

The Desire for More

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: 10 February 2019

Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] Please have a seat. Please take your Bibles out. Turn to Ephesians chapter 1. We're getting back to our series on Ephesians. We're going to close out the first chapter, which we have been preaching on since the fall.

In about the 13th century AD, I don't know if you realize, but it was probably one of the most intelligent scholars, theologians existed.

If you're Catholic, you've probably heard his name. It's Thomas Aquinas. There is a large battle, whether he is one of the Protestant theologians or a Catholic theologian.

I think we can both embrace him for many things that he did indeed teach. One of his challenges that he wanted to do was prove that God existed outside of using the Bible.

He felt that while debating with people, he wanted to have an opportunity to show that God existed. So he wrote this article, which in English we translate the five ways.

[1 : 18] And they're simple arguments, which seem a little bit complex and philosophical when you begin with them. But they're just simple questions. So one of them is the uncaused cause.

So there is an earth that is spinning around the sun. Did that just start? It's moving. Something had to move that earth around the sun.

So he would extrapolate that it was indeed God was the one. So you have the unmoved mover, the uncaused cause, the one that brings harmony. But for me as a young man, when I was studying philosophy, the one that I found was the most gripping, which some people think is the least gripping, but in my twisted mind, I thought what he said, degrees of excellence, was his argument that I thought really showed forth.

And his degrees of excellence basically boils down to this. We know that there's something better. I can smell a flower. That flower smells nice.

But somewhere along in my mind, there's a better smelling flower or a prettier flower. I've seen a couple of sunsets. I can point to some are better than others.

[2 : 42] And by doing so, I extrapolate the idea that there is this idea of excellence, perfection beyond that. Let's be honest. A Ford is a great car until you've driven a Ferrari, right?

Most people probably haven't driven a Ferrari. Sorry, guys. It is a sweet machine, right? It's exquisite. It looks nice. It captures the imagination. The Festiva just doesn't have that power, right?

You guys don't even know. Remember the Ford Festiva little three-wheel thing? Now, anyway. But there's an idea that we know that there's something better. And the reality is that is in our hearts as well in regards to God.

We hear this all the time. I need a closer relationship to God. I need a stronger spiritual life.

I need to go deeper with Jesus. Anybody ever say any of those type of qualifying statements, right? Because you know there's this point that you're at, but you know that there's something more beyond where you are now.

- [3 : 57] And that would kind of figure in degrees of excellence. Even though you may have never experienced it, you know it's there. And you know you want it, right?
- We want more Jesus. We want more Holy Spirit. We want more blessing. We want a higher life. We want a deeper life. Well, let me tell you right here, right now, that is a good place to be.
- It is a recognition that perhaps there is something more with God that you can experience.
- It is a perfectly good desire to know more of God, more of Jesus, more of his blessing, more of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in today's text that Carl read to us, this is exactly what Paul is praying for, for the Ephesian saints.
- He wants them to have more. As Dave preached a few weeks ago, he actually covered the beginning part of this passage that God would give us eyes to see essentially what is that more, what it pertains to.
- [5 : 14] Now, first off, let's understand who these people are. The people are a group of believers that are a church in the city of Ephesus.
- Okay? Paul begins this letter by calling them saints. These are people that know the truth of Jesus Christ. They have accepted that they are sinners.
- Jesus is the perfect Son of God, and he is now their Savior. Now, he begins this passage, and it says, notice verse 16.
- Actually, I'm going to go back to 15 here. He says, He says, He says, He says, He's heard of them.
- He knows that they have this great faith in Jesus Christ. So it's not like he's talking about a bunch of people who aren't active in their faith. They have what Paul calls a great faith, and their great faith has translated in a love for all the saints.
- [6 : 17] So he's writing a group of people who have a great faith and are living it out as a loving community of Jesus Christ. And in fact, we know through history that many churches were planted from this church of Ephesus.
- So the people heard, learned about the faith, had great love, and loved people so much that they wanted to take the gospel out to their loved ones in various cities, and they planted various churches.
- In fact, it's speculated that the 12 churches that the Apostle John talks about in Revelation all came from this church. This is a happening church.
- This is a loving church. This is a faithful church. And Paul gives thanks to God to them.
- But he's recognizing it's not enough. There's other things that Paul wants to pray for.
- [7 : 26] Now, before I discuss what those are, before we get into how God wants them to grow, we need to see how we first interpret.
- When I say, hey, you need to go deeper, what does that mean? All right? So I thought about this week. How would you connect those dots?
- What would that mean? So God actually spoke to me this week. I got a mail from God. Two weeks from now, Jesus Christ is coming to visit Squamish Baptist Church.
- He's coming in purpose. It's a different dispensation. It's not the rapture. All right? But he's coming here. And before that happens, Paul is going to be here next week to inspect us and make sure we're ready for Jesus.
- Okay? Now, what are you going to do? Okay? This is a truth. It's coming. It's happening. What are you going to do? I'm going to imagine the first thing you'll probably do is you're going to start confessing every sin you can think of.

