

# Hope, Riches & Power

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Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's return again for a few moments to the chapter that we read earlier, Ephesians chapter 1. And we'll turn to verse 18.

Ephesians 1 and verse 18. Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope to which He, that's God, 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 the right hand in 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 in the one to come, and so on.

While we've been going through this chapter, we've noticed that it's not just what Paul says to us, it is the way in which he explains what fills his heart.

And that mood of thrill and excitement is something that you can't avoid as you read those verses.

The whole thing is brimming with joy and a sense of elation in the Lord.

[ 1 : 35 ] Because Paul, for Paul to live was Christ and to die was gain. Nothing compared with Paul, as far as Paul was concerned, with the gospel.

I'm sure there were other things in his life, things that he enjoyed, things that he did, I'm quite sure, like any other person. And yet when it came to the gospel, his whole life, his energy was focused continuously and uniquely in the gospel.

And that's because he seems to have always got this sense of the value of the gospel and what the gospel is. And that's what I'd like us to think about this evening.

We've seen how he traces his salvation all the way back before the foundation of the world to his election in Jesus. And then how he calls it his redemption.

And then how he calls it his inheritance. And now he's going to tell the Ephesian believers. And this is where it comes all the way down to where we are.

[ 2 : 38 ] We may live in a very different age to the Ephesian church way back in 60 AD or whatever it was. And yet we are believing people.

We may dress differently. We may talk a different language. We live in a completely different society. And yet the needs that we have this evening on the threshold of a new year are exactly the same needs as the Ephesian believers had.

That's why the Bible is so relevant to us. Whatever we need as Christians we find in the pages of this book. And the problem is not that it's not there.

It's that we don't dig it up. We don't realize it. Because we don't read it as we ought to. And so tonight I want us to look at three things that the Ephesian Christians need.

Three things that Paul prays for for the Ephesian Christians. And what is relevant about this is that because the Ephesian Christians need it, we need it as well.

[ 3 : 47 ] And because Paul has written these down and because they're written before us here in the Bible, that means that God wanted the Ephesian people to have these things and he wants us to have these things as well.

Now the chances are that of all the chapters of the Bible, this one is not one which is most familiar to us. We're familiar with many of the parables of Jesus and the miracles of Jesus and some of the Psalms.

Some parts of the Bible we've maybe even learned off by heart. But I'm pretty sure that this is not one of them. It's not one of the best known passages of the Bible. I would like us to change that this evening.

And I would like us to focus on the latter part of this chapter because it is one of the most underestimated, undiscovered parts of the Bible.

Here are three things that God wants for us tonight. Now, if I am a Christian, my ears are listening. Because whatever God wants for me, surely, surely I want for myself more than anything else.

[ 4 : 53 ] If I'm a follower of Jesus Christ and if this is going to do me good, it's going to revolutionize my life, and it will. If it's going to encourage me and strengthen me and prepare me for what lies ahead, then I want it.

Do you not want it? I hope you do. Part of the reason that perhaps this chapter is not so well known is because of the difficulty that we have in perhaps understanding. And I hope we'll be able to have just a little bit better knowledge of the chapter.

But let me ask you this. Even if you don't understand it, even if you don't, surely the very fact that God wants this for you is enough for you to want it for yourself.

And surely, even if it's not crystal clear to us in every detail, surely it's enough for us to grasp it, to try and grasp it and say, Lord, I know I don't know what this means.

After all, who knows? None of us have a complete understanding of any passage in the Bible.

We're able to say to the Lord, I know I'm not able to understand this. But if you want me to have this, if this is vital and important for the strength of my Christian living, and if it's going to help me to be a greater impact in this world, a greater witness, and if it's going to increase my love for you in some way, then that's what I want.

[ 6 : 09 ] Is that not the case? Is that not the case? I hope it is. I really hope it is. Because that's what it means to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, but God in the very first place.

