

## SERMON OUTLINE

In Ephesians 1:15-23 Paul offers two types of prayers for the Ephesians and for all believers.

- I. Paul offers a prayer of thanksgiving for the report concerning the Ephesian church (v. 15-16).
- II. Paul offers a prayer of intercession for the Ephesian church to continue to grow in their knowledge of God (v. 17), specifically to:
  - A. Understand the hope of His calling (v. 18a).
  - B. Understand the riches of the glory of His inheritance (v. 18b).
  - C. Understand the immeasurable greatness of His power directed toward believers (v. 19) as shown through:
    1. The resurrection of Christ (v. 20a).
    2. The exaltation of Christ (vs. 20b-21).
    3. The authority of Christ (v. 22a).
    4. The headship of Christ (v. 22b-23).

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, April 16, 2017

Passage: Ephesians 1:15-23

Memory Passage: Ephesians 1:15-18 (review 1:1-14)

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Eph. 1:15-23.** Paul begins his 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence in chapter 1 (vs. 15-23, 169 words in Greek) with the phrase, “For this reason.” What is this reason that Paul gives as the basis for his thanksgiving?

(b) How has Paul heard of the Ephesians “faith in the Lord Jesus” and “love for all the saints” (remember, he is writing from prison), and why would this cause such an outburst of thanksgiving and prayer?

(c) Consider this scenario: One of Bible Church’s former pastors or a current member has been imprisoned for their faith, and someone comes to visit them and brings a report concerning our church. What would that report include? Would what is known about our church from our activities (both individuals in the church and the church as a whole) bring encouragement to that imprisoned saint? What would the report reveal about our character? What might need to change for the report to bring even more encouragement?

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ephesians 1:15-23.** Vs. 17-23 reveal the content of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians. To whom does He direct His intercession, and how does Paul’s description (v. 17a, b) inspire confidence that his prayer will be answered?

(b) Paul’s first petition is found in 17c. Does Paul refer to the Holy Spirit (ESV= Spirit) or the human spirit (NASB= spirit)? Give reasons for your answer (hint: how does the phrase “of wisdom and revelation” affect your answer?).

(c) To what does “revelation” refer in v. 17, what is its source, and what is its content?

(d) What does Paul mean when he writes: “having the eyes of your heart enlightened” and when did or will this happen?

(e) What is “the knowledge of God?” Is it knowledge about God? Knowledge of God? Information only? Understanding?

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ephesians 1:15-23.** Paul now makes 3 requests based on the truths found in vs. 17c-18a. To what “hope” have the Ephesians (and you) been called (see Titus 2:11-14 & 1 Peter 1:3-5 for help)?

(b) The inheritance spoken of in Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> request most likely refers to God’s inheritance, His people comprising both Jews & Gentiles in the church. How does this inheritance provide “riches” that Paul wants believers to understand and what difference does this knowledge make in your own life?

(c) Consider Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> request in vs. 19-20: To whom is God’s power directed & to what is this power equivalent?

(d) Why does Paul pray for believers to “know” rather than “receive” or “employ” this power? What is the difference?

(e) Meditate on vs. 19-20, 2 Cor. 13:4, and Phil. 1:10a. How would your life be different if you understood and lived according to this power directed toward you as a believer? In what ways might BCC's impact with the gospel in our community explode?

**DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Ephesians 1:15-23.** Though we think much (and should) about Christ's resurrection, Paul also includes his exaltation. How does Christ's exaltation reveal God's power? Why is it important that Christ's seat is in the "heavenly places?"

(b) Do "rule," "authority," "power," & "dominion" refer to different aspects of the heavenly realm or are they synonymous?

(c) What other "names" are named above which Christ is seated, and why is it important that Christ rules over them in "both this age and the age to come?"

(d) What impact should the truths found in vs. 20-21 have on your daily life? In other words, what does Christ's enthronement over the spiritual powers have to do with you as you work, parent, witness, teach, play, etc.?

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Ephesians 1:15-23.** Verses 22-23 bring Christ's authority into clear focus. What is the difference between God "putting all things under (Christ's) feet" (cf. Ps. 8:6) and giving "(Christ) as head of all things?"

(b) What impact should the church experience given that this exalted and ruling Christ is given as head "to the church, which is his body" (see, for example, Col. 1:18-23 & Eph. 4:15-16)?

(c) How does the phrase "the fullness of him who fills all in all" relate to the church and Christ's presence in this world?

(d) How do verses 22-23 affect the way BCC (and any other church) should function in the world? What does this special presence of Christ in the church provide for the ministry of believers who make up the church, the body of Christ?

**DATE: April 16, 2017**

**PASSAGE: Ephesians 1:15-23**

***A Prayer for Spiritual Knowledge and Power***