

Paul's Powerful Prayer

Ephesians 1:15-23

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We're going to read Ephesians 1:15-23. I know this is a lot of verses, but I want you to follow with me in your Bible, Paul's prayer. It starts in verse 15, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you," and here it is, "in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," that's the petition, by the way, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

So far in Ephesians 1 we've seen two things. Paul was praising God, verses 3-14, from whom all blessings flow. He said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." It was really, beginning in verse 3 down to verse 14, as I pointed out, one long sentence in the Greek delineating the blessings that are ours in Christ. I've emphasized the importance of knowing that when you become a Christian, these are all guaranteed blessings that all believers possess—not just the super saints, but saints, period.

Paul goes now from praising God for His blessings to actually praying to God that He would give us an understanding of those blessings—that we would comprehend, that we would grab ahold of, and that we would experience those blessings in our lives. Again, it's interesting, from verses 15-23 that we just read is one long sentence in the Greek language. These two long sentences comprise all of Ephesians 1. Paul's prayer was that we would know by experience the blessings that are ours in Christ.

As I've always emphasized, you can't enjoy what you don't know you have. If you don't know what is yours in Christ, then you can't appropriate and enjoy it. It starts with knowing your position in Christ, knowing your blessings in Christ, and knowing that in Christ you have everything you need. I love the Colossians passage where Paul says, "And ye are complete in him," that you are fully rigged as a ship ready to sail. It's a nautical term. In Christ we are all complete, and we need to know what blessings we have and begin to draw from them.

What Paul does is begins to pray. As we started Ephesians, I pointed out that it is one of his prison epistles. Paul might not be out preaching in public, but he can pick up his pen and get on his knees. You know, it's interesting that when Paul was in prison he resorted to his pen and his prayers. Paul would be preaching, writing, or praying. You might say, "Well, I can't preach

like Paul,” and “I can’t write like Paul,” and “I’m not an apostle like Paul,” but guess what? You can get on your knees and pray like Paul the Apostle, and you can’t stop that. You can pray any place, any time, anywhere. You might even lose your ability to speak, but you can still groan in the Spirit and you can still talk to God. You might be in prison or in a hospital in an ICU ward flat on your back. Maybe you’re watching at home right now or you’re sick with Covid or some other issue, you can pray. You can intercede. You can move the hand of God on your behalf by praying mighty prayers.

E.M. Bounds said, “Corporate prayer, like little drops, form a mighty ocean which defies resistance.” I really think that one thing is important for us as believers is to understand the power of united prayer, that we as the body of Christ unite together and pray for our spiritual leaders, pray for our church, our community, our nation, unbelievers, and family members. Paul resorted to the power of prayer.

There are three things I want to point out. Let me give you my outline, and it’ll appear on the screen one at a time. We’re going to look, verses 15-16, at the purpose of Paul’s prayer; verses 17-19, I want to look at the petitions of Paul’s prayer; and verses 20-23, we want to look at the proof of God’s power. Paul’s praying that we might know what we have in Christ and then says there’s a power available for us to tap into and be able to live out.

First of all, verses 15-16, we have the purpose of Paul’s powerful prayer. Why did Paul pray? Notice it. “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” That “Wherefore” indicates that what Paul has just finished talking about motivated him to pray, but then he mentions two things that motivated him to prayer in the text. First, they trusted the Savior, verse 15, faith, and they treated the saints lovingly. They were putting their faith in Christ, which is a description of a true believer, and they were loving other believers. Look at it in verse 15. He says, “...after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus,” now these are two very fundamental and basic aspects of the Christian life. The Christian life involves faith in Jesus Christ. When we get to Ephesians 2:8-9, that classic passage, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.” The Christian life begins in faith, continues in faith, and comes to its conclusion in faith. The Bible says, “The just shall live by faith,” not by feelings, not by sight, by faith.

Faith is simply trusting and putting your belief in Jesus and that finished work on the cross where Jesus died for you, He was buried, and He rose again. We’re going to look at the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Christ in this passage. Our faith is not in man, our faith is not in a religious system, our faith is not in our good works or deeds. We don’t put our faith in our water baptism or catechism, we don’t put our faith in the clothes we wear, our religious garbage, or our activity, our good works. Our faith is in Jesus Christ. Amen? My faith is on Christ, in Christ alone. He’s that solid Rock, and we don’t bring anything, we don’t offer anything, we just trust Him—we put our faith and trust in Him, in Him alone. That is a description of a Christian there in verse 15—your faith, and your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ—and that true genuine faith resulting in regeneration or salvation produces love.

