EPHESIANS

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

- What stood out for you from these verses which we explored in January?
- 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 <u>in</u> 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 **1**st **century** and **us now** in the **21**st **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 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 <u>Father</u> who has adopted you, know the <u>Saviour</u> who has rescued you... know the <u>Spirit</u> who has sealed you...
- pray this for one another pray it for **me**... for <u>I</u> 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 <u>know</u> this. May be <u>convinced</u> of it. May grasp hold of
 it. May live in the <u>light</u> of it. May <u>revel</u> in the <u>implications</u> 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** <u>dim</u>!.... 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 then for this world which is passing away! //

- (iii) **FINALLY** Paul prays that his readers will know God's great **power** v19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given...
- That's **some power**! It reached down into the grave to raise Christ **up** and then as it were reached up to the highest heavens to place Christ there above any rule or authority that ever existed for all eternity!
- and the **power** that did that... is **AVAILABLE FOR** us who believe! //
- The 1st century church in its infancy was struggling against **opposition** and **persecution**...
- It wouldn't have seemed very powerful rather small and insignificant.
- Paul prays that his dear brothers and sisters in Christ in Ephesus and elsewhere, may know this great power... available for them... and **know** that they will not be **overcome**, nor be wiped out... know they can draw from this power so they stand and stay standing...
- In a similar prayer in the letter to the Colossians, Paul reports his prayer as follows: [I pray that you will be] strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience
- What's the power for? Not to leap tall buildings with a single bound... not to do mighty miracles.... But for > endurance and patience... so you can hang in there in a world which doesn't know Jesus and doesn't like Christians nor the church!
- And brothers and sisters I pray this for us today we've come through a challenging few months as a church... we've **lost** some momentum and ground...
- There are **burdens** we still share from that...
- But my prayer is that you will know God's **power** at **work power** to be **patient**... power to endure... power to resist temptation, power to face opposition, power to cope with trying times...
- And that you will not feel broken or useless or powerless... that you will NOT feel that you have no energy to keep going or to keep serving - but that you will turn to the same power which overcame **death** and **resurrected** Jesus.... - that you will **tap** into that and **draw** from that **well**... and keep going... Press on... /////
- Let's close... Friends what on earth is God doing?
- UNIFYING ALL THINGS UNDER CHRIST. That's the plan we saw back in January.
- And so Paul prays that his people that WE, gathered here this morning may know the **Lord** better, may be convinced of our **hope**, may know and draw on his **power**... //
- Turn this in to a prayer for <u>our</u> church
- Pray it for all those in your **connect** group
- Pray if for your **friends**...
- Pray it for the **other** congregations...
- Pray it for our Diocese and for the Anglican church of Australia.... Lord as you work to bring everything under Christ - please grant that we know you better, know the hope to which we have been called and know the immeasurable greatness of your power for us who believe.