

# Knowing Hope, Riches and Power

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 00 ] Sorry to hear of the death of little Olivia MacLeod from Melbost at eight years of age. We extend our sincere condolences and prayerful remembrance to her parents and family, to Dean and to John over Olivia's passing. She brought much pleasure and much satisfaction into the lives of many people, although she had herself a few of the abilities that others have.

Nevertheless, she was a source of great joy and a blessing in her own way from the Lord on high. Let's begin our worship this evening singing in Psalm 100.

Psalm 100 in the older version in the Scottish Psalter, that's on page 362. We're singing the first version of Psalm 100. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him said with mirth, his praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice. Know that the Lord is God indeed, without our aid he did us make.

We are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take. The whole of the Psalm, Psalm 100 to God's praise. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

[ 1 : 42 ] Him said with mirth, his praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed, with our aid he did us make.

We are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take.

Oh, enter then his gaze with praise. Approach with joy, his hope, some too.

Praise God and bless his name always. Crown on earth, and praise him, His mercy is forever sure.

[ 3 : 10 ] How may the Lord rise upon us, his mercy is forever sure. How may the Lord begin by my horizons, in a tiny house and may así, start to hear you when he comes with ci■glades on earthFP. Upon Gener contrasting way, as well as going on earth isley ofinterest. Imagine the LORD in nagyon e Others can acetarum on earth. This heaven, any tomorrow, featuring confront them at the■,■■ of encounter Phileως emphile open earth, any of Lot ofunda earth, any God■ Kapital 10th, Wesaty open up and be Elizabeth Berg, have mercy on earth le routinely hope, and beças to the children's Dews.

Before, may the Lord hypert Hej professionals. pod elegy■, Or may the Luther beesw pelcome. portfolio, ever sure is truth that all times firmly stood and shall from age to age end due Now let's join together again in prayer let's unite our hearts and minds in prayer Our gracious and blessed God you who inhabit eternity and yet is pleased to dwell with your people on earth those that by your grace have a humble and contrite spirit we thank you tonight for this privilege once again of coming before you in worship of having this access to you through our Lord Jesus Christ we give thanks Lord in these words that we have sung that we are reminded once again of your greatness and especially of the way in which by your grace you form a people for yourself who are your flock and will be looked after by you as their shepherd even throughout eternity we thank you we thank you oh Lord for all the shepherding care that you manifest to your people for the different ways in which you look after your flock and for the way that that continues into eternity itself for we know that it is recorded in your word for us that the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will pastor his people will lead them to living fountains of water and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes Lord our God how comforting your truth is for us when we require our hearts to be calmed our minds to be pacified and to come before you Lord in a way that would humbly seek to receive from your hand once again the blessings that you have for your people we acknowledge oh Lord our need of your grace again to worship you in spirit and in truth to worship you in a way that would be pleasing to you and acceptable for you help us Lord we pray to depend upon your spirit however much we may have a knowledge of these aspects of your word that we use in our singing and in our thoughts and preaching this evening we ask oh Lord that you would by your Holy Spirit open up our minds to receive them we know that there is so much in your word that yet remains for us to

understand more fully and appreciate more fully and apply more fully and more completely to our lives and Lord we ask tonight that you would grant to us that ability from your spirit to do this help us we pray as we begin a new year in our experience as a congregation as individuals and as families help us to do so out of a sense of thankfulness for all your goodness that you have extended to us over that past year and despite the fact oh Lord that we faced and still face many challenges in your providence we do give thanks tonight oh Lord for all that you continue to be for us for the way that we can come to trust and depend upon you knowing that you are unchangeably the same towards all who come to place their faith and confidence in you we thank you for all the amongst all the change that we experience that you are without change that you remain constant in the glory and in the way in which your being is constantly the same we ask Lord that we may be thankful this evening that we know such a God and that such a God has come toward us to reveal himself in the person of his son and also on the pages of this holy book that we have we ask Lord that you would bless us in this year ahead as a congregation we acknowledge oh Lord that at times we feel frustrated that times we feel we would prefer to find more freedom for the gospel we know that this is not wrong for us Lord to ask you for but yet we pray that you would help us to bow to your own superior will we know not how long this virus and these restrictions may continue to be in place in our land yet Lord we ask that you would deal with it in such a way as would give us greater freedom give us a greater scope for reaching out with the gospel and a greater scope for calling upon each other's homes and visiting and fellowship