The Greek word “love” there (we’ll talk more about it when we get to the husbands and wives, Ephesians 5) is agape. It’s the sacrificial, self-denying, giving love. It’s a divine, fervent spiritual love, so you agape, “unto all the saints.” I chuckle a little bit when I read that because he did include the word “all” there. Someone said, “To live above with the saints in love, Oh that will be glory! But to dwell below with some of the saints I know, that’s another story.” Did he have to put all the saints? Yes, all the saints. Some are not that lovely and some are not that lovable, but God’s love shed abroad in our hearts goes out to all believers. Amen? Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The Christian life is actually faith in Jesus Christ and then love toward others. You have the Godward aspect of your Christian life, faith in Christ, and then the manward aspect, love for others. When you become a Christian, the mark of your salvation, the birthmark of the believer, is love.

I’ve met some Christians that say, “Well, I’m a Christian, but I’m not one of the loving kind. I’m not a loving Christian.” Well, that’s an oxymoron. It’s the mark of the believer. How can you say you love God whom you’ve never seen but love not your brother whom you have seen? How can you say to your brother in need, “Eat, drink, be warm,” and then not take care of their needs, not show them love? When Paul says, “...after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,” and we should certainly love one another, he said he did two things, “Cease not to give thanks for you,” and cease not, “making mention of you in my prayers.” They had faith and love, and it motivated and stirred Paul’s heart to be thankful and prayerful.

I wonder. When you think about other believers are you thankful for them? Paul, in writing to the Philippians, said, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” It’s wonderful when you can live such a life in Christ that when others think about you, it brings a smile to their face, certainly and hopefully not a frown. Amen? But they’re thankful to God for your life, and thankfulness led to prayerfulness, “...making mention of you in my prayers.”

Do you know many times I believe that God the Holy Spirit will put someone “on your heart.” We use that expression, “The Lord put you on my heart.” I believe that God does that for us to pray for one another. If the Lord puts me on your heart, you can pray for me. If the Lord puts you on my heart, I will pray for you. We need to be praying. Whenever someone comes to mind, or a thought about another individual, be thankful for them and be prayerful for them. You can use this prayer that we’re going to examine as indeed a marvelous pattern. They were trusting the Savior and treating the saints in love. Paul thanks and is thinking and praying about them.

Paul gives us a pattern, beginning in verses 17-19. This is really the petition, and the petition is here in verses 17-19 of Paul’s prayer. Now, notice these key phrases, “That,” and then notice the phrase in verse 18, “what,” and again in verse 19, “what.” Those are indications of the petitions that he’s having.

Now, I happen to believe that there’s really only one main petition, and it appears in verse 17. Paul prays, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the

spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” Everything else after that is actually a breakdown of that petition. He makes the petition and then breaks it down as to the content of that petition.

What did Paul pray for? Let me tell you what he didn’t pray for before we unpack these verses. Paul didn’t pray that they would have material blessings or lots of wealth and possessions. There’s nothing wrong with praying for health. There’s nothing wrong with praying for wealth and provision in the will of God, but I would note that when Jesus gave us what is called the Lord’s prayer, the pattern for prayer, He said, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Did you notice He didn’t say caviar (which I don’t eat)? I don’t understand why people pay all that money for fish eggs, just give me an In-N-Out burger, I’m fine. He didn’t pray for our steak, He prayed for bread, which is a basic substance of life. God is going to provide your needs but not your greeds.

