

A POWERFUL PRAYER

Ephesians 1:18-19a



Ephesians 1:15–23

¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Ephesians 1:15–23 (cont.)

¹⁸ *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

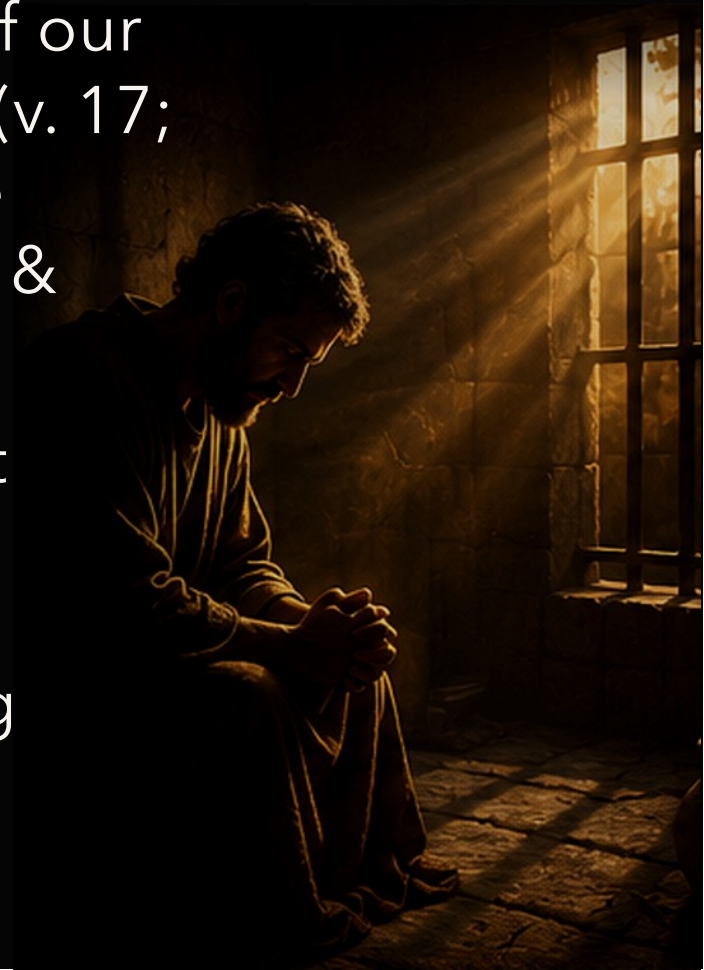
Ephesians 1:15–23 (cont.)

²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Consumed in Prayer (Eph 1:15–23)

To whom does he pray? To “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory” (v. 17; cf. 1:3; 2 Cor 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3). God is the ultimate source of power, enablement & protection, not Artemis.

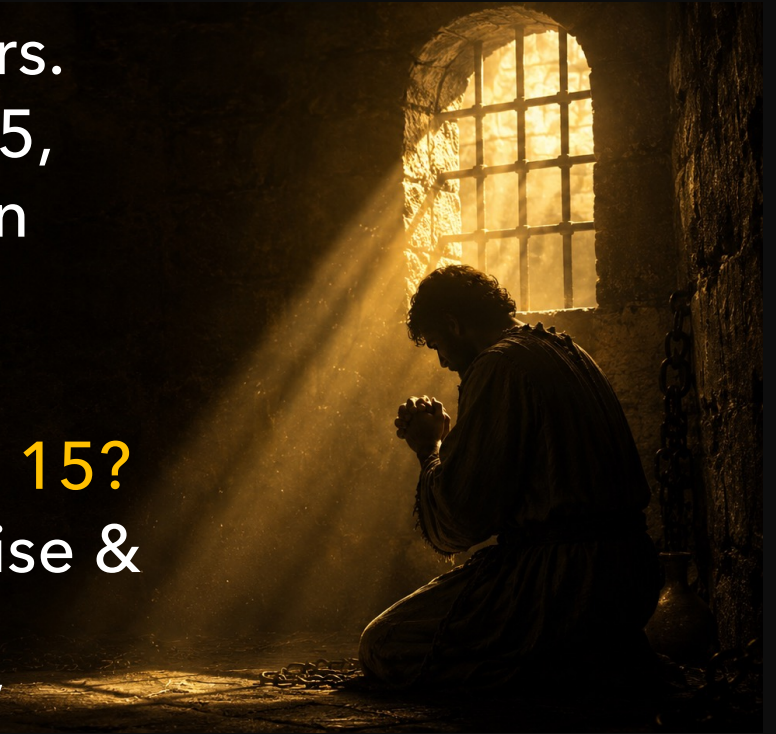
When does he pray? Always. “[I]do not cease giving thanks ...while making mention of you in my prayers” (v. 16). Common juxtaposition of thanksgiving & prayer in prison epistles (cf. Phil 1:3, 4, 9; Col 1:3, 9).