[8 : 38] Right? You're walking across the aisle. You don't even know that guy. But you remember stepping on his shoe and you've been feeling really bad about it for three months. You know, Irene was saying she didn't like Dustin singing.

I didn't mean to bring that up the other day. But, you know, some of these things are going to get worked out. Right? You're going to go to your kids and you're going to ask, hey, I need you to forgive me. Hey, mommy lost her temper the other day.

So you want to make sure there's a clean slate. You're calling friends all over the country because you know if there's a couple of guys that can see into your heart, one of them is going to be Jesus. Right? So you want to make sure that's taken care of.

But what happens next is actually going to differ between you guys. Okay? The Bible actually talks about that there's essentially four ways that you're going to try to fix yourself up for the coming of Jesus.

Jesus. So some of you, you're going to go home and, man, you're going to start cleaning. You're going to have one clean house. Right? You're going to come across that bottle of wine that you have once in a while when guests come over.

[9 : 46] And you're going to start asking yourself, should I have a bottle of wine in my house? I don't know. Better safe than sorry. Let's get rid of it. Right? And then you're going to start saying, man, that ham's got to go. Right?

Can't have ham. Got to make sure there's fish. Right? You're going to start creating these laws. And you're going to sit down with your kids and say, guess what? We're doing four-hour Bible studies this week.

And then we're going to follow that off with a four-hour prayer meeting. Every week, you're going to do it, kids. Right? And then you're going to start coming to church. And you're going to start saying, hey, we're going to get rid of the guitars and we're going to bring in the harps.

Right? You're going to be praising God. We don't have those drums anymore. And BK, you're going to have to wear a tie. Right? What happens is there's essentially some of us start leaning towards legalism.

Right? We're going to lean towards things that are right or those things that are wrong. We're going to make sure that sign at home, we're going to post those Ten Commandments and we're going to probably add another 50 to 60 by the time Paul shows up next week.

[10 : 48] So he knows we know the difference between right and wrong. Now, some of you are going to go the other way.

You're going to start thinking, maybe I've got things too nice at home. Should I own that European vehicle? Oh, that's it. I'm going down to Howell Motors and I'm trading it in for a Chrysler.

Right? You want to live sort of a monastic type of view. You're going to slim down. Organic food only. What are you doing? Foreign made cars are going to go.

You're going to tell your husband that you need to have a beard like the holy man Steve Whiten does. Right? You've got to grow it out. In fact, we're going to wear robes. So people really can't tell how much money.

If we do have money, not only are we going to cancel the cable, we're going to throw out the TV. We're going to agree that every family member should only have 300 square feet of living space.

[11 : 52] Wait, let's make that 200 square feet. So you don't want Paul showing up in your 3,200 square foot house unless, of course, you've got 12 kids. Right?

That is the monastic view or asceticism. You want to appear more frugal to show to Jesus that you can do without.

So that means cold oatmeal for breakfast and you're selling your Apple, Mac and you're buying a PC. Right? Then there's a third type of person.

