

Three Things The Christian Needs To Know

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[0 : 00] Well that's for a very short time, turn back to Paul's letter to the Ephesians and chapter one. Last week we began our study in this chapter where Paul of course, as we said, is writing to a church that he loves dearly, a church he spent much time with.

Again, as we said last week, it's a church where there doesn't appear to be any glaring, heresy or glaring, massive issues that Paul has to deal with like he had to in other churches.

But again and again, as we'll see throughout the weeks, Paul mentions unity. Again and again, Paul encourages this church, this church was a mix of Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

He encourages them to be united. Last week in verses one down to verse 14, we were given this introduction and also we saw a glorious reminder of just some of the benefits for the Christian, some of the benefits or blessings of being united to Christ, some of the promises, the unchangeable promises of those Christians and Ephesus and the Christians here today in Carly.

So for a short time today we can look at verses 15 to verse 23, a different section, a second section of this chapter. And in this section we see and again encourage you to have your Bible open in front of you because we're going through it, verse by verse and jumping around as we go through it, going through it, verse by verse.

[1 : 43] Anyway, we see Paul praying and offering up and telling the church he's praying for them, letting them know also that the main things that he does pray for them, the main things that he brings to God in prayer for them.

As we look very briefly this morning at the prayer that Paul prays for this church in Ephesus, we can take the prayer points and apply them to ourselves even here in Carly, this afternoon.

We can see what Paul prays to the church, what he longs they would know, what he longs they would understand better. And here we are a few thousand years later almost and a few thousand miles away and yet these things will still apply to us.

So in this prayer in verses 15 to 23, there are three main things that Paul wants this, what's God to remind the church in Ephesus, three main areas, three main points that Paul wants these Christians to remember, that Paul wants these Christians to be reminded of.

First of all, he wants them to know the hope offered by Jesus, the hope offered by Jesus. Secondly to remind them and to know that Jesus reigns.

[3 : 11] Jesus reigns unfurlly to know that Jesus owns it all. All things belong to Jesus.

We see from the first few verses, verses 15 to verse 16, we see that again he is talking to an abnormal church.

There's nothing extraordinary about this church in Ephesus. They were a church thriving and working hard and facing tough times in a city like any of the other churches in the city of the same time.

There's nothing massively different, nothing massively obvious that would point this church outward to other churches of the day.

But we see from the beginning as we saw last week in the first few verses in chapter one, well the first few verses here in the second section, verses 15 and 16, we see that this church is special, special to Paul, but it's also special to God.

[4 : 20] And why are they special? We're special we see from verse 15 because they're a community, they're a congregation who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This marks them out, also they're marked out because they love their brothers and sisters. They show love towards all the saints.

This might seem like a small thing but it's important enough for Paul to point it out to them that you folks gathering Ephesus, brother and sisters in Ephesus, as you worship together, as you come

together to worship God, remember this and I pray for you especially because you love the other brothers and sisters, because you love the saints, you love the other Christians.

Seems that Ephesus was known for their love for their other brothers and sisters, known for their love for the saints, for those in the area, for those in other towns perhaps, for those in the region who also loved the same Savior and Lord that they loved.

That should be our hope here this morning. When people think about our church, when people think about car away free church, the first things they know and say and think about this congregation is they love the people of God.

[5 : 56] They care for the people of God. That's one thing that points them out just like Ephesus here. The one thing that comes to mind first and foremost is they love God's people.

They have a care for God's people in the area, in the island, across Scotland. It's a great challenge to start us off if we look at this section.

First of all, seeing that Jesus gives hope, and we see that from verses 17 and verse 18. It's worth mentioning just like the first section in chapter 1, this second section, Paul is still writing one long sentence.

When you read it out loud and when you read it yourself, it's quite a breath, you see it's just comma, comma, comma, and where we have full stops in English, there's only one full stop at a whole section in Greek.