Consumed in Prayer (Eph 1:15–23) (cont.)

For whom does he pray? For others. Second person pronouns (cf. vv. 15, 16, 17, 18). Yet, himself confined in prison (3:1; 4:1; Phil 1:7, 13, 14).

What has he been doing before v. 15? Praying a prayer of adoration, praise & blessing God (v. 3; cf. Ps 103). The transition in v. 15, “for this reason” connects with the praise section.





MACEDONIA

Thessalonica

Philippi

Berea

ASIA

Ephesus

Athens

Corinth

Achaia

ACTS

Adoration

1:3-14

Confession

Thanksgiving

1:15-16

Supplication

1:17-19

Ephesus: The “Mother City” of Asia

01 – Political Prestige

- Provincial capital & admin center of Roman Asia.
- Seat of Roman proconsul (Acts 19:38).

02 – Prominent Religion

- Home of the “great” (μεγάλη) Artemis Ephesia (Acts 19:28, 34, 35) & her temple (Acts 19:27, 35).



Her Magnificence



- A threat from Paul's preaching for the temple to be regarded as worthless ... a danger to Artemis' magnificence (Acts 19:27).

"...when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, 'Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on anything so grand'" (Antipater of Sidon, *Anthologia Graeca* 9.58, c. 100BC).

Ephesus: The “Mother City” of Asia (cont.)

03 – Pervasive Magic

- Magic held sway, *possibly* even among new believers (Acts 19:11–19).



Ephesia grammata (Ἐφέσια γράμματα)

Acts 19:13–19

¹³... some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴ Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Acts 19:13–19 (cont.)

¹⁷ This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. ¹⁸ Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. ¹⁹ And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Ephesus: The “Mother City” of Asia (cont.)

03 – Pervasive Magic

- Magic held sway, *possibly* even among new believers (Acts 19:11-19).
- Magic books ~ 160+ yrs of wages burned! (Acts 19:19).

04 – Perfect Location

- Major port city on the Aegean coast.
- Strategically positioned for trade & travel.



Ephesus: A Gospel Hub for Asia

- Initially prohibited by the Spirit to go to Asia (Acts 16:6).
- Later goes, spends 3 years, & during that time "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10, 26; 20:31).
- Summary of gospel triumph in Asia through Ephesus:
"The name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified ... the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing"
(Acts 19:17, 20)

Ephesians 1:18–9a

I.
¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,
so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what
are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the
saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His
power toward us who believe.

OUTLINE

I. Spiritual Sight (v. 18a)

Ephesians 1:18–9a

¹⁸ *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, ^{II.} so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

OUTLINE

I. Spiritual Sight (v. 18a)

II. Spiritual Insight (vv. 18b–19a)

I. Spiritual Sight (v. 18a)

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened"

- *"I pray that"* - not in the original text. Implied from v. 16.
No sentence break between vv. 17 & 18.
- *"The eyes of your heart"* - parallels *"Spirit of wisdom & revelation"* (v. 17), governed by the same verb *"to give."*
 - ✓ Unique expression, found nowhere else in Scripture.
 - ✓ What you see with your eyes, you perceive with your heart.
 - ✓ The heart is the engine room of your being.

Sin & the Eye in Scripture

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened" (Ge 3:6-7).

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness" (Matt 6:22-3).

"The lust of the eyes comes not from the Father" (1 Jn 2:6).

Sanctification & the Eye in Scripture

"Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law" (Ps 119:18).

"Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways" (Ps 119:37).

"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you" (Matt 5:29; 18:9).

Glorification & the Eye in Scripture

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"
(Matt 5:8)

The Heart in Scripture

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37; cf. Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; Deut 6:5)

- ✓ In Matt, Mark, and Luke, the heart always comes first, and the order is never once reversed.
- ✓ Scripture consistently treats the heart as the barometer of spiritual vitality.

I. Spiritual Sight (v. 18a)

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened"

- "May be enlightened" - fronted for emphasis. So literally, "having been enlightened the eyes of your heart."
 - ✓ The word means to illumine, to shed light upon.
 - ✓ The perfect tense indicates prior illumination at the point of conversion, yet he prays for its continuing influence.
 - ✓ He wants God to sustain the light of conversion contra the darkness that once engulfed them.

Prior to Salvation

"[Do not] walk [any] longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding" (Eph 4:17-8).

"For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ... Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Eph 5:8).

What Paul commands them to do in 4:17 & 5:8 will only happen if his prayer in 1:18 is answered. A life that's enlightened walks in the Light, & does not engage in shameful deeds of darkness. So this prayer is critical.