God may bless you financially, materially, and physically, but there are whole segments of Christianity today that are all about wealth and health. That’s all they focus on. You would think that they find prayers in the Bible that’s all about healing and prosperity, and I note here that Paul went to the heart of the matter because I think that if you are right with God, and God gives you an understanding into the spiritual blessings that are yours in Christ, then you’re not going to necessarily be hung up on your wealth or your health or those kinds of things. Your focus is going to be your walk and relationship to God, so it wasn’t for health, it wasn’t for a new job (which is a legitimate thing to pray for), it wasn’t for the family problems, or “Pray for me. I’m in jail, that I can get out. Send me a cake with a file in it,” or something like that. He was praying for their spiritual lives. We need to keep the priority of prayer. The priority of prayer is knowing God, is walking in fellowship with God, is being in communion with God, and is growing in your grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What does Paul pray for, verses 17-19? He prays that they would know by experience what they already have. Notice that I read it, verse 17, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation,” and notice this key word in verse 17, “in the knowledge of him.” The word “knowledge” in verse 17 is a unique Greek word. It’s the Greek word epignosis. The word gnosis or know and the word epi in front of it means an overflowing, an abounding experiential knowledge. It’s not just having information about God, it’s having an experience with God. Paul’s not just praying that you would intellectually know about God. The goal of Bible study is not an informed mind, it’s a transformed character. That’s what he’s praying for. That you wouldn’t just know about God, there are all these famous people we know all about, but we may not know them personally. Paul’s saying, “I want you to know God,” epignosis, a full experiential knowledge. There’s a difference between knowing about a person and knowing a person.

Who does Paul pray to? Notice it in verse 17. He says, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” two interesting titles for God. Some people are a little bit freaked out by this title, “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” How do you have the God of our Lord Jesus Christ if Jesus Christ is Himself God? How do you have the God of Jesus if Jesus Himself is God?

Great question. I'm glad you asked it. Here's what I believe to be the answer. There may be more involved, but this is my best shot. It's speaking of the fact that Christ became incarnate. It's speaking of His humiliation. In Philippians 2, when He emptied Himself, "...and took upon him the form of a servant," you need to understand that, "...Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," not something to hold on to, but "took upon him the form of a servant...he humbled himself," it speaks of Him laying aside the manifestation of His divine nature, not His divine nature.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that Jesus gave up being God. That's impossible. One of the attributes of God is that He is immutable, He never changes. If Jesus is God, He's always God, always will be God, and He'll never change. But He took on humanity and prayed to His Father in Heaven. He prayed that He would be obedient and submissive to the Father's purpose and plan for His life. In the sense of His relationship to His Father, in His time of humiliation and incarnation, is where this title comes, "...the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," and then He's called "the Father of glory." He Himself is full of glory. He Himself is taking His people to glory, and one day we will share in His glory in Heaven. What a glorious hope and future that is for the believer!

Paul asks for "...the spirit of wisdom and revelation," verse 17, and "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened," verse 18. He wanted them to have the "spirit of wisdom." I believe that's the Holy Spirit—that the Spirit of God takes the Word of God and reveals God to us in His Word. Paul also prays, "and revelation," that He reveals Himself to us, and "The eyes of your understanding," the first phrase "eyes" there is a reference to what we call the heart. In the Bible, this reference to the heart...some translations use, "the heart of your understanding," refers to the real you, the real person, not just the physical organ of the heart but your mind, your emotion, and your will—your whole inner being and personality—that you have the spiritual understanding of heart. The heart is your mind, your emotions, and your will. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to give us wisdom and understanding and to transform the inner man. Someone put it like this: To know God personally is salvation. Write down John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Secondly, to know God increasingly is sanctification. Write down Philippians 3:10. Paul said, "That I may know him," by the way, that is a classic standout cross-reference for this text tonight, "...and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of," Jesus Christ in this life. Paul was a Christian, had been for thirty years when he wrote Philippians, but says, "That I may know him," he wasn't talking about salvation, he was talking about sanctification. "That I may know him," increasingly.

Once you become a Christian you need to grow in your knowledge experientially of Him, and then to know God perfectly is glorification, 1 Corinthians 13:9-12. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." We will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. Know God personally, salvation; know God increasingly, sanctification, which is our present experience; and to know God perfectly is glorification, when we either die and go to Heaven or

we'll be all—Praise God—raptured and meet the Lord in the air and be transformed, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

Let me say this: Knowing God, as he gives us in this petition, verse 17, is the answer to all life's problems. So many people just kind of beat around the bush or chase their problems around the barn and don't really go right to God as the source of life. If you know God personally, and you are experiencing Him growing increasingly, then one day you will be a perfect, glorified saint. That's the solution. That doesn't mean you won't have problems. "Oh, Pastor Miller is saying if I'm a super saint, I won't have any problems—I'll never get a flat tire, my car will never run out of gas, refrigerator will never leak, the toilets will never overflow, the dogs will never dig under fences. We'll have a Holy Ghost lifestyle." No, but the answer to all your problems is that you know God, you're growing in God. It's the grace and knowledge of God.