And that's what we want to do this evening as God's people. Not to be distracted by everything else that we've been enjoying over the past few days. And not to be distracted, not allow anything to stand between us and God.

Here is then what God wants for every one of us who belong to him this evening. Here it is. Three things. First of all, this is what Paul prayed for.

That you may know what is, number one, the hope to which he has called you. That's the first thing. God wants for us to know the hope to which he has called us.

The second thing is this. He wants us to know what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

[ 7 : 11 ] That's the second thing. That's the second thing. He wants us to know the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. Our glorious inheritance. Then he wants us to know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe.

Now I want you to notice several things about that before we go any further. First of all, he doesn't want us to have anything. He wants us to know three things. He doesn't want us to have them. Why is that? Because we've got them already. Notice there are three things that lie at the root. First of all, there's the calling. The calling. We already have that calling.

If we're a believer, if we're a follower of Jesus, it's because God has called us into his kingdom. It's because at some point in our lives, we have become aware of the reality of God.

And we have become aware of our own sin. And we have become aware of the fact that God is inviting us and drawing us to know him and to follow him. That's what his calling means.

[ 8 : 16 ] In other words, there's nobody who is a Christian tonight but hasn't been called by God to do so. Invited by God. And that invitation can come in several different ways. Some of you can trace back to when you were talking to a Christian friend, a Christian mother, a Christian grandmother.

Or some of you can trace your life back to when you were reading the Bible. And through reading the Bible, there was just something about this Bible, this book that was different from every other book that you've ever read.

Or just as you sat in church, there was something about the message. That was completely different from any other message that you've ever heard in all the world. There's a reality and a power and a credibility about it.

And you knew that God was speaking to you. He was showing you that your life up to that point was wasted. And you're doing all the wrong things. And you're living the wrong way. And you're going in the wrong direction.

And you need to change. You need to turn around. And to begin to follow him. And to trust in him with all your heart. Maybe there are some of you tonight and that's where you're at. You're at that point where you are aware.

[ 9 : 17 ] That when you listen to the gospel, there's something about this that just rings true. You don't quite know what it is. You're not quite sure how to understand it. And yet you know that this is the voice of God.

You sense that this is the voice of God. Let me ask you, please listen to him. Please don't ignore him. Please don't go out that door not having listened to the Lord. He is calling you and asking you and inviting you and commanding you to come into his kingdom.

And as you do so, you'll discover what Saul of Tarshish discovered. That it is by grace and by God's goodness and his kindness in Jesus Christ that you have been saved. And so they have.

A person who belongs to Jesus has been called already. So Paul does not want them to have anything more than they have already. But he wants them to know it. That's his prayer. And that's what God wants for us tonight.

He wants us to know it. Not to have it. We've got it already. We need to know it. It's the same with what he calls the inheritance in the saints in verse 18.

[ 10 : 15 ] We already have it. He said, listen, in him we have obtained, verse 11, we have, that's past tense, we have obtained an inheritance.

We've got it already. We've got the calling. We've got the inheritance. So that's not, he's not wanting to, there's no point in having something we've got already. But what he does want is for us to know the value, the incredible value of the riches of that inheritance.

The third thing is likewise, the power. He's saying you've got the power already. You don't need the power. It's there already. You've got it. It's in your hands. It's in your hearts. But what he wants us to know, the immeasurable greatness of his power.

That's the goal. That's the prayer. That's the ambition. That's the desire that every one of us needs to have this evening. That we know, that we discover. And that's why Paul is saying that as God operates in us, what he does is he opens the eyes of our understanding.

Opens the eyes of our hearts. So that we see perhaps something that we've never seen before. Our prayer tonight is that we stand on a threshold of a new year.

[ 11 : 34 ] That by the time we get to this point next year, if God's will, if God spares us, that we will have seen what we have never seen before. And that we will discover what we have never discovered before.

And it is in that discovery that God brings us from one day to the next as we make progress in the Christian life. That's what he wants for us. Discovery.

