

**Purpose Statement:** To see the necessity of these cardinal issues to be in our lives if we claim to be "In Christ"

**Eph 1:15–23 (ESV)** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, <sup>(16)</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>(17)</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>(18)</sup> having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>(19)</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>(20)</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>(21)</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>(22)</sup> And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>(23)</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## 1. We are beginning a section consisting of Paul's prayer for these saints

A. If you've read Paul's letters you know he knew the great importance of a good prayer life

1). This is one of the secrets to the greatness of his life and his ministry

**Henry C. Fish:** "Prayer ... is one half of a man's ministry; and it gives to the other half all its power and success."

a). To minister without prayer is to minister without power – and without success

B. Reminds me of a story I read

Two pastors' wives sat mending their husbands' pants. One of them said to the other, "My poor John, he is so discouraged in his church work. He said just the other day he was considering resigning. It seems nothing goes right for him."

The other replied, "Why, my husband was saying just the opposite. He is so enthused, it seems like the Lord is closer to him than ever before."

A hushed silence fell as they continued to mend the trousers; one patching the seat and the other the knees.

1). The one who had worn out the knees of his pants in prayer was being blessed

## 2. It's interesting that Paul inserts a prayer right here in the middle of great truth

A. Why? He understands what he has said is overwhelming – beyond human ability to understand

1). He has spoken of unlimited resources from an unlimited source

Being chosen – adopted – secure and becoming inheritors of all that Christ has

B. He realizes – if they are to get this – God must give them understanding

**1 Cor 2:9-12 (NIV)** However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" -- (10) *but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.* The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (11) For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? *In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (12) We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*

1). We are totally dependent upon the Spirit to give us spiritual comprehension

a). Why we pray before we read our Bible – pray before we teach a study

b). The deep things of God are only understood by the Spirit of God

1a). And only understood by us when he gets involved and gives us understanding

2a). Brothers and sisters – Eph. 1:3-14 are the deep things of God

**Summary:** So Paul knows he has taught things that have come straight from God

A. He wants his readers to understand their incredible blessings and resources in Christ

1). To understand it enough that they can apply it to enrich their daily experience

a). Pastor Paul wants these believers to live out the Christian life to all its potential

b). But you can't live out what you don't understand

**Transition:** This is where we are headed for the next couple of weeks

A. We are going to tear apart this great prayer of Paul – there is so much instruction here

1). We are going to start with looking at who this prayer is for

- 2). Scripture is interesting – it gives the blessings THEN specifies who those blessings are for
  - a). It gives objective tests so that we can know we are recipients of those blessings  
Or rectify the situation if we are not

## I. PAUL'S PRAYER IS FOR THE TRUE BELIEVER

**Eph 1:15–16 (ESV)** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, <sup>(16)</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

### 1. Paul introduces his prayer with thanksgiving for these believers

- A. But how does he know they are believers and therefore these blessings are for them?

### 2. He tells us – while he has been in prison he'd been hearing about them

- A. Through letters he received and friends that visited he repeatedly heard two things about them  
Two things that indicated the genuineness of their salvation

- 1). He heard about their *"Faith in Christ"* and their *"Love for other believers"*
  - a). These are 2 essential characteristics that will be evident in any true believer

- B. Faith is the beginning of life in Christ (from the believer's side)

AND love is the fruit that true life in Christ produces

**Transition:** Let's look at these two characteristics – starting with faith first

## II. THE FAITH OF THE TRUE BELIEVER

**Eph 1:15 (ESV)** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus...

### 1. Notice: These believers had a wonderful, bold faith in the Lord

- A. They were not ashamed of Him - Others were *"Hearing"* about their faith
  - 1). They had been soundly converted and were not hiding their light
  - 2). They were proclaiming to others the joys of salvation they had found in Christ

**Transition:** So they had faith in Christ – let's look at what faith is

### Faith Defined

#### 1. Pistis in the Greek

"A belief in or confident attitude toward God, involving commitment to His will for one's life"

- A. They had a trust in Christ and his work of redemption for lost man
  - 1). They trusted that his life was sufficient to earn the righteousness they needed to get into heaven
  - 2). They trusted that his death was sufficient to cleanse them from the sin that would keep them out
    - a). They trusted that God the Father would accept what Christ had done on their behalf