Lord we ask that you might be pleased to give these days of freedom to us back again we ask tonight for all who have experienced the illness of COVID itself and those who are suffering from it at this time Lord bless them we pray and give them grace to be upheld by you and help them to recover may it please you also to bless those Lord who throughout the world have to live with this COVID pandemic but have few of the resources that we have Lord God remember these nations of the world that are poor that are beset on a daily basis with deprivation of various kinds who don't have access to the various medicines and vaccines that we have Lord we pray that you'll provide for them and we pray that where there is much wastage in the world much greed on the part of world leaders that you would help us Lord to bear these things before you in prayer and we ask that better days may come during the course of this year when your kingdom will come we pray that your kingdom comes that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven and help us to continue to pray this Lord in the midst of all the changes and the difficulties and the challenges we face I bless tonight to those who mourn the passing of loved ones once again Lord we know in our congregation of families that have bereavement and sorrow over the loss of loved ones we pray especially tonight Lord that you'd bless Dean and John and their family as they mourn over Olivia's passing Lord we thank you for all that little Olivia meant to them during the short course of her life for the many times of happiness and rewards that they had from her little life and we ask Lord that as they showed such great love and dedication and commitment to looking after her Lord we pray that they will know of your care now looking after them in the time of their loss and sorrow and I'd be pleased to bless Lord all who belong and are united to them as a family and at this time we commend them to your gracious keeping remember all others in our community at this time who experience loss in these days and those who reflect upon days gone by and for whom every passing new year is a time of poignant remembrance a time that is emotional for them as they recall those that are no longer with them oh Lord remember them we pray in your great mercy and in your love we ask that you would comfort them and uphold them and strengthen them we pray for our nation at this time and for our leaders once again we bring them before you oh Lord not only because it is our duty but also because we sincerely desire for them that they will be blessed by you that they will be led into your ways that they will come to be ruled in their own lives by the wisdom of your truth by the way of your commands and we pray

[ 11 : 36 ] Lord in this year that we may see more of those who are in authority over us coming to acknowledge you and coming to be turned out of the ways of worldliness and foolishness into the ways of God the ways of wisdom the ways of godliness and we pray oh Lord that we may all be examples to them that we may take every opportunity Lord of reminding them of the privilege we have of the gospel in our midst the privilege we have of having your word freely available to us and the knowledge that your word is so valuable and so relevant to the age in which we live as well Lord remember again we pray our children and young people we thank you for them we pray as they return shortly to school and to Sunday school we pray again that you would bless them bless your word to them bless to them the witness of your people whether it be in their own parents and home

or in Sunday school or in the church we pray Lord that we may always give a good example to them and we pray your forgiveness when we don't when we fall short of being the kind of people we should be in relation to each other whether young or old we ask oh

Lord that you would remember at this time those who face difficulties of unemployment difficulties too of running businesses where we know that the usual trade is not available to them and where their income has been greatly reduced Lord we pray that you would grant days of recovery to them and we pray for all we know ourselves in our own local community and in the congregation who are in that category today and we ask that you'd continue to provide for them and to encourage them and to give them the strength to continue and especially to look to yourself the God of whom we were singing the Lord who has always been the upholder of his people and we pray that you would bless us now as we continue here to wait upon you receive us graciously and accept us in our worship for Jesus sake Amen Now I notice there are a few children out this evening and it's always wonderful to see children out