Discovery of him. That's why Paul says that we must, that he may give you a spirit in the wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

So it is by knowing him and growing in our personal knowledge of Jesus Christ through his word that we come to this discovery. Now then, let's look then at these three things.

And can I ask you please, can I challenge you with this? That even after this service, even if you go away none the wiser as to what these three things are, just because they are what God wants us to have or what God wants for us, can I challenge you here to go away and to start praying this prayer?

[ 12 : 45 ] It's a prayer that is sure to be answered because if you pray to the Lord something that is in his word, God will absolutely, definitely give you the answer.

In other words, if we pray, Lord, I want to know the hope of my calling, he'll give you that. Even if you don't know tonight what it means. Lord, I want to know what the riches of my glorious inheritance and the saints are, he'll give you that.

Lord, I want to know what is the immeasurable greatness of the power towards us who believe, he'll give you that. Even if tonight that I don't do a good job at all in explaining or enlightening in any possible way, I still want you to pray that prayer.

And somehow or other, God will work within us and he will create that discovery within us, even although we may not be aware of it, that's the way in which he's trying.

Now listen, let me not, don't underestimate this. This is life-changing stuff. It's his word, God's word. It's not there just as flowery language.

[ 13 : 52 ] You may feel, well, it's written in a way that I can't feel that I can grasp or understand. Don't worry about that. This is God's word. It's not just flowery language. It's not just fancy use of words.

These are realities. And Paul wants the people to have this and we need to want to have it because God wants us to know these things. God wants these things to be ours.

So I'm challenging you tonight. As a congregation, wherever you come from, if you're a visitor, you go back to your own place and start praying this prayer of the Apostle Paul. And ask the Lord, Lord, give me the hope of my calling.

I don't know what it is. But I want it. Because you want me to have it. Lord, give me to know the riches of my glorious inheritance in the saints. Give me it because I need it and because my life's going to be strengthened and turned around by it.

I believe it will be. And it's the same with the immeasurable greatness of his power. A power that we have but we don't know the greatness of it. That's what we need. Now, the other thing I want to say is this.

[ 14 : 55 ] That it is through prayer that that knowledge will come to us. It's not going to be automatic. Why do I know that? Because it was through prayer that the Ephesians were to get that knowledge.

And it was through prayer that the Ephesians were to grow and progress. And that's why I tried to say last time we looked at this passage how important it was to discover. And to rediscover afresh and afresh the power and the effectiveness and the thrill of real prayer.

Real prayer is what Spurgeon said is doing business with the Almighty. That's the way he put it. Doing business with the Almighty. Do you think of that every time you go on your knees or every time you bow your head?

Or any time you come in your bedroom and to come to the Lord and to meet with him? Do you realize who you're coming to meet with? That you're next face to face with the Lord and you're doing business with the God of the universe.

Who's listening to you as if you're the only person in the world. And who's paying attention to you and bowing his ear. That's the way the Bible puts it. Inclining his ear to hear you and to receive your prayer.

[ 16 : 02 ] And to answer your prayer more than we can ask or even think. That's what he's promised us. The problem is that we don't believe in what we have already. And that's what we're going to see in a few moments time.

Well what's the first of these then? The hope of his calling. The calling he's talking about. Well we've explained that already. What is the hope of that calling? Now the problem here is that when we use the word hope.

There's always a measure of uncertainty about I hope the snow is going to disappear. Well we don't know whether the snow is going to disappear or not. But we still say I hope that it's not so icy tomorrow. And I hope it's sun shining tomorrow.

And I hope that we get home safely. And all of these things. So we're just a kind of expressing a wish aren't we? That's what we do at this time of year. We're wishing. We wish each other a happy new year or a happy Christmas or whatever we wish.

It's an expression of goodwill towards one another. But it's no more than that. And it doesn't do the slightest bit of good in reality. It's a nice thing to say. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that you shouldn't do it.