It's just one long unending sentence. It's why it seems so hard to read and it's quite hard to listen to. When we come to our sections, they all kind of merge together, but roughly looking at verses 17 down to verse 18, we see that Jesus alone gives hope, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fathre of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.

[7 : 24] The first question I have to ask here is he asking that God gives this church nepheis the Holy Spirit.

I've heard some Christians talking about this chapter and they bring this out, we see it's Paul here asking that God gives this gathering of believers the Holy Spirit, that the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fathre of glory, gives you a spirit of wisdom.

Thankfully, our translation doesn't give us that legroom, we see here it's a spirit, we're translators, we're even giving us a small s, just making it clear this is not talking about the believers receiving the Holy Spirit, it's instead growing in the spirit as we'll see in a second.

We know that at the point of our conversion we are given the Holy Spirit. He comes and he makes his home in us and with us.

In reality, Paul is writing here in a standard Jewish style we could say is somewhat lost to us and a wee bit lost in translation.

[8 : 35] Paul is asking for a deeper understanding for these people. A spirit of wisdom, a deeper understanding of wisdom, a deeper sense of wisdom, a deeper understanding of knowledge of God, that they'd want to dig more and find out more, that they want to know more about God, they'd want to find out more about God, that they'd never grow tired of worshiping God and finding out more and more about their Lord.

Paul's not asking that they receive some secret backhand information. The church is not some secret society, we have no special aprons or special handshakes, what we have is open and clear and plain for all to see.

Paul is asking that what is open and plain would be made more open to these people, that the brother and sister in Ephesus would have their eyes opened more and more by the Spirit.

That God would give them a greater sense of who he is and what he has done. Not a prayer that they would receive a Holy Spirit but it is a prayer that he would open their eyes further, he would open their minds further to see more and to take more joy in the glory of the God who has saved them, the glory of God they worship together to find more joy and to dig deeper into the wonder of the Son he sent, of their Saviour.

So specifically what does Paul want these brothers and sisters to increase them? I will see that in verse 18, having the eyes of their hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he God has called you and what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

[10 : 51] Paul is praying that the brothers and sisters in Ephesus would have a greater and deeper realisation, comprehension, comprehension of what is before them.

On verse 19, we looked back in chapter 1 of Ephesians and we saw that God's plan for his people is perfect and eternal.

And here he prays that the Holy Spirit would give these people a greater appreciation of the hope they now have in Jesus.

You may know what is the hope to which he has called you. As Christians we are called to have hope, to hope in the finished work of Jesus, to hope in what?

Or to hope in the riches of the glorious inheritance. To hope that there is that promise awaiting us.

[11:52] A greater hope, a greater awareness that that inheritance, that future has been purchased for us by Jesus. And the question for us as we sit here this morning, do we appreciate the wonderful reality of the gift that we have right now?

If we are here this morning as Christians, do we appreciate the fact that we have a great hope? Not just some vague sense that it's all okay in the end, but a real hope that if we know Jesus, if we love Jesus, then our eternity is secure.

He promises to keep us and he promises to take us home to himself as we saw last week. So Paul prays they would have a greater sense, a greater hope, a greater understanding of their inheritance.

Have we prayed, have we ever prayed for something similar for ourselves? Are we content perhaps just as we are?

Perhaps do we say, well I'm saved, I'm a Christian, surely that's enough for me and of course in one sense that is enough. It's more than enough, praise God for that fact, but as Christians we should always be desiring to find out and to know more about our Savior.

[13:18] Not just some pure academic study, or some dry research, but to dig into Scripture, to talk with one another, to read resources, to see all these things, to grow in our love, to grow in our appreciation, to grow in our care for who our God is and what he has done for us.

And that should be our prayer as a people here in this congregation, as we grow together as brothers and sisters, we'd also grow together in digging more and more into the wonder of who God is, the wonder of what he has done.

We pray a similar prayer that Paul prayed for the Christians in Ephesus, that our eyes would be opened, our hearts would be opened, we'd understand and be given more wisdom.