I believe that so many marriage problems can be traced back to your relationship to God—financial problems, your relationship to God; emotional problems, your relationship to God; psychological problems, your relationship to God. We need to be right with God and growing in our walk and relationship to God.

There are three truths about God Paul prays for us to know in this petition. It starts with that key word "what." It appears three times. First of all, he wants us to know, verse 18, "...what is the hope of his calling," that you know the hope of His calling, that "the eyes of your understanding," or heart, "being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." Basically, I'm going to cut to the chase and not go around all the different views and interpretations. I believe he's talking about Heaven. He wants us to be focused on Heaven. He wants us to be more heavenly-minded. He wants us not to be earth focused. He's praying that your heart will be open, your eyes spiritually will be opened, that you will understand that you are going to Heaven. What a perspective that could bring to life. Amen? To realize, "I am on my way to Heaven. Heaven is my real home, not this earth." It's so important that we do that, that we get our focus on Heaven.

In Galatians 1:15, Paul says we're called by Him and His grace. "...what is the hope of his calling," so the calling...by the way that term "calling" coupled with "hope" indicates that God calls us by His grace and that His call leads to Heaven or glory. Write down 2 Timothy 1:9, where Paul says, "Who hath," that is, God the Father, "saved us, and called us with an holy calling," so salvation here is described as being called by God. If you are a true believer, you have faith toward Jesus Christ, you have love toward all the saints, and you can be sure that God has called you by His grace. You've heard me quote Jonathan Edwards so many times you're probably getting sick of it, but he said, "What begins with grace ends in glory." It's so profound. God calls us by His grace and then one day we will be with Him in glory. "...he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He's praying that you will understand the glorious hope of your calling, that God has called you by grace and one day you will spend eternity in Heaven.

In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter says, "...who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

When we get down to verse 22, and I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, we're going to find the word "church" there. The word "church" is a Greek word *ekklesia* which literally means called out assembly, called out people. What is a Christian? A Christian is the called. You're the called. God called you. You heard His voice, you responded, you became His child, so you have the hope of Heaven in your heart and He wants our eyes to be opened to the reality of that hope of Heaven and the perspective that we have. One day we will be called to Heaven. Someone said that He calls us to salvation, calls us to sanctification, and one day He'll call us up to glorification in Heaven. Our past calling gives us a future hope.

Let me give you a couple other verses to write down (those of you that are taking notes). In 1 Peter 1:3, our calling is a living hope. In Titus 2:13, we're going to have a calling to "...that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." In Hebrews 6:11, we have what is described as the sure hope. So, we have a living hope, we have a blessed hope, and we have a sure hope. We have that assurance. Someone said, "It is the citizens of Heaven who make the greatest differences on earth. Those who are citizens of Heaven and live for Heaven do the most for God in this world." How very important that is. Write down Titus 2:13-14 where Paul says, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." We are living now holy lives, producing good works, because of the motivation of our future hope.

Notice secondly, verse 18, Paul wants us to know, "...what the riches of the glory of his inheritance." Having "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened," "...and revelation in the knowledge of him," first means that we have the hope of our calling, and secondly we know "...what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Again, there are two ways to interpret that, and we saw it earlier. The first way to interpret that is that we are His inheritance, that actually God inherits us through the redemptive work of Christ. We are His chosen people; we're His peculiar treasure. That's pretty cool. To think that I, a redeemed child of God, am His treasure. It also means that we, too, are going to inherit Heaven, inherit God's glory, so that you might know what is your inheritance that is yet future for us, the inheritance that is ours.

Go back to Ephesians 1:13 where Paul says, "...ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," and that Holy Spirit is an endowment of the future glory that is ours in Christ. We have an inheritance awaiting for us consistent with the hope of Heaven that is ours. We see Jesus, we will be like Him, and we will be living in Heaven—no more sin, no more sorrow, no more suffering, no more sadness, no more sickness, no more death, all the former things will pass away.