[ 17 : 02 ] To wish something good for one another. Of course it is. Because at least it gives the other person a bit of confidence and a bit of encouragement. It tells them you're thinking nicely of them. Of course it is. It's good to do that.

But it doesn't do actually do anything does it? It doesn't. And that but that's why instead of wishing Paul is praying for them. Because when you're praying for someone you are doing something for them.

Something real. Something tangible. Something that is actually going to affect their life. Do you really believe that this evening? Do you really believe that this evening?

You know the Christians who changed the course of this world. That's how they did it. By prayer first of all. I hear people saying well why does the church not make an impact in the world?

Why is the church not more effective in the world? And I think that largely the root cause is because we've lost sight of the effectiveness of prayer. And prayer has become more and more associated with form of prayer rather than real fervent urgent calling upon God asking for what we need.

[ 18 : 05 ] That's what prayer truly is. And when Paul is when Paul is praying for the Ephesians he's crying out to God and he's he's probably in tears for them. Asking that the Lord will give you these things.

So there's no way we're going to get these things whatever they mean without prayer. So that's why I'm saying tonight will you pray for them? Will you make this a new year resolution and don't lose sight of it?

Pray for these three things. Please pray for these three things because here is what God and what what happens by the way. That's another problem with prayer. We pray and then we forget what we've prayed for.

What kind of faith is that? When you pray for something and then you think oh well I've forgotten all about it. Within half an hour you've forgotten all about it. That's not prayer at all. That's just a form of words once again.

But the next time you pray remember what you prayed for. And if you don't get it you pray for it again and again and again. And when you know it's the right thing to pray for you pray again and again and again. And you wait on God.

[ 19 : 06 ] And you believe that one day if this is his will and his purpose then you'll get it. That's what prayer really is. And it's the same with this. If you pray this prayer of the Apostle Paul then your life will change.

I can guarantee it. Your life will change. And you'll grow as a Christian. And you'll come to see things that you've never seen before. Well the problem with hope of course is that there's an element of uncertainty about it.

But when it's used in the Bible don't think of it as just a wish. It's not a wish at all. There is nothing uncertain about the hope that Christians have.

It's an expectation from God. It's an anticipation from God. Of what God is going to do. It's a positive mood.

There's a joy and a certainty in the hope that we find in the Bible. There's nothing uncertain at all.

So when Paul is talking about the hope of your calling.

[ 20 : 07 ] He's talking about someone who expects great things from God. And someone who attempts great things for God.

That's what hope is. And that is the hope of the Bible. Now I guess if we were to just look at this verse on face value.

Having the eyes of your heart so that we know the hope to which he has called you. You probably conclude that the hope to which he has called you lies somewhere in the future.

Where we'll enter one day into heaven. So that when Paul talks about the hope. We probably think that that means that's another word for the kingdom of heaven.

God will take all his people to one day after they die. Or at the time of the resurrection. God will take all his people to one day after they die. Now, of course, there is that element bound up in this verse.

[ 21 : 11 ] But I don't believe that that is immediately what the verse means. I believe that what the verse is referring to is the calling that we have now.

Not the calling we one day will have when God takes us from this world into the next. That's involved in it. That's involved in it. But I believe that Paul is particularly concerned about the Ephesian Christians as they are today.

And what they need today. And how they're going to avoid today's temptations. And how they're going to face the challenges and the persecutions that were taking place against Christians at that time.

So what they needed, they needed now. So what then does it mean? It means, I believe, this. It means the sheer enjoyment of God. The sheer enjoyment of God.

[ 22 : 14 ] Now, I could use a lot of words. I could use joy. I could use confidence. I've already used that word. I can use anticipation. I can use expectation. All these words come into it.

But to me, the one word that encapsulates what hope is, is the word enjoyment.

And I make no apology for using that word at all. It might come as a shock to you that I would use the word enjoyment in the same breath as God.

