

EPHESIANS

LIVING (THE) GOSPEL

Sermon 1 - Ephesians 1:15-23

1. Share a situation in which you have asked "Lord - what are you doing!"

Recap - Ephesians 1:1-14

2. What stood out for you from these verses which we explored in January?
3. What do we know about God's plans for the universe? How does knowing his plan help us to live in the world today?

Read again Ephesians 1:15-23

Knowing the Lord

4. By what two means, does Paul teach that we will know the Lord better?
5. How will wisdom help us know God better? How can we gain such wisdom?
6. How will revelation help us know God better? How can we gain such revelation?
7. What difference will knowing God better make in our lives?
8. A non-Christian friend says to you - 'I don't know why God let you go through that hard time'. How do you answer?

Know the hope

9. Let's say you're struggling financially. The bills are mounting. What are the challenges?
10. Let's say now, that you know that you have an inheritance coming. What difference that does make?
11. What difference should the hope of our eternal inheritance make to life's challenges here and now?
12. Why are we tempted to think our hope lies just somewhere up ahead or around the corner in this world?
13. Why do we struggle to relate our future inheritance to our everyday challenges?

Know the power

14. What did God's mighty power achieve for the Lord Jesus? (See the passage again)
15. How can we draw from God's power - what will it actually mean for us in practical terms that God's power (the same power which raised Jesus) is available to us?

Pray for one another that we might know God better, know the hope to which he has called us and know his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Date: 8th April 2018
Services: 730, 930, and 930 Peregian (via video)
Series: Ephesians: Living (the) Gospel
Passage: Ephesians 1:15-23
Title: Knowing God
Outline: Know the Lord
Know the hope
Know the power

- Have you ever asked the question: **‘what on earth is God doing’?**
- Many situations can give rise to such a question.... In fact I’d be surprised if anyone here **hasn’t** asked it.
- An **illness**, an **accident**, a **broken bone**, a **divorce**, **unemployment**, a **fractured relationship**, a **miscarriage**, **infertility**, **depression**, **failed exams**... we could go **on and on**...
- Even taking it out of the **personal** realm... mass shootings in the USA, increased tensions with Russia, the Syria conflict still unresolved, the recent **earthquake in Papua New Guinea**, a **fire in a mall in Russia killing over 60 people**... the state of the church around the world and in our own land...
- **What on earth are you doing Lord?**
- Well I can tell you.
- In fact – I can remind you – because we looked at this in the summer...
- From Eph 1:10 - It **was** a mystery – but it’s now been **revealed**.
- Look with me **there** again - *he made known to us the mystery of his will* – **to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ**.
- Well that’s certainly not how we see the world right now!
- We see **division** and **turmoil** and **injustice** and **oppression**...
- We see **conflict** and economic **imbalance**
- We see **religions** that teach **opposite realities**...
- We see the **decline** in **Christianity** in the west
- We see **rise** in **persecution of Christians** ...
- Even in our own lives and families we know not all is well...
- But here’s the **promise**... here’s the **plan**... that one day God will bring everything together in **perfect unity** under the leadership of his **Son** – the **Messiah** – our **Saviour** – our **King** – **Jesus!! //**
- That’s the **plan**.
- What does it mean?
- It means that **one day** – at a time determined by God himself – Paul says – when times will have reached their fulfilment – i.e. in accord with his eternal plan – a **brilliant unity** will be restored to the **universe**... centred around, rooted in the person of **Jesus Christ**.
- This is God’s overarching purpose for the **whole** of the **created order**... //

- Life is fractured now... we **all** experience it... to one degree or another – life is **messy** on a **PERSONAL** level...
- life is **messy** on a **GLOBAL** level...
- And in the **SPIRITUAL** realm – as we will see when we get to chapter 6, there are **powers** and **forces** at work which are **opposed** to God, trying to cause **havoc** to the work of God in the world...
- ...But one day... one day, praise God, the mess will come to an **end**, and every **person**, every **power**, every **force** in the universe will be **under Christ** and unified **in Christ**. ////
- Because of this friends, we among **all** people, should be people of **hope** and **joy** and **expectation**... people with a **perspective** on the world in which we live. ////
- So – we **know** the **plan**. //
- BUT, this is not just some **cosmic theoretical theological plan** which has nothing to do with **us**...
- **We** are at the centre of it...
- **YOU** are at the centre of it... for **you** brother and sister have been **showered** with **every spiritual blessing**...
- **do you recall from January?**
- **YOU** were **chosen** to be included in the people of God...
- **YOU** have been **adopted** as God's own
- **YOU** have been **redeemed** with his grace and have been forgiven...
- **you have been informed** of his plans
- you have been **sealed** by the Spirit!!
- Can you **fathom** it...? //
- Don't let allow the **frustrations** and challenges of **this world** to blind you to **these spiritual realities**...
- ...and however you try to understand what God is doing right **now** in your life... make sure that this picture of him **lavishing** his **blessing** on you... is the **filter** through which you grapple with everything **else** going on in your life! ////
- Having unpacked and explored and applied in great detail, the first 14 verses of Paul's letter to the Ephesians over summer, we're now going to pick up where we left off and pick up the pace a bit...
- ...this morning looking at the remainder of ch 1 – vv15-23 and I hope you can see those verses this morning... ///
- This **chapter** ends with a magnificent **prayer**
- And the **prayer** is directly linked to the wonderful blessings he has been outlining.
- Because he prays that his **readers** – **Ephesians** in the **1st century** and **us** now in the **21st century** – will **fully grasp** all he has been **talking about**.