As to the hope we have, the wonderful hope that we have. That's the first thing, so he hopes, he prays that they understand the hope we have in Jesus.

And moving on, briefly we see then from verses 19, roughly down to verse 21, that Paul was praying that he would all remember that Jesus reigns.

[14:40] I won't read the verses again, but we have that in verses 19 to verse 21. And it's almost strange in verse 19, Paul just then, as it were, just throws in this incredible truth that we see in verses 19 and down to verse 20.

The truth that God works in us with the same power that he worked when he raised Jesus from the grave.

By that same nature shattering, world changing, universe changing, reality changing power that the Father demonstrated through his raising the Son from the dead.

That same power now is active in us, at work in us. With the same power that rose Jesus from the grave, took us from our graves of sin and death.

That should just blow us away. And if Paul hadn't written it here, and if it wasn't written for us in other places, it's something we would never come to even grasp at all.

[16:04] But it's here, it's again in Colossians, again and again in Colossians, the same reality given to us, the same power that was used by God to bring Christ up from the dead.

The same power that works in us as we come here this morning.

If we're honest, feeling weak, feeling tired, feeling like a useless Christian. Feeling old, feeling frail, feeling elderly, feeling too young, feeling too slow, not feeling smart enough, like a rubbish servant to our God.

We are living lives as those who have seen and who have experienced and who live right now in the constant power of God.

The same power that raised the Son now works in us. It's incredible, Paul makes this point here and it's an encouragement.

[17 : 23] My friends, if you're here this morning as a daughter or son of a king, if you're here this morning as one who loves your Savior and serves your Savior and cares for your Savior.

And no matter how you feel, no matter how downtrodden you feel, how powerless, how lost you feel, just look again at the truth presented in these few verses.

The resurrecting power of your God has worked in your life and in my life and he has taken us up from the grave.

And right now he is making us more and more like our Savior. No matter how we feel, that's still the reality of the situation.

For right now we're becoming more and more like Jesus through the Spirit working in us, not through our efforts, not through our hard work, but through the Spirit working in us.

[18 : 27] That same power is slowly transforming us. What an encouragement for us this morning. Paul doesn't even stop there.

His previous statement in verses 19 and 20, this statement of truth that the power that raised Christ is now working us, that's then seen even more clearly in the extent of Jesus' current power, we could say with respect in verse 21.

Where is Jesus now? Well, we see at the end of verse 20, raised from the dead, ascended, seated in the right hand of God in the heavenly places.

Jesus is now where He's far above all rule, all authority, far above all powers, far above all our dominions, above every name that is named, not only this age, but also in the age to come.

My friend, we worship our risen Lord, but we also worship an exalted Lord. Verse 21, to expand our praise and our worship of our Savior, He is our risen personal Savior.

[19 : 44] He is our risen caring brother, but He's also our risen exalted Lord, as we see from verse 21, who reigns supreme far above all other things.

Again if we're honest, sometimes perhaps Christians we may lose sight of the majesty and holiness and wonder of our Savior.

But here, even in this verse alone, verse 20 and 21 alone, inescapable. Yes, like I said, He is our close brother. Yes, He is our personal Savior, but with all that, and in all that, and above all that, and encompassing all that, He is the one who reigns and rules above all things.

This reminder was essential for the Christian's inefficence, who were facing and who were about to face great times of trial.

As a Roman Empire would begin and carry on persecuting the Christians, these early brothers and sisters needed that reminder, that God reigned, that God ruled, that the Savior of the Holy Spirit worshiped, that He is greater than the governor, that He was greater than the Caesar.

[21 : 15] It's the reminder for us today. This is not just some feel good pick me up on a Sunday for the Christians here. This is a wonderful, humbling reminder.

But right now, Jesus reigns and rules over all authority, above us, above all earthly authority, above every angel, above all the forces of evil, above all that's created our Jesus rules, and He reigns.