When you think of God, you think of perhaps your wrongdoing and your guilt before him. Perhaps it's a thought that makes you tremble. And perhaps the last thing you think of now, right now, as you think of God, is the word enjoyment.

He's the last being that you would ever enjoy. That's because you're not in a right relationship with him. And that needs to be sorted out. And only he can do it.

[ 23 : 16 ] And he will do it if you ask him. Come to him tonight and discover his mercy and his grace and his greatness. And then you will discover what it means to enjoy God.

Now, why am I so certain about my use of this word? Because that's what I find in the Bible. I find in the Bible people in the Old Testament and the New Testament who followed and obeyed and loved the Lord.

And it was their sheer delight. It wasn't because they were forced to. It wasn't because there were robots having been programmed by God to do everything he said.

You look at a man like Abraham. You don't find in Abraham a man who slavishly dreads God. And lives every day trembling. Not knowing whether he's going to do the right thing or the wrong thing. And fearing, fearing the punishment of God every single moment and every breath he takes. You know, that's sometimes the picture that people get of what a Christian is. When I read the life of Abraham, I read a man who absolutely loves God.

[ 24 : 22 ] And he's thrilled by God. And he wants to be in God's presence. Same with Moses. Same with Isaac and Jacob. And all the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints.

The Apostle Paul. Why was it that he was so full of the gospel? Because he totally loved God. And that is what the Christian life is all about. And if it's anything less than that, then now you see what you need to aim for.

Enjoying God. Is that something that you do tonight? Is that something that you want to do?

Enjoying God. When I was a child, I learned my catechism.

I don't know how many of you learned. I'm sure the older ones. And by that, I mean my age and upwards. I'm sure you learned your catechism as well. We were made to learn all of them.

And it was some task. You got a Bible if you learned all 107 of them. And there were some of them that were pretty long. Especially the reasons annexed to the commandments.

[ 25 : 26 ] And all of these ones that seemed to be endless and impossible to learn. But the one command, the one catechism that everyone knew was the first. And you know, if you know the first one.

In your own experience and in your own life. That's it. You know them all. What's the first catechism? What is, here's the question.

What is the chief end of man? And by that, the question means this. What is the chief purpose?

What's the reason why we are in this world?

And here's the answer. Man's chief purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

See, so I'm not off the mark at all, am I? Man's chief purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him.

[ 26 : 27 ] That's it. And if tonight, that's the last thing that you think about when you think of God.

You need to be right with God. You need for Him to take away everything that stands between you and Him. Whatever it is. And you need to come to the Lord and confess your wrongdoing and your darkness and your sinfulness.

And you need to ask Him, Lord, turn my life around so that I can enjoy you. And as a Christian, there are things that can spoil our enjoyment of God.

Some things that obscure the vision of God, the understanding of God that God wants us to have.

Things that we put there ourselves. Things that arise out of our own experience.

And they spoil. Things that the devil puts there to spoil our enjoyment of God. And tonight, maybe you're a believer in the Lord and you're saying, Well, I know there is something desperately missing in my enjoyment of God.

[ 27 : 37 ] And I would so love for that to be put right. Well, here is the prayer. Give me the hope of my calling. And God will do it. That's His word.

It's His promise. He will do it. Only He can. We can't do it ourselves. We can't take away all these obstacles ourselves. But we can work at it.

And we can pray at it. And we can come to the Lord and ask Him to give us that hope. That enjoyment of our Christian lives.

And that's why it is such a monstrosity. To reduce the life of a Christian to a set of do's and don'ts. The Christian life is not a set of do's and don'ts.

The Christian life is first and foremost enjoyment of God. And when a person begins to know what it is to enjoy, his life is changed.

[ 28 : 40 ] So that the things that he once lived for, doesn't want to live for them anymore. Things that he once did as a habit, doesn't want to do them anymore because they're worthless to him.

But the worst thing you can do to a person who's just converted is to say, right, now you're converted. Here's what you do as a Christian. Here's what you don't ask. See, that takes his vision away from the Lord. That takes his attention away from the Lord.