- it is a prayer in three parts: that we might
 1. Know the **Lord**
 2. Know the **hope**
 3. Know the **power**
- (i) that we may **know the Lord** – Look with me at v15 – *for this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*
- What better prayer could a **pastor pray** for his people than that?
- Brothers and sisters – that is what **any pastor would want for his people...**
- this is what I want for you... that you may **know this God who has blessed you with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm,...**
- **...know the Father who has adopted you, know the Saviour who has rescued you... know the Spirit who has sealed you...**
- pray this for one another – pray it for **me...** for **I** want to know him **better too!** //
- **How will it happen?** Through the Spirit of **wisdom and revelation.**
- The work of the Holy Spirit...
- **Wisdom** - making us **wise.** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom – the Old Testament tells us that in many places... fear – that healthy respect – that clear understanding that God is God and we are not... that we don't meet God as equals... only a fool thinks we meet God as equals... as pals... as mates... no; we need that healthy respect for who God is and who we are.
- **And revelation** – the Holy Spirit will take God's word and open it up to our hearts and apply it to our hearts...
- And so when the HS gives us wisdom about who God is and what he is like and when he reveals God to us through his word... we will know him better.
- Brothers and sisters – as I give thanks for you – I am going to ask that God may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may **know** him better!!
- What difference do you think knowing God better will make?
- ...if we all knew him better... had a better grasp of him, his character, his plans and purposes... we'd be a lot richer... a lot better off in our Christian life.
- Think in terms of human relationship – what happens when you know someone? Ie – someone really good...?
- You **trust** them...
- You know you can **depend** on them
- You feel **safe** in their presence
- When you come to know a good person,... you can be yourself with them... you can talk to them about anything... and even if they act in a way which confuses you... you still trust them – trust their intent... and you interpret everything through that trust...
- Friends.. this is what happens when we know God better!! /
- You feel safe in his presence, you open up with him – sharing your heart with him – and even if something he does confuses you, you trust him deeply... because you know his heart ///

- **Lord please help us all to know you better! ///**

(ii) **that we might know our HOPE** – v18 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the **hope** to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...*

- Do you **know** you have an **astonishing inheritance coming...**?
- Not from a long lost aunt or cousin... but from God himself.
- His inheritance is **life with him....**
- It will be **eternal...**
- ...you will know God **fully**, and **you** will be fully **known**
- Everything you see in **part** now – as in a mirror **dimly** – you shall see in **fullness** then – for you will see God **face to face...**
- Everything we **know** in part know – joy of **knowing** God – **restoration** – **healing** – the **presence** of the **Spirit** – we shall know in **full / then...**
- Everything Jesus gave us a **glimpse** of when he was with us... of **restoration and wholeness and healing...** we will know **fully** in the inheritance promised us... //
- It's not **halos** and **harps** – it's a new **creation...** with all the astonishing beauty and wonder of this one but without any of the effects of the fall we wrestle with every day.
- And it will be **shared...** with **all** the **saints** – that is – with **all God's people** from **all time...** but so **great** an inheritance is it – that even **your** share in it will be **overwhelming...**
- For **Christ is coming**, **everything** that is **wrong** with this world will be put **right**, all **injustices righted**, all **evil** put **down** and there'll be a **new eternal perfect creation** in which you'll share..... **"EVERYTHING UNDER CHRIST..."**
- And Paul prays that his people might **know this**. May be **convinced** of it. May grasp **hold** of it. May live in the **light** of it. May **revel** in the **implications** of it!
- You know, even without noticing, we place too much hope in this world....
- Well – next **month** – things will be better – or next **year** – or when we get the new **house** – or when I get a new **job...** or when my **sister** comes to her **senses...** or if we can just get to our next **holiday** – or win **lotto** – THEN everything will be **OK...** //
- Well friends – it won't actually. If you put all your hope in **this** world and what might be just around the corner – just nearly in reach – than you'll eventually be **disappointed...** the next challenge will be just around the corner!
- So, I want you to know this hope to which Paul refers - because then you **won't** put all your hope in **this world**.
- And you will **increasingly** see that what this world has to offer is not all that **significant...** not all that **great...** in fact in the words of the great little chorus – when you see Jesus in all his glory – then the things of this world will grow **strangely dim!**.... in the light of God's glory and grace... //
- And if you know the hope of your eternal inheritance then you'll live more for the world to come than for this world which is passing away! //