Notice the third expression, verse 19, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power," he could have just said, "what is His power," but he piles it on here, "exceeding greatness of his power." Do you know God's power is exceedingly great? It is unlimited. Amen? It is omnipotent. Paul is praying that we might know our heavenly hope, that we might know our heavenly inheritance, and that right now we might know God's power. God's calling looks back,

again, salvation; God's inheritance looks forward, glorification; and God's power looks around, present sanctification. This is Paul's main focus, by the way, God's power to experience the blessings that are ours. What good does it do to have all these blessings if there's no power to use them, no power to live the Christian life? So, the power that is available.

We move from the purpose of Paul's prayer, the second is the petitions of Paul's prayer, and now, in closing, we see verses 20-23, the proof of God's power. You say, "Well, that's all fine and dandy, Pastor John, God's power is available for us, but how do we know that there's really power available for us?" The answer is the resurrection, exaltation, and headship of Christ. Let's read it again, verses 20-23. "Which he wrought in Christ," now, at the end of verse 19, Paul mentions "...the working of his mighty power," the word "power" in your English Bible is the Greek word *dynamis*. It's where we get our word *dynamic* or *dynamite*. Paul wants us to know the dynamic, dynamite power that is ours in Christ, so that you might know the power that is yours, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named," in the spiritual realm with all these rankings of powerful beings, Jesus is over all of them, "not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

I want you to note here, if you're taking notes, the three proofs of God's power. First, it was seen, displayed, and demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, "...when he raised him from the dead," God the Father raised God the Son from the dead. By the way, the Bible says that God the Father rose God the Son. The Bible also says that Jesus rose Himself from the dead, and the Bible also says the Holy Spirit rose Christ from the dead. Which is it? It's all three because They're all three one God—three in One. The Father raised Him, He raised Himself, and the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead. That's powerful! Jesus is dead for three days. His body lie lifeless in the grave, and Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o'er His foes. What a great display and demonstration of the power of God to save the sanctified.

By the way, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which was a bodily resurrection—it wasn't a spiritual resurrection but a physical, bodily resurrection, He came back alive—is an indication that His atoning sacrifice on the cross was accepted by God the Father. How would we know that when Jesus died on the cross that God the Father accepted that atonement for our sin, other than God the Father raised Him from the dead. It's the Father's vindication of what He did for us on the cross, and it sets Him off as the Son of God. It's a reminder that my sins can be forgiven because Christ is alive. A dead Savior can save no one. You have the resurrection. This is why Paul, again in Philippians 3:10, said, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection."

Secondly, it moves to His exaltation. Notice at the end of verse 20, "...and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Just a quick footnote, the Bible says God is a Spirit. If God is a Spirit, then how does He have a right hand? He doesn't have a right hand. The word "right

hand” is a word that conveys the idea of a seat or place or position of authority and power. When you’re at a dinner and want to honor a guest, you put them at the right side. In Heaven, Jesus is given the supreme place of power and authority and honor. It’s not like God has a right hand and a left hand. When the Bible speaks of “the eyes of the Lord,” or “the mouth of the Lord,” it’s using human terms to describe an indescribable God. This “right hand of the Father” indicates that He is now exalted. We miss this quite often.

If you want to put the little package together on the life of Christ, then you start with His incarnation, move to His crucifixion, the resurrection, then His exaltation. If you want to add a little more to that, you can go to His pre-incarnate state, His eternal past, then His incarnation, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension and exaltation. He didn’t just go back to Heaven. He went back to Heaven and was given authority over everything. This again, Philippians 2, “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...And that every tongue should confess.”

Paul closes this prayer, this petition, by talking about the exaltation of Jesus. He came from Heaven, Philippians 2, “...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,” so not just ascended Him back to Heaven but gave Him a place of honor and authority.

Thirdly, verses 22-23, “...and gave him to be the head,” of “...the church.” I’m convinced, and I don’t have time to tarry on it, that verses 22-23 are packed with some important doctrines of the headship of Christ over His Church, the body. It’s super important to understand that. He is resurrected, He’s ascended, He’s exalted, and now He’s the head of the Church, “Which is his body.” This is the first time in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, verse 22, when you find the word “church.” The word “church” has nothing to do with a building. Sometimes you’ll drive down the street and say, “There’s a church,” no there’s a building. The Church is God’s called out people. Amen? Church is not a building. If we didn’t have this building and met in the field next door or in someone’s backyard, we’re still the Church. The Bible uses the word “church” here as all God’s people called out to form this body.

