



Date: **1-27-2019**

Scripture: **Ephesians 1:15-23** (see translation below for more insights)

For the past three weeks we have explored how the one God in the three persons of Father, Son, and Spirit have worked together to enact the believer's salvation/redemption. This was done by the plan of the Father, accomplished by death of the Son, and applied by the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

From these great truths of our salvation Paul launches into one long prayer for these believers. This prayer reveals the heart of Paul and gives us a model for how we ought to pray for others.

Digging into the Passage:

- Vs. 15 begins with the phrase "For this reason"^a. What is this referring to?
- In vs. 16 how does Paul describe his prayers for these believers?
- From vs. 18-19, what three things do we come to know as a result of our hearts being enlightened?
- From vs. 20-23, what three things did the God the Father do with "his great might" in reference to Christ?
- From vs. 22-23, for what purpose does God put all things under Christ?
- In what way is the church "the fullness of [Christ] who fills all in all"?
- Does Christ fill up the church^b or does the church fill up Christ^c?

Reflecting on the Passage:

- How can the **causes** of Paul's prayers for these believers guide us in our prayers?
- How can the **content** of Paul's prayers for these believers guide us in our prayers?
- Overarching this passage is the sovereignty of God in all things. How do we pray under this truth?^d
- How is the trinity at work in this passage?
- How does the Father use the Son for the Church?

^a The word in Greek that is translated as "for" usually refers back to something previously said. Thus, it gives the ground for what follows. It is possible here that the word "because" ties "for" to the rest of vs. 15; meaning that "for" would not be functioning as it usually does.

^b Meaning, the church is the fullest expression of Christ on this earth or is filled by Christ in its mission.

^c Meaning, somehow Christ would be lacking something that the church fills over time until Christ returns and this filling is complete.

^d This question is adapted from Carson, D. A. in *Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, 2nd Ed. (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, MI, 2014), pg. 158.



Life Application for the week:

- Does your Life Group have a list of people you're praying for?
- Does your Life Group have a couple unsaved people that you pray for as a group? If not, would you consider coming up with that list tonight? Who can your group be specifically praying for and eventually out too?
- Who on your list would benefit from being in fellowship with other believers?
- Who can you invite or bring in to your life group so that they can experience the power of God at work through His body, the church?
- Pray through this passage this week for the people on your list.

Pastor Jeremy Translation:^e

¹⁵Because of the spiritual blessings we just discussed^f and because of what I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and the love you display toward all the saints,^g ¹⁶in my prayers, I continually give thanks to God for you. Moreover, not only do I continually give thanks for you, but I also continually ask ¹⁷the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Father of Shekinah Glory to give you a spirit that will understand the true nature of things in the physical world and one that will also perceive the unseen things going on in the spiritual realm.^h I ask this for one reason – so that, you will grow into a deeper more meaningful relationship with Christ.ⁱ ¹⁸God has enlightened the eyes of your heart for this very purpose,^j so that you may experience for yourself^k the following three spiritual blessings:

^e highly periphrastic, yet each decision was an intentional interpretation supported by significant commentaries.

^f Διὰ τοῦτο – connects it to previous section, vv 3-14

^g Earlier defined as the believing ones...here term saint is retained to demonstrate the believer's positional status of holiness, justification.

^h σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως

ⁱ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ,

^j Perfect Pass PTCP – indicates an action that happened to its object in the past with continuing results in the present.

^k εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι



1. one – the absolute certainty of your victory in God^l because of your calling in Christ;
2. two – the glorious riches of being a saint who God made into His inheritance;
¹⁹and
3. three – the mega-greatness of God’s all-surpassing power^m at work in you.

All of these blessings may be experienced right now by those of us who believe. They are accomplished in us byⁿ the energetic working of God’s over and abundant might and inherent strength, ²⁰because the power that’s working in you is the same exact power that God used when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at His right hand in heaven, far above all the other charlatan rulers, authorities, powers, kingdoms, and spirits being invoked, and Christ will remain in that exalted position not only for this current age, but for all eternity, because ²²God subjugated all things under His feet^o and gave Christ to the church (which is His body, the fullness of him), to be its head over everything which was no stretch because Christ already holds together all things.^p

Biblical hope = absolute certainty of victory in God (BKC)

^m τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ

ⁿ κατὰ ... In accordance to

^o Lit = “under his feet” draws upon the OT idea of Kings, standing on the knecks of their conquered foes...see Egyptian footstools which have depictions of enemy kings on them...

^p Interpretation of “The one filling all with all” cf. Acts 17:28, Colossians 1:15-19; 2:9



Bonus (Digging Extra Deep)

- In vs. 17 Paul prays that God would give these believers “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation”:
 - Who is this spirit?^q
 - What does the phrase mean if it is referring to the Holy Spirit?^r
 - What does the phrase mean if it is referring to the human spirit? (See note for explanation)^s

^q Due to the complexity of the Greek here commentators disagree on who the “spirit” is referring to and different translations reflect this as well. Either way you understand “spirit” the vast majority of people believe the Holy Spirit is involved in the giving.

^r This interpretation has to answer how, since believer’s already have the Spirit, are they again receiving the Spirit? If this is referring to the Holy Spirit then this is another reference to the trinity like vss. 3-14 before it. The ESV and NIV translate it in reference to the Holy Spirit.

^s The NLT takes this intended meaning and translates it as “to give you **spiritual** wisdom and insight.” *NLT: Chronological Life Application Study Bible*, 2nd Ed. (Tyndale House Pub., Carol Stream, IL: 2004), pg. 1706. Other translations that are similar are the NET, NEB, and NASB.

This interpretation recognizes that the believer already possesses the Holy Spirit and sees Paul’s intention here as the Holy Spirit aiding believer’s in a wisdom and revelation (or insight) that accords with spiritual things (that is, things pertaining to the Holy Spirit).