

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

REMEMBERED

Ephesians 1:15-23

INTRODUCTION

None would disagree with the thought that prayer is powerful. We have either seen its power in others or have been blessed to see it in our own lives. Either way we know that prayer is powerful. But prayer is also necessary for reasons we might not readily think. Paul prays for the Ephesian believers, not because anything is wrong, but because everything is right! They not only know the innumerable blessing of God (Ephesians 1:3-14) but they are evidencing their loyalty to Christ in love and faith (Ephesians 1:15). Paul gives thanks for these evidences of grace and we should learn to do the same more often. While there is much to be concerned about there is much more to be thankful for within the church family if we look for it. Paul thanks God for what He is doing in the Ephesians but then he asks God to do more! May the Lord help us to always give praise to the Lord for His grace and also to never stop asking for more of His power in our lives (Ephesians 1:15-23).

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (Ephesians 1:15-16)

Paul has highlighted the great and awesome work of the Lord and gave thanks to the Him for amazing, Trinitarian, grace towards sinners (Ephesians 1:3-14). Now Paul gives thanks to the Lord for the continued work of salvation in the hearts and lives of the Ephesians, expressed in their faith in the Lord and their love for the saints (Ephesians 1:15). For this Paul says that he *always* offers prayers of thanksgiving to God for them and on their behalf (1:16). Paul gives thanks but he also prays for the Lord continued power in their lives asking that the Lord would give them *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him* (Ephesians 1:17). Wisdom refers to the ability to live or practice what we know. Revelation is the insight and illumination granted to believers through the Spirit. In essence Paul is praying that the Ephesians experience God's Word in their lives (revelation) and be enabled by the Spirit to live the truth they experience. All of this comes through the ongoing power and work of the Spirit of God.

HOPE IN GOD (Ephesians 1:18-19)

The term *heart* in scripture often refers not to the actual organ but to the affections of man. It is the place where spiritual intelligence and life reside. To that end, Paul prays that the eyes of their hearts be continually enlightened to perceive and know, in deeper ways, the essence of the hope of their calling in Jesus (Ephesians 1:18). Paul is literally asking that the Ephesians see their current situation in light of their future glory. As believers in Christ we are people whose *true* life is in what is to come at the return of Christ. What we are experiencing in the present must always be judged based on what our true hope is – eternity with God. Paul further defines our hope as the wealth of our inheritance and the immeasurable power we have in the Lord (Ephesians 1:19). Ephesus was a major city. Wealth and prominence was evident. Intellectual and political power abounded. As tempting as these may have been to the Ephesians Paul calls their (and our) eyes to focus on the wealth and power that is our in Christ and is eternal.

POWER OF GOD (Ephesians 1:20-23)

The hope that we have in the Lord is fueled by the power of the Lord at work in us. It is the exact same power that He exerted when he raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:20). What an incredible reality for Christians to ponder: the power of God over death and sin is within us by way of the Holy Spirit. We

can hope in God because of the power of God which reigns over all earthly powers and people! Though Christ be slandered and maligned; though we experience persecution in this world here is the reality: God raised Jesus from the grave and seated Him above every earthly power (Ephesians 1:21). He reigns and rules over all in this world. Everything is subject to His authority. Since Christ resides in us by the Spirit, we should not subject ourselves to this world. Rather, we should hope in the all-encompassing power of the Lord (Ephesians 1:22,23).