And we see here, there's a sense here, there's a whole different world and dominions and situations and things so far beyond us, realities that we know nothing or little about.

We know from Acts chapter 19 that Ephesus was a place where the people were practicing many different occult and cultic practices, they're worshiping different gods and we're giving our lives over to false gods and we see an image painted of a city that was just full of this demonic, evil, idol worship.

And the reality is, my friends, make no mistake that these realities exist even today. But there is this other side of things which we know nothing or very little, at least about.

[22 : 47] But our spiritual dimensions which we have no grasp over and nor are we supposed to have any grasp over. It's nothing to do with us. There exist powers and forces and evils far beyond our control, far beyond our understanding.

And there are those around us, even this island, who are engaging with and for these forces. A question, if all that's true, should we be scared?

Do we fear the whisperings of evil? Do we fear the power of evil? Do we fear those who work in and work with the dark things in life?

Of reality, there makes little difference to the Christian because the God we worship, our risen saviour, he's above all that.

He's fallen above all these things. No matter what situation we may face, or what evil we may face, what oppression, spiritual or physical we may face, we worship our God, we worship our saviour who is above all these things, who is in full control, even over all these things.

[24 : 16] We worship our saviour who is in full control. So Paul prays that they be reminded of their hope in Jesus, be reminded of the power of Jesus and finally that they be reminded that Jesus deserves all, or Jesus has it all.

I see that in verses 22 and verse 23. He's speaking off the fathur and they 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 the image being used in verse 22 is a common image of the day.

And also it's what we have here, that a reigning, a conquering king, when he won the battle would very often sit for a time, I know this from history books, from time with a head or perhaps the body of a king he conquered, but when he conquered underneath his feet, he would use his enemy quite literally as a footsail, we're singing that other along.

All verses real vivid imagery. This is not just Jesus meek and mild, this is Jesus the conquering king.

In verse 22, we see that Jesus is now on the throne. He's seated at the right hand of the fathur and all things are under his feet.

[26 : 09] All things, it's all done. He's conquered all his enemies. And now he has power over all.

The word used for all in verses 22 and 23 and again, word used for all in this whole section, Paul is using the strongest, the biggest word he possibly could.

I have a word Paul could have used in Greek for using the word all, the word he uses, it's the strongest word, it's all encompassing, it signifies a total completeness.

Not one thing is missing, not one thing is beyond the control of Jesus. All things are now in subjection to him.

He reigns and rules over and above all. And again that same word is used in verse 22, at the end of verse 22, where we see also the fathur has given him his head over all things to the church.

[27 : 20] As the church, he is our head. We come before him today to worship him. We come to the one who is head over us this day.

Again it's quite interesting and quite important actually to note that in the original word order of verse 22, it quite literally says him, or speaking of Jesus, him he gave as head over all things.

Or him he gave as head of all things over to the church. It brings Jesus to the front, it emphasizes on who the head is, reminding us that he is in control.

In one sense he is in control of all things as ruling king. But also he is in control of his church, he is over all his church, he is head of his church.

But that's not a frightening thing. The Christian is a wonderful, wonderful, comforting reality that our saviour is in full control of us all here.

[28 : 29] He knows us, he cares for us, he is the king who knows his subjects, intimately he knows all about them.

Paul forever reminds him who they are in Christ, that they are part of the church. Which is in Christ, the church in verse 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all and all.

That last phrase, who fills all and all, but again these two alls, he uses the same word twice just he can't say enough.

He can't stop repeating himself that it's just everything, it all belongs to Jesus. The whole universe, the whole of time and reality, it's all his.

But especially you are his, and I am his. We are part of his body.

[29 : 39] He fills all and he's in all. Jesus is with and around every believer he is in, every believer in his spirit.

He is in and with and around the church as a whole. What a thought for us this day. Around us we worship him, he is with us.

