

Sept 27, 2026

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of Ephesians

Alive In Christ: Discovering Our Identity & Purpose

Part 2: Paul's Prayer for the Church:

Discovering Our Riches and Living in Resurrection Power

Today we continue our historical and chronological journey through the New Testament with Part 2 of The letter to the Ephesians. This Letter was written by the Apostle Paul during his first Roman imprisonment, around AD 60–62. Paul composed four letters now known as the Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians. Most scholars agree that Colossians and Philemon were written first and entrusted to Tychicus and Onesimus, who, along with the letter to the Ephesians, traveled from Rome to Asia Minor. Their likely route took them first to Ephesus—the capital and main port of the region—where Tychicus delivered Paul's letter to the Ephesians. From there, Tychicus and Onesimus journeyed inland to Colossae, delivering Colossians and Philemon, and visited nearby Laodicea (@10 miles) for the exchange of letters.

Ephesians 1:15-23...¹⁵ *Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere,* ¹⁶ *I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly,* ¹⁷ *asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.* ¹⁸ *I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called—His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance.* ¹⁹ *I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the*

same mighty power ²⁰ *that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.* ²¹ *Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.* ²² *God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church.* ²³ *And the church is His body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with Himself.*

Some material adapted from Warren Wiesbe 'Bible Exposition Commentary. (14-17)

Did you catch what Paul just prayed?

He didn't pray for the Ephesians to *receive* something new. He didn't ask God to give them something they were missing.

He prayed that that God will *give you spiritual wisdom and insight into all the riches we have in in the resurrected Christ.* That is a stunning statement. Paul is essentially saying: "*You are already rich (spiritually). You just don't know it yet.*"

And that, church, is one of the greatest tragedies in the Christian life—not that God has withheld His blessings, but that His people have never truly seen them.

Let me show you what I mean with a story.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe tells the story of William Randolph Hearst—one of the most powerful newspaper tycoons in American history.

Hearst was a passionate collector of rare and priceless art. He invested millions of dollars traveling across Europe, acquiring treasures from galleries, auction houses, and private estates. No price was too high. No search was too long. If it was beautiful and valuable, Hearst had to have it.

One day, Hearst came across a written description of a particularly exquisite antique—something so rare and extraordinary that he became consumed with finding it. He immediately dispatched his personal agent with instructions to locate it at any cost. Months passed. The agent searched frantically—combing through collections across the globe, following every lead, crossing every ocean.

Finally, a cable arrived back at Hearst's estate.

"Sir, I have found the treasure."

Hearst must have leaned forward in his chair with great anticipation.

"It has been sitting in your own warehouse for years."

Let that sink in.

Hearst had spent a fortune—months of searching, thousands of miles traveled, enormous sums of money—looking for a treasure he already owned.

It had been in his possession the entire time. He simply had never read the catalog of his own collection.

Church, I want to suggest to you this morning that many of us are doing the exact same thing—spiritually.

We search for peace in the wrong places. We beg for purpose from a world that cannot give it. We scramble for identity in relationships, achievements, and possessions—when the God of the universe has already deposited the boundless wealth of heaven into our account in Christ Jesus.

The problem is not that God has been stingy. The problem is that too many believers have never claimed the birthright that belongs to them in Christ. And that is precisely why the Apostle Paul drops to his knees.

In Ephesians 1:15–23, Paul is not praying for the Ephesians to receive something new.

He is praying that they would open their eyes to what they already have—their riches in Christ, their hope in His calling, and the resurrection power that is already at work within them.

Today, under the theme *"Alive in Christ: Discovering Our Identity & Purpose,"* we are going to walk through Paul's prayer under three vital movements:

1. **Praying for Spiritual Perception** —
Knowing God More Deeply (vv. 15–17)
 2. **Praying for Spiritual Illumination** —
Seeing Our Hope and Riches (v. 18)
 3. **Praying for Spiritual Power** —
Living in Resurrection Authority (vv. 19–23)
-

I. Praying for Spiritual Perception:

Knowing God More Deeply (vv. 15–17)

Look at verses 15–17: ¹⁵ *Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere,* ¹⁶ *I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly,* ¹⁷ *asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.*

Notice where Paul starts. He thanks God for their **faith toward God** and their **love toward the saints**. These are the two vital coordinates of the Christian life—the **VERTICAL AND THE HORIZONTAL**. Faith takes hold of God; love reaches out to people. But Paul doesn’t stop there. He doesn’t say, “*Well, you have faith and love, so you’re all set.*” No! He prays for their spiritual perception. He asks for the “*Spirit of wisdom and insight*” Why? Because with the natural mind, a human being cannot fathom the things of God (1 Cor. 2:9–16).

The Holy Spirit must step into the classroom of your heart as the divine Teacher, take the Word of God, and make it alive to your soul.

And what is the goal of this perception? Look at verse 17: “...*so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.*”

The Greek word here is **epignosis**—not surface trivia about God, but deep, personal, experiential intimacy with God. An atheist may say there is no God; an agnostic says you cannot know Him; but the Christian cries: “*I know whom I have believed!*”

To know God personally is salvation.