One of the metaphors of the church in the Bible is the concept of a body, a physical human body. It’s also likened unto a building with little bricks put together and God inhabits. It’s also described as a bride, that Christ is our heavenly bridegroom, and we’ll be wed to Him one day. It’s used in the book of Corinthians and other passages that the church is a body and Christ is the head. Now, how good is a body without a head? Not very good, right? Jesus said in John 15, “...for without me ye can do nothing.” Notice He didn’t say, “Not much,” or “Without Me you can’t do a lot; you can do some, but not a lot.” No. Without Me you’re a big zero. “Thank You, Lord.”

It’s the head that sends all the signals to the body. You know, we don’t think about our brains very often, but thank God for the human brain because without it you’re nothing—you can’t think, you can’t talk, can’t smell, can’t see, can’t move, can’t feel. Do you know your brain tells

you to be emotional? Your brain tells you to cry. Your brain tells you to feel. Your brain has all these impulses in there. The greatest scientific minds can't understand the human brain. I understand the differentiating between the brain and the mind, and they can understand the brain biologically, but they can't understand the human mind. It's because God made us in His image and likeness. That's that immaterial part of man that's different than the animal kingdom. You're not just a living being, you're a human being.

How marvelous that Christ is our head—He gives all the orders, He gives all the signals, He gives all the directives. Maybe you're a hand, maybe you're a foot, maybe you're a finger, maybe you're the ears, or maybe you're the mouth. I don't know. But all of us are a part of that body, and all of us need one another. We, importantly, need one another, and we all work together to bring honor and glory to Christ in the body of Christ by using our gifts in love for the building up and the edifying of others. Amen?

Christ is the head of the Church. No human being, no institution, no individual other than Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. Whether that be a local church, like Revival Christian Fellowship, or whether that be the Church universal, Christ is the head. He's the One that's building the Church, He's the One that's to be glorified in the Church, and it is His body.

Notice how Paul closes in verse 23, "Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Christ is filled and full by His glorious Church. I have this idea that I don't know how to express in words or even theological terms, but I think in the big mega-narrative of God's redemptive plan, the big giant mega purpose and plan of God, that it has to be revealed and explained to us, involves the Church—yes, Israel, yes, the nations—but it all culminates in the Church—the bride of Christ, the building of God, the body of Christ. It fills Christ; it completes Christ. When we get to Heaven, the Church is gathered around the throne of God—all the tears, all the sorrows, all the suffering, all the pain, all the difficulties, all the hardships that we've endured in this world—the Church will be glorified and magnified and Christ is our Redeemer. What a glorious truth that is!

When you get a glimpse of what the Church is, the body of Christ, we need a high view of God, of Scripture, of the Church. One of the problems in evangelical Christianity today is we have a low view of the Church—take it or leave it. We see this in this last year plus that we've gone through with the Covid thing. There are people who are active members of this church that have not come back to get connected since Covid broke out. There's no substitute for the body of Christ. There's no substitute for praying for the church, serving in the church, giving to the church, laboring for the church, being spent and spending for the church. We have this kind of, "Hey, no big deal. If I'm home, I'll go to church. If I've got nothing else to do, I'll go to church. If I feel like it, I'll go to church or be engaged." No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. It is His body. He died on the cross to redeem the Church.

I believe that God called me to pastor His church, but I'm an under shepherd. Jesus is the Pastor of this church. I'm not the pastor of this church, Jesus is. My whole focus and goal in life is to be faithful to serve the Church, His body, that we might be His hands extended, His

mouth, His expression to the world around us. Don't devalue or underestimate the importance of the Church locally and universally. It's so very, very important. I wish there were some way that I could convey or communicate how highly we should value the Church. It's not just Christian fellowship, and "I go to church," and "I like it cuz the music's great, and they have a nice worship team," or "an air-conditioned sanctuary on these hot days," it's His body. It's the expression of Christ in the world. He died to redeem the Church. The whole plan of God in sending Jesus Christ was to form the Church, the body, the bride of Christ.

Paul closes with this thing of understanding: God's power is available to us, and we see it in the resurrection. We see the power of Christ demonstrated in the exaltation, and we see it in the fact that Christ has been placed as head of the Church, His body. Let's pray.