**Point:** So faith starts with trusting in Christ work alone to be sufficient for your salvation

- A. But real faith doesn't end there – it will never stop and a mere intellectual belief in Christ
  - 1). Saving faith always has action in it – it believes the truth and it responds to the truth it believes
  - 2). To just claim belief in Christ without an accompanying change in lifestyle is not saving faith
    - a). The devil believes there is a God – he just doesn't want to submit to his will

**James 2:19 (NIV)** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

**Summary:** We could say that genuine saving faith combines two ideas

- A. It is a reliance on Christ for salvation and a commitment to Christ for sanctification (lifestyle)

**Transition:** This is important – let's dig in a bit

## Reliance Upon Christ

### 1. Involves personally depending upon the finished work of Christ's sacrifice as:

- A. The only basis for the forgiveness of sin – **YOUR SIN!** – This is extremely personal
- 1). This is much more than a general belief that Christ is the Savior of the world  
Faith personally goes to him to receive him as **YOUR SAVIOR**  
**Spurgeon:** It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me to trust him to be *my Saviour*.
- Transition:** You believe he is the only way to have your sins forgiven
- B. You are not trusting in your works – your goodness – your merit – you trust in his grace alone  
**William Gurnall:** Faith hath two hands; with one it pulls off its own righteousness and throws it away...with the other it puts on Christ's.
- Transition:** So you trust in him to save you – Great – but it can't stop there

## Commitment to Christ

### 1. The whole of life changes – there is a new king in charge and it's not you

- A. When you trust him in a saving way you abdicate the throne – you begin to follow him  
**Thought:** We need to get this straight - This is not meritorious
- A. Some people reject the Lordship of Christ because they think to teach you must obey is works
- 1). No! We teach you must obey because that is what he has worked into you – who you are now
- B. You follow him because he changed when you were saved
- 1). You were dead to him and alive to sin – therefore you had no desire for him  
Now you've been given life – now you're alive to him and have died to sin
  - 2). Because he has placed that love for him into you – wired into that new nature – you obey  
**Jn 14:21 (ESV)** Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.
    - a). We keep them because we're saved and have been rewired for obedience  
**Ezek 36:26-27 (NIV)** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (27) *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*
    - b). Therefore John can say – when that isn't happening – something is wrong  
**1 Jn 2:4 (ESV)** Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,
      - 1a). Why? Because if you know him – he has changed you – obedience is the proof
  - 3). This isn't perfection – this is direction – the character of the life is obedience now
- C. Notice what Paul says about their faith – who it is in – we must read what the Word says  
**Eph 1:15 (ESV)** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the **Lord** Jesus...
- 1). Lord "Kurios" = Lord, master, owner, sovereign
  - 2). The one who saves you is also your Lord – consistent throughout scripture  
**Ro 10:9 (ESV)** ...if you confess with your mouth that **Jesus is Lord** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.  
**Ro 14:9 (ESV)** For to this end Christ died and lived again, *that he might be Lord (master and sovereign)* both of the dead and of the living.
  - 3). I know this thought isn't popular today – some claim you can believe without following
    - a). That you can be saved by Christ without bowing - following
    - b). I say this for your safety – do you really believe he will accept that?
      - 1a). Notice what he will have from everybody

**Php 2:10–11 (ESV)** so that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>(11)</sup> and *every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.

- c). The only place of comfort – of safety – is to line your life up with God’s will

**Jn 10:27 (ESV)** My sheep *hear* my voice, and I know them, and they *follow* me.

- 1a). Why? Because they ARE his sheep – they have been given a sheep nature that hears and follows their shepherd  
2a). They hear and they follow because of what salvation has made them – new creations - rewired from goats to sheep

- D. This is why James can say

**Jas 2:26 (ESV)** ...faith apart from works is dead.

- 1). He is not saying that works can’t save you –  
a). He is saying that once you’re saved you WILL HAVE works  
b). He is saying that true saving faith can’t lie dormant – it responds to God’s will  
1a). The Holy Spirit will move you to some kind of action  
2a). Paul says that is who you become when you are saved

**Tt 2:13–14 (ESV)** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>(14)</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession *who are zealous for good works*.