I hadn't intended to have a children's address but nevertheless I want to say a few words to the children just now before we come to read God's word in the word of God right through the word of God we find an emphasis on God making things new near the end of the Bible in the book of the Revelation we find that God says behold I am making all things new that will be at the end of everything that's happening in the world in the end of history when God will bring life as we know it now to an end he will create a new heavens and a new earth but before all that we also have teaching in God's word about how he comes to give us new life how he makes us new creations in Jesus Christ when you come to be a Christian when you trust in the Lord when you're saved that life that you live then you are a new person God renews us from within our souls and he gives us from within our souls what the Bible calls being born again that is a new beginning for a new life and Psalm number 40 remember tells us that when God does that for us when he takes us out of the pit as it's an illustration there of a sinful life and what we are like to begin with he takes us out of the miry bog and he sets our feet upon a rock and he puts a new song in our mouth and that new song is the song of praise that we sing to God in praise for all that he is and for all that he does in the way of our salvation so God makes us a new creation gives us a new life gives us a new beginning puts a new song in our mouth and that means a new relationship with himself the most wonderful thing in the world is to know of a new relationship with Jesus Christ because then you're brought also into a new relationship with God the Father to know him as your Father in heaven who looks after you who continues to care for you and who will always do so forever more so I hope that as young people here tonight as you listen to the gospel as you hear the message of the Bible that you will think about these new things the

Bible speaks about and see if you can find for yourselves other things in the Bible that are said to be new especially as they belong to the life of Christians and as you do that well remember then that being a new person with a new beginning having a new relationship with God is for you as well you don't have to wait until you're older you can do that now and I'm sure some of you are already doing that and doing so in a way that will carry on through into your own life as adults as well we're going to read God's word we're reading from the letter to the Ephesians Paul's letter to the Ephesians in chapter one let's read from the beginning down to the end of the chapter Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints who are in Ephesus who are faithful in Christ Jesus grace to you and peace from

[ 17 : 30 ] God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him things in heaven and things on earth in him we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory in him you also when you heard the word of the truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in him were sealed with the hope with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we

acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory for this reason because I have heard of your faith in the Lord

Jesus and your love towards all the saints I do not cease to give thanks for you remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in 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 towards 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 once again we pray for God to bless to us that portion of his word we're going to sing once again Psalm 139 this time 139 a on page 180 so it's in the sing psalms version

Psalm 139 and singing verses 15 to 18 page 181 when in the sacred place my frame was made before my birth you saw my body yet unformed within the depths of earth and all the days that I should live which you ordained for me were written in your book O Lord before they came to be O God how precious are your thoughts I scan them from afar and as I seek to grasp them all how numberless they are were I to count them they would be more than the grains of sand when I awake I am with you still safe within your hand these verses then from verse 15 when in the secret place my frame was made before my birth you saw my body and the grave was made before my birth you saw my body and the birth you saw my body beckoned for within the depths of earth and all all the days that I should live which you ordained for me were written in your book O Lord before they came to me

O God how precious are your thoughts I scan them from the earth and I O God how precious are your thoughts I scan them from afar and as I seek to grasp them all how numberless they are to grasp them all how numberless they are and for my heart they are and my life forever they are to say God will I may be more than the when I ■ mowing to come whoorted to above my heart when I Fabian Chris, as he takes the house on every bird and he goes to her grace of sound when I awake I am with you still staying within your hands let's turn for a short time this evening to Ephesians chapter 1 and reading once again at verse 18 we can't read from verse 15 because all these verses are united together very closely so if we read from verse 15 and we'll come to look more closely at verses 18 to 20 for this reason because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints I do not cease to give thanks for you remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in 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 towards 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 it's always a privilege but always a great challenge to look through the windows that Paul gives us in his letters to hear himself at prayer and that's effectively what we're privileged to do this evening as we read these words