Around us we worship him, we're worshipping the one who is enthroned on high. The one who is with the fathom and perfect glory.

The one who still bears in his body the marks of what he went through for us. It's a quote attributed to the famous features professor Rabbi Duncan, I'm sure it goes back before that he claimed that he didn't make it up.

But I have a way, it's a great quote about Jesus right now in heaven, that the dust of the earth sits enthroned in the throne of heaven.

[30 : 46] The dust of the earth is now enthroned above all, but right now our savior is bearing the marks of what he went through for us and he will bear them forever.

Also that we have a people for his own, also that he would be out all in all. These three points that in Jesus we have hope, that we know that Jesus reigns, that Jesus has it all, that all belongs to Jesus.

These three points are an incredible comfort for Christian here today. They give us such comfort, that despite our often pathetic service to God, that despite the situations we find ourselves in, despite how grim our reality may be, despite all these things that our Jesus reigns and rules, that despite how poor we feel, despite how far away from him we feel, that he is still in us and with us. But for those here who as of yet are not Christians, I know none of this comforting, I know none of this is of any use to you whatsoever, because right now the hope that we know as Christians, that hope isn't yours.

For the Jesus who reigns as our King, but you still face him as an enemy.

[32 : 27] The Christians here, he is our King and we serve him and we know we are protected by him. If you're here just now and still not serving him, still not worshiping him, he is still your King, but you are rebelling against him.

And thirdly to know that all belongs to Jesus, the comfort of the Christians. For those here as of yet don't believe, I know that's not comfort whatsoever for you and my prayer and my question, my honest question is, why not?

You've heard this a thousand, thousand times. You have no need for some student to come for a six week placement to tell you, you've heard it a thousand times and I'll say it again, I said last week, this is real, this is not just in performance we do for the sake of it.

We're so comfortable in our routine, so comfortable in our suits, so comfortable in everything we do, we forget, this is real my friends. This is real, this is serious.

This is life and death stuff. The Christians here, we have read these passages and we take the time to praise God that our Savior is all in all, that our Savior gives us hope, that our Savior reigns.

[33 : 49] But it's not all doom and gloom, the Savior who reigns and the Savior who right now that you are his enemy to.

He's also made a way for you. It's nothing but your own hard, headiness, nothing but your own hards, but it's nothing but your own childish rebellion that is keeping you from crying out to him for salvation.

For all who cry out to be saved, we know that God here, you're a cry. But all who cry out for him, he will hear them. But all who cry out that Jesus, we've our Lord and their Savior, that he hears.

There are questions you have and excuses you have. There's time, you have centuries, perhaps years, perhaps eternity afterwards to deal with these questions and things. But don't let that stop you in the meantime.

Again, that's how last week, speak to someone here, speak to the elders here. I'm going to dance for next four-ish weeks, come and say hello to me, and bear almost every morning.

[35 : 00] Don't waste the time you have left. Come and know this Jesus who is Lord over all. Come and know this Jesus who reigns right now. Come and know this Jesus because all that you know and all that you have belongs to him anyway.

Come acknowledge his Lordship over you. That's better heads than that, I would have prayer. Lord God, we come before you and we give you praise and we thank you for your word.

As your servant of old wrote these things to your people to encourage them, we do pray and thank you that these words can still encourage us today. Lord, you forgive me for anything I said that was not according to your word.

We give you praise that the power is in you, in your living word and not in the feeble vessels Lord, you choose to make it known. We give you praise for them.

We do pray as we carry on that this day would do so with hearts and minds set on you. Even so as we come to sing this final item of worship, Lord we ask you to open our minds and open our hearts.

[36 : 00] Help us to sing Lord of hearts and minds, focus on you, worshiping you, understanding that we are singing to you our risen, reigning, exalted King.

For one who has all things under your feet, for one who has all things given to him by the Father, for one who reigns now and will reign forever.
Lord help us to acknowledge these things and to never stop praising your friends. Ask it in his name for his sake.