Third person is going to start taking out those candles. You're going to be talking to your husband or your wife and say, remember that chanting music we used to listen to in university? We've got to get that out, right?

Get those monks singing. We're going to dim the lights. We're going to go for a holy atmosphere. You might start talking to one another.

[12 : 52] Should I tell Paul about that dream that I had that we woke up and the cats were cooking us breakfast? Right? Won't that make us seem holier? Like we all have these different ideas and this is something that man has been fighting pretty much their whole entire life.

You know that? They have been. We try to add more to Jesus. It's not like we deter anything that Jesus does, but we try to add more.

Some try to add rules. Some try to add an ascetic type of life. Some people try to add an element of mysticism.

And oh yeah, that home, they've got incense burning 24-7. Right? These things that we deem as more spiritual, more acceptable. In fact, Paul addresses these three things in Colossians 2, 16-23.

He simply says, Now I know when we read that worship of angels, the Jews for a time would worship angels because they believe the angel was the mediator between God and man.

[14 : 26] They believed it was the angels brought the tablets from God to Moses on the mount. So angel worship figured very highly in Judaistic worship.

Kind of like in the Catholics, it's the saints. Mary is the mediator for many of them. So that's kind of what Paul's talking about here. Just giving you a quick understanding. He says, Going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by a sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body, nourished in it together through its joints and ligaments, grows with the growth that is from God.

If with Christ you died unto the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? Regulations that say do not handle, do not taste, do not touch.

Referring to the things that all perish as they are used, according to human precepts and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom. So these things that we do, that we think are earning points with Jesus, appear to be wise.

But they are promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body. But they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

[15 : 52] What that means is you cannot grow spiritually through those things. Remember the golden calf when Moses came down the mount? Those people did not make that to rebel against God.

They thought they were going with God on that. They thought they needed a picture. So they collected all the gold, thinking they were doing a good thing. It was a disastrous thing.

And the fact is, for the last 5,000 years, we continue to build golden calves and do silly things in our head, thinking that we're somehow getting closer to God.

Why? Because we still feel deep in our heart, I need more. I need to be closer to God.

I have to have a deeper relationship with God. So in our desire for more, we do more works, right?

[16 : 56] We think that by getting closer to God, if we do these things, this will fill that hole or that desire that I have for more with Jesus.

Basically, we're trying to earn a righteousness of our own making, whether we realize it or not. The problem is, all these things produce self-righteousness.

Because what you're going to do is, you're going to start looking over across the street. Hey, I know they're Christians. They're not burning incense. They're still driving the Mercedes. They don't have their house up for sale.

I know they got cable TV. In fact, they got satellite TV. Right? You start judging. You're not satisfied. It robs you of joy. It produces a judgmentalism heart.

It creates an idea of subjective experience. You grow in pride. Adding to Jesus, it's like having a glass of water and try to add something to make it more clear.

[18 : 07] There's nothing you can add to my water to make it more clear. You know that? Anything that I add will dilute it. There's nothing. And that's the same thing with Jesus Christ.

But Paul still is praying something more for us. What is that? So let's understand the context.

Paul writes this letter from prison to a people he knows especially well. He served there. He pastored there. He eldered there. He trained Timothy, who's their pastor there.

He has an immense love for these people. But he understands something. Paul understands that there's essentially three stages to Christianity. And I'm going to fold those three stages for you today.

The first stage of Christianity is learning who Jesus is. Amen? It's coming to that point in your life you may have never heard of Jesus Christ. You had no business of looking at Jesus Christ.

[19 : 09] But all of a sudden you got to a point that you recognized whatever philosophy of living you were having wasn't working for you. And you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

You realized somewhere along the line you were a sinner. God is not. Jesus is holy. He loves me. And if I put my faith in him he saves me.

Right? We're there. So that's the first stage of Christianity is understanding that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. The second stage of Christianity is our relationship and worship is increased when we understand our salvation.

Ephesians 1 talks about that God and his providence actually saved us before time. That God had made us his. It talks about the foreknowledge of God that he had intimate knowledge of us.