[ 25 : 05 ] Paul is leading us to contemplate what he himself is praying for especially praying for these Christians in Ephesus in the church in Ephesus and as you draw near this this window to just look in and listen as it were to Paul at prayer this is what you find him actually saying he's beginning with thanksgiving he's giving thanks to God for this church for these people for these saints he's giving thanks for them as he hears of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and of their love towards other Christians as well and he's giving God thanks that's how he begins this prayer and that's a lesson for ourselves really we should ordinarily try and begin our prayers with thanksgiving not that we confine it to the beginning of our prayers but it's always good to actually begin prayer with thanks because it doesn't matter when you come to prayer you're always going to have something in your life for which you ought to give thanks to God and thankfulness and thanksgiving is such an integral part of worship privately or publicly that we always refer to thanksgiving as a primary element a major element in our worship and in our relationship with God well he begins there with thanks remembering you in my prayers and then he reveals what exactly he is thanking what exactly he is asking for following on from his thanks what is he asking God to give or to do for these

Ephesian Christians well first of all he is asking that God will give them an understanding more than they have this is what he is really beginning with remembering you that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him having the eyes of your hearts enlightened in other words he is praying that these Ephesian Christians will come increasingly into a knowledge of God and of his salvation of who they are of what God has given to them of who God himself is in other words he wants them to live out their theology he wants them not only to know these things about themselves and about God but he wants them to grow in that understanding he wants God to increasingly give them more and more to give them the insight the understanding they need as their life goes on but he doesn't leave it at that he then says this understanding that I am praying that God will give you this enlightenment of your hearts is so that you will know three things and these three things are then mentioned by him you see the order of the verses the order of the prayer really is he is beginning with thanksgiving he is then asking God to give this church in Ephesus this understanding this insight this wisdom this spiritual insight this knowledge but it is so that they will actually know these three things as a result what are the three things the first thing is that you will know the hope to which you are which he has called you the hope to which he has called you and then secondly what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and then thirdly what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe and you find the word what there are three what's if you like the word what in the case in each case leads you into what it is exactly the apostle is praying for 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 so these are the three things we're looking at this evening not the first part of it

we've gone through that quickly we want to focus on these three they're very important in fact they're very much integral to our Christian experience to the life of every Christian so let's take them in turn is first of all praying that God will actually give them through this increase of knowledge and understanding to know what is the hope to which he has called you now one of the things that marks a change in a person's life from being lost to being saved one of the things that marks that is the existence and the exercise of hope you find that in this in this epistle itself you go into the next chapter and verse 12 there he tells them he reminds them what they were as Gentiles before the gospel came to them in their lost condition remember he says that you were at that time separated from Christ alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and you were strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world and however people might say they're hoping for the best in life and that's itself not something that's illegitimate that's something that's quite understandable of course all of us to that extent hope in some sense or other hope for the best things in life but there's no guarantee that that whatever we hope for will actually ever come to pass that's not the kind of hope that Paul is talking of here at all this is a hope that is set upon the promises of God and therefore it's a hope towards things that are secure already in Jesus Christ everything that God has promised to his people to give them he will give them every single thing that's set out there in every aspect of his salvation for our personal advantage and our benefit God is committed to giving us that our hope reaches out towards that what he's saying is I'm praying to God that he will give you an increased understanding so that you will know more about this hope to which he has called you he's called them to this hope he's called them to exercise this hope he's called them to think upon and accept and believe the things that are true of especially that inheritance that he mentions in the next clause the inheritance that God has laid up for them in heaven but every single thing that God has spoken of for his people and for their advantage their hope is to be set on these things now sometimes sometimes the Bible actually uses the word hope for the things which are actually hoped for for example you find in Titus Paul's letter to Titus where he mentions the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ there in Titus chapter 2 and verse 13 that's exactly what Paul is doing there for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people training us to renounce ungodliness and so on and we're waiting for our blessed hope we're waiting for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us now he's calling that our hope not just something we're hoping for but he's using the word hope there as the exact thing for which we're hoping the appearance of Jesus Christ as our Savior who will appear and who will come at his return I think in Ephesians it's better to think of the word hope there as a word for the hope that we exercise the exercise of hope the actions of hope along with faith and along with love in our hearts and our minds this is what he's

