

## Christian Wisdom and Understanding

Ephesians 1:15-23

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which 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 principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

**In our last study of this epistle, we looked at God's divine watch-care over the believer.** We looked at Romans 8:29-31 that says, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, and these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

**This week we are going to see the continued progression of the Christian life as it relates to Christian growth.**

Look at how Paul continues in verse 15, “Wherefore, I also after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” Notice how Paul ties our “faith in the Lord Jesus” together with our “love unto all the saints.” This is in perfect harmony with 1 John 4:7, that says, “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and

everyone that loves is born of God, and knoweth God.” And we have also been told in John 13:35, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.” **The outward sign that we have been born again is our love for fellow believers.**

**Therefore, learning to walk in love is the most important thing we will ever do in this area of faith.** You might be thinking, “What does love have to do with faith?” The answer is found in Mark 11:22-25, “So Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. *And* whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.”

**We are familiar with verses 23-24 and we are quick to quote those verses when it comes to prayer and faith.** But a careful study will reveal that Jesus uses the word “and,” which is a conjunctive word, to tie verse 23-24, to verse 25, “And when you stand praying...” **It is obvious that He is still talking about praying in faith.** And what are we to do as we pray in faith? “...if you have anything against anyone, forgive him...”

With that same thought in mind, look at what we have been told in Galatians 5:6, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.” **The Bible says that faith works by love.** Now watch this – **if there is no love, faith simply will not work.** And forgiveness has to do with love, doesn’t it? John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...” Ephesians 4:32 says, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

**Now I know the devil is trying to get some of you to believe that**

**you can't forgive that particular person for what they have done to you, but that is simply not true.** 1 John 4:8 tells us "God is love" and Romans 5:5 says, "...the love is God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."

**Listen to me tonight, if you have been saved, "love of God" is in your heart.** You don't have to *pray* for it. You don't have to *fast* for it. **If you have been saved, its there.** Why? Because Jesus is in there.

With that thought in mind, look at verses 16-18, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Paul now prays that the child of God would grow in grace and faith, and that God would give us the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."

In the Old Testament, the writer of Proverbs 2:12 told us, "My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding." In 1 Corinthians 12 we are told of the true ministry of spiritual gifts, and in verse 8 we are told, "For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit." **The child of God will never be able to grow in grace and knowledge until he is willing to live under the direct power of the Holy Spirit.**

Paul then admonishes us to have "the eyes of your understanding...enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of your calling." Job said in Job 42:5, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." **One of the great assignments of the Holy Spirit is to open up the eyes of our inward souls that we may know the reality and the power of God in our own lives.**

**One of the great tragedies of our present-day church is that so many Christians have their eyes closed to the greatness of God.** Jesus put it this way in Matthew 13:13-16, “Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.” Ladies and gentlemen, for too long Satan has blinded the eyes of Christians to the great and precious promises of God as they relate to the necessity of victorious Christian living.

**Therefore, instead of turning our knowledge and our problems over to God in faith, we try to work things out with reason and logic.** Unfortunately, we have too many Christians, like the, unsaved, have reduced the world to an illogical and irrelevant, and impersonal understanding. Knowledge without faith is a dangerous thing. This truth is seen in Zeller's book entitled “*Outlines of Greek Philosophy.*” **In his book, Zeller tells us of a Greek metaphysicist by the name of Gargius that proved that *motion* was impossible from the standpoint of logic and reason.** First Gargius reasoned that a thing can't move from where it is because if it does, it is not there. *Second*, he reasoned a thing cannot move from where it is not, and that is a logical deduction. And *third*, he reasoned, that where it is, and where it is not are the only places that there are. **Therefore, he concluded, if a thing is not where it is, it can't possibly be where it is not.** Consequently a thing simply can't move. And that, my friend, is **logic.**

**The Christian life is a life that is based on a living faith in a living God.** Hebrews 11:1 simply says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” And that thought brings us back to the truth that is brought out for us in verses 18-23, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what

is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” God's desire for us to have spiritual insight is not that we might go around bragging about it, but that we might have assurance of our spiritual blessings, and can realize the present power and authority that every believer Christian has.

**Child of God, we have said many times before, you are somebody special.** You are now a **son of God.** You now possess the **divine nature of God.** **In your body dwells the presence of the Holy Spirit.** Your **citizenship is in heaven.** You now have the **authority to pray for anything you want and expect God to give it to you.** Never forget that in Jesus you are somebody special.

"But," you might be thinking, "That sounds like you are bragging." My dear friend that is no brag, just fact, as seen in verse 19, "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." Let me again remind you that Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." And then in Romans 8:31 we are told, "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, praise God, **we as Christians are a very special people, by the marvelous grace of a loving God.**

The **power of God that saved me;** the **power of God that is within me;** the **power of God that keeps me;** is the same **power of God** "which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and

power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” **We are the possession of Jesus Christ, and our assurance lies in Him, and in His mighty power.**

**Tonight, God is looking for Christians who will commit themselves to Him, and will allow Him to open the eyes of their hearts that they might see and know of their spiritual power and privileges that they can enjoy through Christ Jesus. Are you willing to be that Christian?**