- E. This is why Paul could argue in Romans 6

**Ro 6:1 (ESV)** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

- 1). That is what many think – I can be saved and not have a changed relationship with sin  
2). But what does Paul say?

**Ro 6:2 (ESV)** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

- a). By no means! Why? Because God has done something when you were saved!

**Ro 6:6 (ESV)** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

**Objection 1:** Now I’m scared – I still sin

- A. Listen – we all still fail at times – but is Christ Lord – are you convicted and do you end up bowing  
1). Do you go back to him and humbly confess that sin and bow to his will again?  
2). We all get off track at times – he gets involved – hunting down the wandering sheep  
a). He convicts us – troubles us – removes the blessings  
Until we are willing to listen and bow once more

**Objection 2:** But I thought salvation was by faith alone

- A. Absolutely! But saving faith is never left in the intellect alone – a mere mental assent  
1). It connects you to God and when that connection occurs – Change always takes place

## 2. These are important thoughts in today’s Christianity that claims you can be saved without changing

- A. Scripture answers – the Faith that saves you will always change you radically  
**2 Co 5:17 (ESV)** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. *The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*  
B. This is a little different from the Gospel Lite we are hearing today isn’t it? But it’s Biblical  
1). That’s why I have given you MANY scriptures to back up my point  
a). I want you to be safe spiritually – I want to sweep out any deception  
C. So = it is not salvation by works – it is salvation by grace – and grace always changes you

**Transition:** That brings us to the next point – love for other believers

- A. Again this is not something we do to be saved or maintain our salvation
  - 1). We do this because we are saved – therefore it becomes a proof of God’s work in our lives

### III. THE LOVE OF THE TRUE BELIEVER

**Eph 1:15 (ESV)** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus *and your love toward all the saints*,

#### 1. The second mark of genuine salvation that was true of these Ephesians

- A. Their faith had connected to God and he was pouring his love in them and through them to others
- B. This is a fruit of having the Spirit in us

**Ga 5:22–23 (ESV)** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>(23)</sup> gentleness, self-control...

- 1). If the Spirit is in residence he *will be* producing love
- C. This is also obedience to Christ’s command
 

**Jn 13:34 (ESV)** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

  - 1). He loved us with Agape love – unconditional – unearned – even to those who don’t deserve it
    - a). Jesus loves the unlovely – Do we have proof of that? He loved us didn’t He?

#### 2. The extent of Christian love - “Everybody”

**Eph 1:15 (ESV)** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward (Who?) *all* the saints,

- A. I hear about these little fights between Christians – is that right? Does it bring honor to our Lord?
 

**Phil 4:2-3 (NIV)** I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. (3) Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

  - 1). Paul pleads with them – get over it! Stop the petty fighting!
    - a). Yeah but you don’t know what they’ve done – I get that – I’ve felt that
    - b). But when I try to excuse a grudge – the Lord reminds me of this Scripture
 

**Eph 4:32 (ESV)** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

      - 1a). There is the standard – forgive others like Christ has forgiven you
      - 2a). How kind and merciful he is to those who don’t deserve it – I am to be the same way

#### 3. The Christian life is a life of love that is a real, genuine, and sincere

**D. L. Moody:** A man may be a good doctor without loving his patients; a good lawyer without loving his clients; a good geologist without loving science; but he cannot be a good Christian without love.

- A. It is a love that is willing to sacrifice – willing to meet needs
 

A love that goes beyond warm thoughts and mere words

**1 Jn 3:18 (ESV)** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.
- B. It is a love that was demonstrated by Christ – lived out by him
 

**Jn 13:34 (ESV)** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

  - 1). He loved by coming to earth – to enter our desperation – to meet our needs
- C. It was demonstrated by the Father in his giving to meet those needs
 

**Jn 3:16 (ESV)** “For God so loved the world, *that he gave his only Son*, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- D. This becomes a tangible proof we’ve been saved

**1 Jn 3:14 (ESV)** We know that we have passed out of death into life, (**How do we know?**) because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

- 1). This sacrificial love is an evidence of salvation
  - A life characterized only by selfishness gives evidence of spiritual death
    - a). I didn't say that – God did!