praying for and this is something for ourselves to pray for as well that God will give us to know to know more of what is the hope to which he has called us to which he has effectually which he has powerfully called us and united us to Christ so that we would have this great hope and in other words if you think of the word knowledge that you may know what is this hope it includes when you include that it includes the likes of having an assurance of your salvation having an assurance of the things that belong to you as a Christian that they're yours that God is yours that you have this relationship with God that you want to find and explore more of and in in one of his great articles the Puritan theologian

John Owen it's an article it's really a book an article by John Owen is a book really because of the extent of his writings but this is an article called of being spiritually minded and in that article on being spiritually minded this is what he says from a mistake over the nature of hope it is that few Christians labor after it in other words he's saying if we make a mistake about what hope actually is the nature of the hope that's what leaves many or he says few Christians to labor after it to exercise themselves to it or have any benefit from it have the benefit from it for he says to live by hope they suppose infers a state not only beneath the life of faith and assurance and believing but also exclusive of them he goes on to say they think that to hope to be saved is a condition of people who have no grounds of faith or assurance but he says this is to turn a blessed fruit of the spirit which hope is this hope this Christian hope it's to turn this blessed fruit of the spirit into a common affection of nature in other words he's saying it's no better than just what the world has in hoping for the best but he says gospel hope is a fruit of faith trust and confidence yes he says indeed the height of all the actings of grace issues in a well grounded hope nor can it rise any higher in other words so on is saying when you take all the actings of grace and put them together in other words the way that

[ 35 : 35 ] God works in the lives of his people it really amounts he says to this this is really the height to which it reaches that it creates in them this wonderful gospel living believing hope and that's the hope that you can see Paul here praying for that these Ephesians will come to know more and more of what that hope is and what that hope is united to which moves into the next part which is talking about the inheritance so look at yourself tonight as I look at myself and think about this hope this word hope and apply that to yourself what is your hope set upon is your hope the certain hope that's based on the promises of God does your hope arise out of a living relationship with Jesus that's what this hope really is anchored in that's where it's rooted in a living relationship with Christ so that we've come to be changed from what we were as the

Ephesians were without God and without hope without God without hope in the world to a people who have this living hope this hope that Peter spoke about in this first epistle remember he spoke there at the beginning blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled and unfading you can see that how the apostles shared in the wonderful core things of salvation I'm sure they discussed this whenever they were able to meet from time to time you can imagine them just discussing these wonderful things and that's why you find in the likes of Peter what's very similar to what you find here in Paul these things about hope and hope in terms of reaching forward stretching out towards the inheritance that God has made secure in heaven in Jesus Christ for his people so he's really saying to you and to me tonight what is the nature of your hope it's surely more than just hoping that things will work out okay hoping that things at the end of the course of your life will result in an eternity with Jesus an eternity among the saved among the people of

God God well it all begins with that living relationship with Christ uniting us to Christ God gives us this hope and as he brings this hope into being in our hearts so all the things that God promises are so precious precious to us read in the psalmist there of as he was looking at his being created in the womb and how God knew all the various parts of his being before they ever came to be in actuality how precious he says to God are your thoughts oh God the way that God thought positively upon him before he was born and had established everything that was going to be true in his life and had governed every single aspect of his life well that's the God we hope in and that's the basis of our hope that this is our God that he is our God and that he is true to his word and as he's true to his word and as you take his word at face value so you exercise hope towards the fulfillment of these things that belong to God's people that's the first thing then he's praying that God will give them this insight so that they will know what is the hope to which he has called them secondly what are the

riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints it was mentioned inheritance a couple of times in the chapter already or before that and also after this in verse 11 we have obtained in Jesus an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to his will and he mentions it then afterwards here this glorious inheritance in the saints and he mentions the fact that verse 14 the Holy