That he loved us made us his and then he gave us over to his son Jesus Christ. And his son Jesus Christ did something for us. He redeemed us.

[20 : 32] He went to the cross died for us so that we may have a right relationship with God. So that's that second phase stage two of Christianity.

And then this spirit this Holy Spirit applies it calls us to him. We make that choice for him and we apply that work of redemption is made to us.

And not only that God puts the Holy Spirit in us as a guarantee of our future inheritance. Amen? It's like he brands us.

you are mine is what Jesus Christ is saying. It's not realized. We live in this crummy world but we're his.

And he's telling us no matter what happens you are mine. Poor, rich doesn't matter. Black or white from different countries man, woman doesn't matter.

[21 : 38] You're mine. So he's got us there. We are his. We are his heritage. Now let me ask you a question.

How many of you have truly gone beyond the first stage of Christianity? How many of you truly understand the work that Jesus Christ has done in your life and it has increased your love and worship of him exponentially?

Some people get to that point hey I'm okay I'm saved right? I've got heaven locked up. I'm good. And you're excited about that. But we sometimes stutter in going to this next stage of learning about Jesus.

Jesus. And even fewer people go to the next stage which is called experiencing Jesus.

You love being saved. You love having Jesus as your savior. You are secure in the knowledge that you are going to heaven.

[23 : 01] You love bringing your kids here to church making sure they hear the gospel so that they would go to heaven too. But sometimes you wonder why is it so important to go beyond that?

Do I really study God's word in order to incorporate the blessings that BK is talking about? God's word the fact of the matter is the Bible itself has far more to say about life in experiencing Jesus Christ than it does about coming to know him.

Did you know that? There's more page and words written about how to experience Jesus rather than just being saved by Jesus.

so God obviously has this purpose that there has to be something more there. And I think when we talk about I need to have a deeper relationship with God I need to experience more of God this is the experience that we're after.

So universal is it the prophet Jeremiah stated in Jeremiah 9 23 24 Thus says the Lord Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom let not the mighty man boast in his might let not the rich man boast in his riches but let him who boasts boasts in this that he understands and knows me that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love justice and righteousness in the earth for in these things I delight declares the Lord that's a that's a mic dropping statement right let him who boasts boasts in this that he understands and knows me do you guys want to boast that some will argue hey

[25 : 30] PK I just can't learn that much I'm not educated high school graduation and man I think they just gave me the diploma to get me out of the school I was 23 at the time right you know we struggle right I can't learn more I read but I can't understand you see this is Paul's prayer for you and this is what I want to encourage you Paul has a prayer for you and he says that you'd be illuminated you'd be illuminated when we read this in Ephesians it's talking about revelation and we sometimes interpret revelations about giving us future understanding that's not what he's talking about here he's actually talking about as Dave said eyes to see that you'd be illuminated and let me tell you what it is the greatest challenge that you and I have is not giving Jesus our heart the greatest challenge we have is giving Jesus Christ our life it's not our heart hey we're comfortable with

Jesus being our savior it's a great thing but are you willing to go all the way and make him your lord lord and what you see lord and what you read lord and who you who you socialize is it direct your life it's really understanding we you know we so easily trust Jesus with our salvation but do we really trust him with how we live many of you are familiar with Paul's teaching in first Corinthians he talks about the meat and milk of the word you guys remember that it talks about there's milk of the word and meat of the world and a lot of people think the milk is the basic stuff that we learn but the meat is for stuff that it's for those who study more more mature that's actually the wrong distinction between the milk and the meat it's not about extra smart or extra study it's related to what do you do with the truth that you do understand what do you do with the truth that you do understand because you have the greatest teacher in the world in you you know who he is it's the