#### 4. A quick love test

- A. When was last time you really did something sacrificial to help another
- B. When was last time you reached out to another believer that wasn't a friend?
  - 1). Paul commends these believers for loving ALL OF THE SAINTS
- C. Do you build up others in this fellowship or tear them down through gossip etc.
  - 1). Destroying another through gossip is one of the most unloving things we can do
  - 2). You can change the way somebody is viewed by another forever – “Ron's a liar”
- D. Here's a practical one. When having coffee afterwards do you reach out to those standing alone?

**Thought:** These are important questions – Do I obey? Do I love?

- A. Not perfectly – we still stumble at times – don't always win that battle for personal holiness
  - 1). There are times we're still defeated by selfishness – where we don't care – we are cold
- B. But what is the characteristic of our lives? Do we see the evidence of faith and love there?
  - 1). Or did we pray a prayer then went out and nothing changed?
    - a). The heart is still unbowed – sin and selfish reign?
    - b). Don't rest there! Make your calling and election sure!

**Transition:** In these verses we get a glimpse into the love of Paul for the saints

## IV. PAUL'S EXAMPLE OF LOVE

**Eph 1:16 (ESV)** I do not cease to give thanks for you, *remembering you in my prayers,*

### 1. Paul didn't just teach the necessity of love – he lived it

- A. One of the greatest ways we show love for others is to pray for them
  - 1). Ask a missionary what can I do for you - first thing on the list will always be prayer
  - 2). Here we see Paul regularly spent time interceding for others

### 2. Praying for others is not easy – taking the time requires sacrificial love

- A. The devil fights against this – rushing us – because this is so powerful
  - 1). When a congregation really prays for the pastor and the teaching who knows what will happen
  - 2). When Christians really plead for the lost they will see salvation
  - 3). When those down and discouraged are lifted up to God by others they will be strengthened
- B. Prayer is mighty – it connects to the living God – it moves the hand of omnipotent power
  - 1). It connects to a God who loves to answer prayer – a God who commands us

**Luke 11:9-10 (NIV)** "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (10) For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

- a). What a promise – yet so many let it go wanting
- C. When we see a brother in need – love them by meeting it
 

If you can't help materially love them through prayer!

  - 1). God shows us needs to move us to action!
- D. If God brings a person to mind – you think “I should pray” – PRAY RIGHT THEN
  - 1). You have no idea what they might be going through at that moment

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- 2). First mission trip to Japan – first night – radical spiritual warfare! Like Satan had entered the room
    - a). I fought in prayer – quoted scripture and clung to Christ
    - b). Next morning – fellow missionary – “Lord woke me up at... told me to pray for you”
      - 1a). Exactly when the battle began
      - 2a). I’m sure that had a lot to with my victory! He helped me stand!
  - 3). One time I was wrestling with a big decision – life altering – under so much pressure
    - a). I finally sat down one morning – “Lord whatever you want I’ll do – just show me”
    - b). A brother wrote me the next day from Romania
 

“I was praying at (same exact time I had surrendered) and you came to mind. The Lord spoke to me. Here is what he said...”

      - 1a). Totally cleared up by confusion and gave me direction!
  - 4). I can’t tell you how many times I’ve prayed for somebody – texted them to encourage them
 

“Thank you. That is exactly what I needed. I’m really going through it right now.”

**Transition:** So what have we seen?

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## CONCLUSION

### 1. The Christian is one who has placed their faith in Christ for salvation

- A. They rely on his works for them and not on their works for him
- B. But when that happens – they are changed – the evidence of that will be service
  - 1). The Spirit will move them to active obedience and service

**Jas 2:26 (ESV)** ... faith apart from works is dead.

- a). NOT works save you BUT those who are saved will have works

**Eph 2:8–10 (ESV)** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>(9)</sup> *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* <sup>(10)</sup> *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,* which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- 1a). There is the proper balance – not saved by works – saved by grace alone

But once saved – you will have works – that new nature created in you is active

### 2. The Christian is one who is “other oriented”

- A. That new nature is wired to love the family of Christ – the Spirit will move you to loving action
  - 1). This is an indicator of saving faith

### 3. We saw a practical way to express love is through prayer

### 4. This is an important study in today’s age of “easy believism”

- A. Where a mental assent with no accompanying change – no evidence of God’s internal work
 

Is considered enough to save a person – the Scriptures are clear – it is not!