Spirit is given as the guarantee of our inheritance until we take actual possession of it in glory well this inheritance is so important it's that for which Jesus died and just as in the ordinary worldly sense you have an inheritance something that's passed on to you and becomes yours in actuality when the person who's passing it to you has died when their life has come to an end even if it's already in their will if it's already there made secure for you you don't actually take possession of it actually until that person has died and the will is made good and here it is with Jesus you might think of it in this way that Jesus in his death has written out a will and for his people he has written into that will every single thing in his salvation every single thing for their advantage that he has actually died for and risen from the dead for they are all set out there they are all secure they are all things to which your hope reaches out and you await that time of its fulfillment when you leave this world or at least when

Jesus comes back so he says that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you that you may know the riches what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints I have just very recently done my tax return ministers do that every year and at the end of the exercise when you get it back from the accountant well it doesn't really come into your mind to ask the question how rich am I because I know I'm not in fact I'm actually owing a sum as I usually have I'm sure Kenny and others will have the same usually a sum that you're owing back to the inland revenue because you haven't paid enough tax over the previous tax year so you can say for sure about myself I'm certainly not rich but of course that's worldly riches that's financial riches God here is talking about spiritual riches talking about the riches that we have in this inheritance that we have in

[ 42 : 02 ] Christ and not only that he's actually specifying it even more detailed he's saying the riches of the glory of his inheritance I think it's probably better translating it that way instead of just leaving at his glorious inheritance what Paul has in mind is the glory of this inheritance is where my riches are located where the riches that God has made out to me in his will for me in Christ that's where these riches are located how rich am I I'm as rich as Jesus has made me rich I'm as rich as the glory that characterizes that inheritance that God has made over to his people how rich am I I'm as rich as the riches for which Jesus died whatever I have in this world I have these riches if I'm in Christ tonight you have these riches if you're in Christ tonight and the glory of that inheritance is really the pinnacle of these riches it is a glorious inheritance because it's everything that

Christ died for it's that inheritance in heaven and in the glory of heaven and the blessedness of heaven what is more glorious than that where you're presented before God so fully acceptable and accepted in Christ to him that you are in the very image of his son and in the very image of his son you come to appreciate and to partake of finally the glory of this inheritance the glory the riches of it how rich are the saints they are as rich as this glory and remember when he uses the word saints here it's the glorious inheritance of God in his saints the saints as you find here in the second verse of the chapter the first verse of the chapter he's writing to the saints who are in Ephesus is he writing to people who are perfect well obviously not when you read of other parts of the of the letter he's obviously writing to people who are not yet perfect far from it and when the

Bible mentions the saints of God it's not telling us about an elite group of highly spiritual people from amongst all those who are Christians talking about everybody who's in Christ for all their failures for all the things that mark them as still wrong with their lives for all the things they would themselves complain about and confess to God about their shortcomings they are saints they are sanctified in Jesus Christ they are made acceptable to God in him and there are a few more wonderful thoughts than that as you think of yourself and of ourselves together as Christians all of us were saved because that's what the Bible encourages us to think of not just ourselves individually but the saints of God together this united band and body of people that are in Christ these are the saints somebody put it I think it came from the reformers probably but it's something along the lines of the Pope makes saints of the dead but God makes saints of the living the living people that are united to him by faith they are saints in Christ they are sanctified in him they are made acceptable to God and here he is saying that you may know what are the riches of the glory of that inheritance well I can't get my mind rounded at all just now neither can we during the course of this life in terms that I