So that he's more concerned about what he does on the outside than he is about enjoying the Lord. But this is the prayer that the apostle, this is the prayer that the apostle prays for the Ephesian church.

Now I've gone on a bit too long. What is the next thing? Well, the next thing is this, the riches of inheritance, of his inheritance. Now remember I said before that the inheritance is something they have already.

Verse 11, we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him. Now remember what I said two or three weeks ago. Imagine you got a letter from Edinburgh, from a solicitor in Edinburgh, and you opened the letter and you saw you have an inheritance.

[ 29 : 42 ] But it didn't tell you any more than that. It just said contact this number to find out more information. Now let me ask you this. What is, if you got a letter like that, what is the first question that you'd be asking?

Be honest. You'd be asking how much the inheritance was, wouldn't you? Of course you would. It's a natural question because an inheritance can be anything from 10 quid to 10 million pounds. You'd be wanting to know how much it was, and that's why you'd be contacting the lawyer to find out, well, what I really want to know is how much is it? And in this life, an inheritance can be messed up by all kinds of disputes that there might be between one party who claims the inheritance and another party who claims the inheritance.

I'm not sure if you're familiar with Charles Dickens' book, Bleak House. That's the whole story. Between the dispute between Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and in the end, everybody was penniless because so much had been spent on the solicitors that nobody had a penny left.

But tonight, God has given us his inheritance, which cannot be disputed, and which is immeasurable in its riches.

[ 30 : 55 ] The question is tonight, have you discovered what you have in Jesus Christ? Have you discovered the value of what God has done for you?

Have you discovered how rich you are in Jesus Christ? Not the kind of riches that people strive after in the celebrity culture of the 21st century.

That's all going to come to nothing. And the people today who you can't touch because they're celebrities, they will all come to the same end. But if you have the riches that God has given you in Jesus Christ, that's a wealth that can never be taken away from you.

But it's a wealth that is obscured. We don't know that we're so wealthy. And this prayer is that God will open our eyes, open the eyes of our understanding and the knowledge of him, so that we will see how rich we are in Jesus Christ and what we have.

And so that we will live in the knowledge of that riches. You see, it changes your life so that you begin to see the circumstances of your life in a completely different light.

[ 32 : 05 ] So that when bad things happen, when difficult and sad things happen, you stop and you say, well, let's look at the big picture. I know that my life is full of frustration and perplexity, and there are things that are really difficult that I'm going through at this present moment.

But, but, you see, a person who isn't a Christian can't say the but. All he sees is his circumstances. And if you're not a Christian, they mean nothing. You're left floundering by yourself. But a Christian can say, my circumstances, even if they are sore and painful and dark and inexplicable, I know that by God's providence, God has brought this in his providence into my life, and he's able to work all things together for good to those who love him.

And we're able to make this reckoning. You know what Paul said? And there was nobody who suffered as much as the Apostle Paul for being a Christian. We have no idea what he suffered. Jail and shipwreck and stoning and pain and loneliness and disappointment and all of these other

things.

But you know what he said? He said, I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us.

[ 33 : 34 ] You see, that's what he's doing. If he didn't, if he didn't have the knowledge of the riches of his inheritance, he would not have been able to sit down in suffering and be able to compare.

Here's my life at present, but here's what it's going to be. And here's what God has given me. And here's the privilege that I have in the Lord Jesus Christ. And here's what the Lord Jesus suffered for me.

How can I not suffer for him and in his providence? That is what the Apostle knew and what he had. And then lastly, there's the greatness of his power towards us who believe.

Again, once again, we already have the power. The power is there, just like the inheritance, just like the calling. What we need to do is to discover the greatness of that power.

And once again, we can only do so as we meet the challenges of this world. Now, what do you think of, just in a few moments, what do you think of when you think of power? You think of perhaps the power of an earthquake or the power of a lightning storm or the power of the sea.