To know Him increasingly is sanctification.

To know Him perfectly is glorification.

(Spoken Word)...

It’s not about knowing Bible trivia or reciting a creed; It’s about knowing the Shepherd who provides for your need.

It’s not just God as a Judge on a distant white throne, But God as your Father who calls you His own. A Friend in the valley, a Light in the night, The Source of your wisdom, the Shield of your might.

Beyond every chapter, beyond every line, Paul prays: “*Lord, reveal what is holy, divine!*”

II. Praying for Spiritual Illumination:

Seeing Our Hope and Riches (v. 18)

Paul moves from perception to illumination in verse 18:

“I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called—His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance.”

Paul passionately prays: ***“that our hearts be flooded with light.***

In the biblical worldview, the heart is not just where you feel romance—it is the mission control center of your inner man: mind, will, and emotions. The inner man has eyes, ears, and spiritual taste. When sin darkens our sight, we confuse prices with values.

Ancient Ephesus was one of the richest cities in the world, boasting about the glorious Temple of Diana. Today, that ancient wonder is a pile of ruins in an archaeologist’s pit. But the poor, persecuted Christians of Ephesus who died in Christ are sitting in the glory of God right now!

Look at what God’s light reveals:

1. **The Hope of His Calling:** Not wishful thinking, but ironclad future assurance.
2. **His Glorious Inheritance in the Saints:**

Notice this carefully: verse 18 is not talking only about *our* inheritance in Christ. It is talking about **Christ’s inheritance in us!**

Ponder that: God looks at broken, redeemed sinners and calls us His *wealth!*

(Spoken Word)

He sees past the wreckage, He sees past the shame;
He speaks to your future and gives you a name!
When Gideon was hiding and trembling with fear,
God called him a warrior with victory near.
When Simon was sinking and unstable as sand,
Christ called him a Rock that would boldly stand.
God doesn't define you by where you have been;
He defines you by grace that has washed out the sin!
You are His treasure, His portion, His prize—
Wake up, O Church, and open your eyes!

III. Praying for Spiritual Power:

Living in Resurrection Authority (vv. 19–23)

Finally, Paul reaches the crescendo in verses 19–23. It’s one thing to have wealth, but what good is having riches if you don’t have the power to access it. Paul does not want your spiritual weakness to keep you from heaven’s wealth. Look at verse 19 & 20,,
¹⁹ ***“I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”***

In the original Greek, Paul stacks four dynamic power-words together:

- **Dunamis** — explosive, inherent dynamite power.
- **Energeia** — operative, active, unstoppable energy.
- **Kratos** — conquering, reigning sovereign strength.
- **Ischus** — mighty, indomitable force.

Where do we measure that power? Not in the stars of creation. Not at the parting of the Red Sea.

We measure it at the empty tomb of Joseph of Arimathea!

The same power that snapped the chains of death, broke the Roman seal, rolled away the stone, and exalted Jesus Christ “*far above all rule and authority, power and dominion*”—that very power is directed toward **you who believe!**

And look at verses 22–23: ²² *God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church.*

²³ *And the church is His body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with Himself.*

God placed all things under Christ's feet and gave Him as Head over all things **to the church**, which is His body.

Think of that anatomy! Christ is the Head in heaven; you and I are His body on the earth.

The Head directs the body. The Head supplies the body. And whatever is under the feet of the Head is under the feet of the Body! Sin, Satan, fear, addiction, sickness, and despair are under the feet of Jesus—and because you are seated with Him in heavenly places, they are under your feet as well!

(Spoken Word)

It's resurrection power for your daily trials;

It's ascension authority across the miles.

Not a power that flickers like a dying spark,

But a blaze of glory that shatters the dark!

The grave couldn't hold Him, the tomb couldn't stay,

And the very same Spirit is in you today.

No devil in hell, no power on earth,

Can cancel the promise of your new birth.

The Head has conquered; the victory is won;

The battle is finished in the rise of the Son!

Conclusion & Invitation

Church, Paul's prayer is ringing across the centuries into this room today:

- **Discover your riches:** Stop searching in empty wells for what has already been stored in your account.
- **Know your calling:** You are not an accident; you are God's prized possession.
- **Live in His power:** Stop fighting today's battles in yesterday's human strength.

(Final Spoken Word Call)

So drop your beggars cup,

Lift your eyes up.

Step out of the shadows of fear and regret;

Your God has never failed a promise yet.

You are rich in His grace, you are sealed in His love,

You are seated with Christ in the heavens above.

To every believer here today:

Will you lay down the spiritual amnesia?

Will you pray: *“Lord, flood the eyes of my heart with light. And help me walk in Your resurrection power”*?

**And to anyone seeking, searching, or feeling
spiritually bankrupt:**

You don't have to clean up your life to come to Jesus.

You come to Him bankrupt, and He gives you the riches of His mercy. He died for your sins, He rose from the dead, and right now He is knocking on the door of your heart. Step out of the dark, receive the gift of grace, and be made alive in Christ today.

Invitation