Holy Spirit and Paul is encouraging them to go beyond their salvation to understand that there is this growth that comes by submitting to the truth and how it shapes you all right it's not what you know it's who you are amen it's not what you know it's who you are are you submissive to God's word or not submissive to God's word we're just talking about just Carl and I were talking about the other day the difference the distance between what I know and what I act sometimes it's like this but sometimes it's like that greater worship to God is not based on what you know but it's who you are before the Lord the Holy Spirit is powerful and the Holy Spirit knows exactly how to feed you it's not advanced learning it's obedient learning amen even this simple truth when we take them into our heart become great truths when you believe that the things are too advanced for you what you are saying is the

Lord doesn't know how to feed a person like you that's what you're saying I can't learn that you just say hey man I am such a special case even God himself you know God who created the whole world the universe and put everything into perfect orbit and submission in the whole universe can't get me right he's like my grade three teacher Mrs.

Smith she just didn't get me God gets you and sometimes the reason why is because you're not trusting him with the milk you know this truth you know there's more that God is calling you to and it's easy to try some of the religious things we'll do a few more of the works we'll clean things up at home might even light a few candles create the mood but in the end it doesn't accomplish what you so desperately want I believe you desperately want to be close to Jesus we want for God to know us amen that we would say that we know and we understand him so there's three things that Paul prays for these saints at Ephesus and

[30 : 32] I'm going to go over them briefly with you the first one is found in verse 18 it's the hope of your calling he's just not happy that you were saved he saved you with a purpose and that purpose has a calling when you know God you will know what that calling is for some of you it's very simple sometimes you have family members you need to take care of to a higher degree than most God has called you to that you might be an adult who has a parent that's hurting God has called you now to a stage in your life where you take care of your parents sometimes it's your kids sometimes it's your workplace but it starts with your home but

Paul wants to assure you that there is no need to search for more spiritual blessings the fact of the matter is you have them all that moment of salvation God has given you everything you need to live this life so about your calling he wants you to know that he chose you before the foundation of the world that he chose you to be holy and blameless before him that he predestined you unto adoption he chose us redeemed us predestined us adopt us into his family he made us acceptable and he has a purpose for you he does he has a purpose and that purpose is to glorify God with your life and it's going to look a lot different to everyone in here but there's a purpose to that two the second thing that he prays for he says what are the riches what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints now what he's talking about here is not what we get out of salvation we get a lot in but he's actually talking about what

God has in us right God gets something in us when we're saved it says that although we have an inheritance but God does as well and he is glorified in us get that that doesn't make sense but it's true in the Old Testament Israel was called inheritance we the church are a part of his people many of you know the story of Job and it's a hard story that I wouldn't wish on anybody but notice at the very beginning of Job we're going to start at verse 6 I'll just read it to you now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them the Lord said to Satan from where have you come and Satan answered to the Lord and said from going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it the Lord said to Satan have you considered my servant

Job that there is none like him on the earth a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil I'd love God to say that about me that people walking to and fro this earth would see me and know that there is a servant of the living God dimes to dollars each one of you would want to hear that as well right no matter where you are what part of the world you are at when Jesus talks about that's my servant that's my servant and then there's this last part that he's asking us about and it's a tough part he's praying for his immeasurable greatness of his power towards us what does that mean the greatness of his power let's talk about his power first of all

Jesus Christ died he was buried guess who raised him from the dead God did God had the power to raise the dead he resurrected Jesus Christ some of you have testimonies you were living one way and now you're living another way that is the power of God in your heart made you death brought you to life and you live a completely different way amen that's power that's God's power and it just doesn't happen there it's there all the time it's the power that resides in us it's the power that works in us and he even gives us this example how much power is it that Jesus has well he sits in the heavenly places he has authority over all he's got power over all he's dominion over heaven and hell his name is above every name and the name of all the ages

[35 : 53] Jesus Christ still reigns and who are we plugged into Jesus Christ so what do we have available I don't think we get this and I'll tell you why how many of us pray that God would give us light so we can understand right the fact of the matter is he's already told us that we already need to follow the light that we have which is Jesus Christ in the word John 9 5 we pray for strength but God in Philippians 4 13 teaches us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us so the strength that we're praying for we already got it right it's like God give me that strength to run the marathon hey you already have it you got the big lungs and the good slow twitch muscles in your legs you can do it you just need to do it we can pray for more love yet the love of