[ 34 : 44 ] Many of us, many of you have direct experience of the power of the sea. That's what we think of. This is the kind of things we think about when we think about power. And when we think about God's power, we may want to go back to Genesis chapter 1 and to look at how, by extraordinary, what we call the word of his power, in the midst of a universe that was full of nothing but darkness, God said, let there be light and there was light.

You ever stop to think about that incredible moment in history where out of darkness there was light. And there was light because God said there must be light.

He commanded the light to shine out of darkness. When you think about it, you have to think about it. You have to stop for a moment and really think about what's...

Or else you can go on in Genesis, you think about the destructive power of the flood or Sodom or Gomorrah and the plagues of Egypt. All of these things you can think of.

The dividing of the Red Sea. We're thinking about that this morning. These are God's acts of power. But when it comes to this power, God doesn't want us to go to any of these places at all.

[ 36 : 03 ] He wants us to come to one place. And it's an empty tomb. He wants us to come inside that tomb. To before it was empty.

And he wants us to see that there is a body being placed in that tomb. It's a cave outside Jerusalem. And we're to wait and see what happens.

And you think, well, nothing's going to happen because nothing ever happens to a dead body. You can't change death. Death is final. But not in this case.

Because if you wait long enough, you see that body beginning to move. And to your amazement, the living Jesus Christ steps out of the cloths in which he was bound, leaving the cloths on the floor. He takes off the headgear, the napkin that was about his head, and he folds it and puts it in a place by himself. And then he walks through the rock that was placed over the mouth of the tomb.

[ 37 : 18 ] And your mouth is open in amazement, never having seen anything like this before.

And God wants us to know today that that power, the power by which he raised Jesus from the dead, is still with us.

That's what it says. And he wants us to know that it's still with us. And he prays, Paul prays, that you will know the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his great might.

Have you ever asked yourself the question, why was the resurrection done in secret? I mean, if you and I were going to do something as unique as raising someone from the dead, it would be in public.

You'd be calling a press conference. We'd be making sure that as many people as possible in the world saw what was happening, but that's not what God did at all. When Jesus rose from the dead, nobody saw it.

[ 38 : 29 ] Nobody. Because God wanted to keep it secret. Because by keeping it secret, God communicates to those who are prepared to believe.

So Jesus appeared to his disciples afterwards. And the disciples went and they spread the message that Jesus was alive and they had met him on the road.

And by preaching that message, sharing that message that Jesus who was dead had been alive, people's lives were changed and people came to know the living Lord Jesus.

That power is still there today because that same message is being shared all over the world in towns and villages and homes and hospitals and churches and wee chapels here and there all over the world.

And people are coming to believe. Why? Because of that power. Because of that power. That secret, silent power of God. The power that works through the gospel and the power that changes people.

[ 39 : 34 ] The power that changed the apostle Paul. And the power that works through you and I as we live the Christian life. And as we pray for the salvation of souls and for people to be changed and as we work together for the gospel and ask that God will pour out his spirit among us and do great things among us through his spirit.

So tonight, God wants three things for us. He doesn't want us to have three things. We've got them already. We have already been called.

And if you haven't, then come to Christ. Don't let another moment pass before you come to put your trust in Jesus. us. We've already been called.

We already have the inheritance. We already have the power. The question is, will I now begin to pray that God will reveal those three things to me in a way that I've never discovered before in a way that will revolutionize my life and change it forever?

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Our Father in heaven, we ask that you will bless your word to us and bring it to us in great power this evening.

[ 41 : 00 ] We ask, O Lord, that the living Jesus, the one who was dead and who is now alive again, will reveal himself to us this evening in a new and a living way and give us to know that reality in our own hearts.

And, Lord, change our lives, change us to be more like Jesus, change us to be saved. If there's anyone here tonight who doesn't know him, Lord, speak to them especially, but speak to all of us and turn things around so that we become effective witnesses in your world.  
in Jesus' name, Amen.