available to me, to the saints.

[53 : 28] Holy Spirit, work in our hearts that we would know that we would know these things for our joy and for the glory of Christ in this world, I pray.
Amen. Amen. Thank you.