appreciate everything to do with these riches how can you possibly estimate them how can you possibly measure these riches they are just beyond our ability to measure I don't think we'll be able to measure them even throughout eternity we'll still be learning of how rich we are in Christ that he's saying here you have the advantage you have the privilege of seeking in your relationship with God to increasingly come to appreciate the riches of the glory of this inheritance that belongs to you as a Christian that belongs to you in Christ at this time of year we find a list usually of the richest people in the world I just happened to read this somewhere the other day and apparently Elon Musk has now overtaken Jeff Bezos as the richest person in the world Elon Musk who has something to do with Tesla the electronic car people and other businesses of course and his net worth apparently so we believe according to this report his net worth worth is 278 billion dollars I have no idea what that looks like 278 billion dollars he can say that's my net worth doesn't mean he has all that money available to him immediately but that's his net worth that's why he's listed as the most richest person in the world 278 billion dollars do you know anybody as rich as that

[ 47 : 25 ] I know a lot of people who are richer than that there are people in this building tonight who are richer than that that teenager who goes to the prayer meeting out of her love for Christ that person is richer than the riches that Elon Musk has that old man scrabbling for a living in somewhere like a favela in Brazil or in a country that's devastated with the plight of famine and still trusts in Christ that old man struggling through life that trusts in the Lord Jesus that has him as a savior he's a lot richer than the riches that Elon Musk has why because he has the riches of the glory of this inheritance whatever he looks like in this world whatever people think of him whatever people talk about in terms of the life that they live Christians people who are in Christ the saints in Christ Jesus they have riches that nobody can possibly match the riches spiritually that are theirs in

Christ how rich are you tonight what is your net worth maybe like me you have to say Lord I don't have enough to make me a rich man or a rich woman in this world far from it but I thank you Lord that you have placed me in a position in relation with yourself that you have given me in union with Christ my Lord to be actually in possession or at least have it made out to me in a will these riches are mine these riches belong to me these riches have actually been provided through the death of my savior and nobody can take them from us they never get devalued they never need to be examined as to whether or not they've eroded in value they're not worldly riches spiritual riches but oh how rich you are when you're related to

Jesus savingly when your trust is in him so that's the second thing that you may know the hope to which he has called you that you may know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and thirdly that you may know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe now you see Paul really himself even seems to be struggling for words here because as he goes on he says according to the working of his great might when he worked in Christ he's putting words together but even as an apostle he still isn't able to find words that he feels are adequate to just describe this greatness of power that God has towards us who believe he just calls it immeasurable the immeasurable power towards us who believe but he then tells us where that was demonstrated where that was seen where you can read of it which he says was exercised it's according to the power towards 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 as right hand in the heavenly places when you see a dead body somebody who's passed away when you lower a coffin into the grave as we often have to do when you're standing there and realizing as that coffin descends into the grave and you contemplate that very solemn moment as that grave then comes to be filled in the thought is inescapable isn't it that comes to you and says well that can never of its own accord emerge out of that grave that dead body does not have the capacity to raise itself back to life but God has because he's already done it he's done it already in Jesus Christ and when he died and then rose from the dead the immeasurable power of God was demonstrated in bringing

Christ back from the dead not only bringing him back from the dead but seating him at his own right hand in the heavenly places putting him far above all other powers he says and made him sit far above all rule and authority and power above every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one that is to come nobody has a higher position than Jesus nobody has as great a power as the God who set him there who raised him from the dead and carried through in that action until it ended in his being seated at the right hand of God on high there is no power that could possibly do such a thing but God has already done that but you notice he's saying when he set him set him in

the heavenly places and did this for for his church this is immeasurable power toward us who believe according to this great power when he raised Jesus from the dead and made him head over all things to the church so you often think about Jesus as the head of the church not any royal person or anybody else he is the head of the church that's right but there's more than that here he is saying he has made him in the power that exalted him to the right hand of the throne of God he has actually set him above all things he has made him to be head over all things to the church in other words the rising and falling of empires the coming and going of pandemics all of these great movements and upheavals in human life down through the centuries they are all under the dominion and under the authority and under the power of Jesus