I. Spiritual Sight (v. 18a) (cont.)

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened"

- "May be enlightened" - "the eyes of your heart" are the object of the enlightenment.
 - ✓ The passive voice indicates that God does this to man (1:17). Man does not attain to it by ritual or religious effort.
 - ✓ The Ephesians were already believers, so Paul is praying for continued manifestation of the enlightenment that began when they got saved.

What happens when a Christian's vision is impaired or his optic nerve is damaged?

"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins" (2 Pet 1:8-9)

The gauge of your spiritual sight, how well your heart is illumined, is indicated in your virtuous living or lack thereof.

II. Spiritual Insight (v. 18b–9a)

“so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

- “So that you will know” – Connects illumination in the heart (v. 18a) with the result of understanding in the mind.

SIGHT



INSIGHT

II. Spiritual Insight (v. 18b–9a) (cont.)

“so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

- “So that you will know” – the verb “to know” here is translated as “know with certainty” in Eph 5:5.
 - ✓ In v. 17, he prayed for God to give the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.
 - ✓ The Christian life is lived and won in the mind.

II. Spiritual Insight (v. 18b–9a) (cont.)

"so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe."

- "So that you will know" – "to know" governs all three requests
 - ✓ "to know" what is the hope of His calling
 - ✓ "to know" what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.
 - ✓ "to know" what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

A. Knowing Our Hope in God

"so that you will know what is the hope of His calling" (v. 18b)

- Paul is again going to bring these two concepts of hope and calling together in Eph 4:4, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling."
- Before Christ, we were gentiles "having no hope" (2:12).
- Future hope (1:10 "the summing up of all things in Christ"; 4:30 "the day of redemption"), initiated in the past by God ("His calling"), yet profoundly relevant at present ("what is").

B. Knowing Our Worth to God

"so that you will know ...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance (τῆς κληρονομίας) in the saints" (v. 18c)

- "His inheritance" - literally "the riches of His glorious inheritance"
- ✓ God's inheritance is both glorious and abundant, plural "riches."
- ✓ Paul speaks of "the riches of His grace" (1:7); "surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (2:7); "the unfathomable riches of Christ" (3:8).

B. Knowing Our Worth to God (cont.)

"so that you will know ...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (v. 18c)

- ✓ Paul has just described God as "the Father of glory" (1:17).
- ✓ The words "riches" and "glory" are used together frequently in Paul's writings.
- ✓ "The riches of His glory" (3:16) ; "His riches in glory" (Phil 4:19); "riches of the glory" (Col 1:27).

Whose Inheritance Is It?

- "He predestined us to adoption as sons ... to Himself" (1:5).
- "In whom also we were made [His] inheritance/ appointed by lot (ἐκκληρώθημεν)" (1:11; cf. Deut 9:29).
- "[The Spirit] who is a pledge of our inheritance (κληρονομίας)... " (1:14a).
- "...until the redemption of [God's] possession" (1:14b).
- "[Unbelievers do not have] an inheritance (κληρονομίαν) in the kingdom of Christ and God (5:5).

God's people are His treasured possession (1:5, 11, 14 = 1:18)

B. Knowing Our Worth to God (cont.)

"so that you will know ...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (v. 18c)

- "In the saints" - or otherwise, "among the saints." God regards His people as His own inheritance.
- ✓ What is astounding is how God describes His church: An inheritance of extraordinary wealth & glory.

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's] own possession" (1 Pet 2:9)

B. Knowing Our Worth to God (cont.)

"[I pray that you] may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:18-9).

C. Knowing God's Power in You

"so that you will know ... what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (v. 18b, 19)

- "The surpassing greatness of His power" - Translators are seizing for words to truly do justice to what Paul says here.
- ✓ It is superabundant magnitude, immeasurable excellence, & overwhelming greatness (τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος).

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C. Knowing God's Power (cont.)

"so that you will know ... what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (v. 18b, 19)

- "The surpassing greatness of His power" - No, great is not the Artemis of the Ephesians in all of her luster and magic.
 - ✓ Great is the mystery of godliness (1 Tim 3:16). He is the great one.
 - ✓ The Father of Glory has raised Christ from the dead. Literally God undid death, seated Him in the heavenlies & placed everything in subjection to Him.

C. Knowing God's Power (cont.)

"so that you will know ... what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (v. 18b, 19)

- "Toward us who believe" - the only people to whom this power is available.
- ✓ Power "in accordance with the working of the strength of His might" (v. 19b).
- ✓ It is power that God has given to Christ to the church (or for the church) (v. 22)

Power in Ephesians

"[You are] to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (3:16).

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (3:20).

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (6:11)

"[You will] be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (6:16)

Application

- ❖ Ask God for spiritual sight and perception as you read Scripture.
- ❖ Pray often for yourself and others that you will live worthy of your calling & hope.
- ❖ Remember that you are valuable to God
- ❖ Appeal to God's power for change for areas in your life not consistent with revealed truth.