God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit already according to Romans 5 5 we pray for more grace yet 2nd Corinthians 12 9 tells us the grace that he's given us is sufficient we pray for more peace but God has given us a peace that surpassed us all understanding what I'm trying to argue for you today what Paul is praying for you today is that you don't need to pray for more light more strength more love more grace more peace you've got it but what we need is insight and wisdom to understand how to use this power properly and faithfully one commentator says our blessings are so fast that our human minds cannot even comprehend them that God has got so much for us that you and

I and our human mind can't figure it out that always makes me feel uncomfortable right you ever I remember the first discount mall that I ever went to when I was at university I had a limited budget so I would save up all my money and we would go to the States and buy enough clothes for the whole year remember J.Crew J.Crew used to be the big thing right I used to love J.Crew and then I found a J.Crew outlet mall oh I couldn't I had to leave it was overwhelming I could buy t-shirts for five bucks like to me this was the greatest thing like my 600 was now like six thousand dollars to me like I was so overwhelming I did not know what to buy so what did I do I bought every color that I could afford like it was just overwhelming and sometimes it's the same thing spiritually our hearts feel this pull but God gives us this Holy Spirit and I'm going to read to you this portion out of 1 Corinthians 2 verses 9 to 12 but as it is written what no eye has seen no ear heard nor the heart of man imagine what

God has prepared for those who love him that's awesome we can't even imagine it these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit for the Spirit searches everything even the depths of God for who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him so also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God now we have received not the Spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God that we might understand the things freely given us by God and we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit interpreting spiritual truth to those who are spiritual the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned the spiritual person judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one for who has understood the mind of the

Lord so as to instruct him but we have the mind of Christ you see God's deeper truths cannot be seen with our eyes heard with our ears or comprehended by our reason and intuition but they are comprehended by those who love Jesus these are the three truths that we need to comprehend one God has a plan nothing happens by accident he is unfolding this plan for us before our very eyes and he unfolds it day by day second truth we need to comprehend is God has power amen he has been unfolding it before our eyes time and time again and the point that he's driving home in verse 23 of this verse we're going to get to it is the place where

[41 : 31] God's plan and power unfolded is in the church of Jesus Christ that's what he's setting up these Ephesians for you want to experience God you want to know what God's going to do I'm going to do it in your church this is where his greatest love is supposed to shine if we do love serve one amen Ephesians 122 says and he put all things under his feet and gave him his head over all things which is his body the fullness of him who fills all in all you want to go to the place where God is working it's the church and you know what he works in dumb broken people like me and dumb broken people like you we show love we serve we give we care this is supposed to be the testimony to the world

I guess I get asked by a lot of people I you know I planted a church and I was part of a reconstruction of another church before and a lot of newcomers come hey what can I do what can I lead this is my experience this is my past leadership and some of them these things are great and wonderful but I always respond in the same way pick someone to love just pick someone to love here at the church just pick them could be a neighbor could be a senior saint could be a young family that's struggling but pick them love them you want to be blessed serve someone you want to be served serve them bless them you want to be loved love someone see this is the plan that God has designed and the first thing that we need to understand is submitting to this plan and not our own true knowledge true experience true more of

Jesus actually starts right here and as we get into the rest of this book it's going to tell us what it looks like in our community amen let's pray dear Lord heavenly father I just thank you for the saints that meet here who love us who serve us thank you for those who are even presently walking up to play music so that we may praise your name lift up your name father even hear the stories but you do you see we've just told that your eyes search far and wide far and near north to south east to west father I'm praying for this church as Paul is praying for the church of Ephesians that we would truly come to the greater understanding of your knowledge that we have in us father you've given us the direction you've given us the grace you've given us the love you've given us the strength all these things you have promised us father it's like being we have a car and making sure we're using the right map to get to the right place well father we know that right place is your church where your name is to be lifted up father

I pray that our testimony would be that as the