

EPHESIANS

GRACE & GLORY

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS | EPHESIANS 1:15-23 | part 03

Ephesians 1:15-23_“Hopes, Riches, & Power”

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 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, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked 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 above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things 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.

COMMENTARY

THE BIG PICTURE: Zooming out of the book of Ephesians, you'll notice that chapters 1-3 deal with doctrine. These chapters help us to become good theologians. They clearly define the gospel, some major attributes of God, and some characteristics and qualities of the church. These chapters are packed with weighty theological passages. Chapters 4-6 deal with duty. These chapters lay out the life that flows from good doctrine. This is a great theme in Ephesians, doctrine (right learning) and duty (right living) can never be divorced. Now, if we zoom in on chapter 1, we'll find this rough outline. Verses 3-14 are PRAISE, while verses 15-23 form a PRAYER. As you read through these verses it would be wise to lay Paul's prayer over your own prayers.

THE PRAYER: The people of Ephesus are in difficult physical circumstances. For the background, read Acts 19-20. The people of Ephesus are worshippers; they just have the wrong God. The Christians in the city are a small minority, their God isn't liked, they aren't like, and severe persecution is never far away. Now, notice, vv.17-18, Paul's prayer doesn't mention their physical condition. He prays that the "eyes of their heart may be enlightened." Paul is going after their hearts, their spiritual condition. Now, Paul would affirm (along with the rest of the Bible) that praying for the physical condition of people is right and good. However, our prayers should not stop with the physical. To state it another way, if we had to pick one to pray for (spiritual needs vs. physical needs), Paul would take the spiritual. Examine your own prayer life. Are you more inclined to pray for the physical needs of those around you, or the spiritual condition of their hearts?

THE REQUESTS: Notice what Paul asked God to allow their hearts to see (vv.18-21). Here's the truth for every person on the planet, The more you see God, the more you'll trust God, know God, want God, and live for God! He prays for the people of Ephesus to see the HOPE they have in Christ. He prays for them to see how RICH they are in Christ. Third, he prays for them to see the POWER they have in Christ. What great requests? This week, take some time to mediate on each of those. Why are they so significant? Does your heart see them and believe them? May we become people who pray as passionately and as wisely as Paul!

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QUESTIONS

- Read Ephesians 1:15-23. Write down any insights/thoughts/questions from it.

- Paul notices two things about the people of Ephesus that lead him to remember/pray for them. What are they (v.15)? Do you notice these things and do they stir your heart to pray for others?

- In v.17-18, Paul makes a crucial prayer request. What is it? Notice how Paul prays more for spiritual needs than physical. We are not saying that praying for physical things is wrong, but physical requests are never meant to be prayed alone. Examine your prayer life...is there enough praying for the spiritual well-being of those around you?

- Paul prays that you would have "the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know" three things. What are those three things? What do they mean?

- Do you pray these things consistently for those around you?

- Paul prays for the "eyes of our heart to be enlightened." What sort of habits needs to be strengthened in your life to help you consistently see God clearly?

- A well-known Christian motto goes like this, "To know Christ and make Him known." Paul prays the first half of that statement for the people in Ephesus. How can our HomeGroup do/encourage both parts (a: to know Him b: to make Him known)?