[ 53 : 30 ] Christ what could be more comforting to you than that that your life as a Christian is ruled by this power that has everything in his control under his own in his own hand for the benefit of his people for the benefit of his church made him head over all things to the church I don't have time really to go too much into it but remember that wonderful passage in Revelation chapter 5 having seen the throne in chapter 4 he then John was led to another vision where he saw this scroll this book that was written with seven seals and then he began to weep because nobody was found worthy or had the authority to open these seals and as Revelation develops the book of Revelation you understand then that these seals as Jesus took the book the lamb in the midst of the throne he took the scroll and he began to open the seals and as he opened the seals things happened in the world in which we live in other words he's telling us that the destiny of human beings the events of human life they're all within the scroll in the hand of this

Jesus this lamb of God who sits on the throne who is elevated to the highest position he has made him head over all things to the church and as he's opening in the imagery of Revelation as he opens these seals and the things written in the scroll are then worked through in the course of history so we're led to this wonderful thought that nothing happens in my life that's not already in this book and nothing happens in this life that's outwith the control of him who's opening it and nothing happens in my life that's detached from all the other things that are happening in the world and nothing has happened in the world nor will happen in the world that's not under the direction of Christ directing all things for the benefit of his people friends what a privilege is yours tonight as a Christian when you know that this is true of your life however much you and I don't understand of it whatever whatever things in life genuinely hurt us and causes pain and bewilderment whatever things in this world cause you to be so concerned and give you like this pandemic much cause for thought much anxiety it's been in this book already it's come from the opening of these seals it's under the authority and the might the power of God in Christ and so whatever our experience is in life it relates in some way or other to this it's always under the control of this

Jesus this great saviour and he wants you to know this he wants you to know more of this he wants you to know more of what the immeasurable greatness of his power is when it's according to the working of his great might what he's saying is you look at the power that took Jesus from the dead and set him at that highest point at the right hand of God and the power that's working in your life as a Christian he's saying is according to that power it's actually in terms that you can say this actually is the exact same power in my life as a Christian that was exercised and seen in bringing Jesus back from the dead what greater assurance could there be for you as a Christian than that and what greater cause of concern could there be if you're not a Christian and that is not the case in your life you see how important faith in

Christ really is it's the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe who believe who trust in Christ because that's so vital a part of our consideration in that passage so here then he's saying is the Christian life this is what he's praying for what he's praying that God will give them by this increase in understanding that they will come to know more of the hope to which they have been called that they'll come to know more of the riches and understand something more of the riches of the glory of that inheritance in the saints and know more of the exceeding greatness the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe Christian life is largely about realizing who we are who we belong to and what is awaiting us and the understanding of these things is all tied up with the knowledge we have of Christ as our

Savior now we began looking in through the window looking in through the window and seeing Paul at prayer hearing Paul praying these things for the church in Ephesus so we're now stepping away from the window we're leaving this window meantime but we're not forgetting what we've seen are we because these are the things that we have to make our prayer also so that we will know them

increasingly for ourselves may God bless these thoughts on his word to us once again we're going to conclude our worship this evening singing in psalm number 96 in sing psalms psalm 96a verses 8 to 13 page 127 from the middle of verse 8 there enter his courts with joy and bring an offering with you worship the Lord in holy fear all earth before him bow tell every land the Lord is king established is the earth and cannot move the Lord will judge the peoples in his truth and so psalm 96a from the middle of verse 8 enter his courts with joy enter his courts with joy and bring an offering with him worship the Lord in holy fear all earth before him bow till every land the [ 60 : 51 ] Lord is king he establishes the earth and cannot do the Lord will judge the people's death is true shed chief and earth hur cyt please unto us God in womenój will increase And forest trees will sing.

The old will sing before the Lord Who comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness. The people's death is true.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen. Amen.