**THAT YOU MAY KNOW HIM BETTER**

Ephesians 1:15-23

Key Verse 17

  **“**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.”

**Introduction**



 Recently, Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie filed for divorce from her husband Brad Pitt. Jolie and Pitt began their relationship after the release of “Mr. & Mrs Smith”. They officially wed in 2014, but now just 2 years later, Jolie is done with the relationship. People may wonder what went wrong for them. Usually women are more prone to be discontent in marriage than men and are more likely to file for divorce. Surprisingly, as in the case of the Brad-Jolie divorce, infidelity isn't top of the list of marital complaints. Among the reasons cited most often for wanting a divorce include the following: emotional abuse, a partner who's unresponsive to a wife’s needs, and a spouse's immaturity. Jolie has been increasingly interested in her humanitarian work instead of acting, while Brad wants to continue his celebrity life in Hollywood. There are also rumors of differences in parenting philosophies. Divided interests may have led them to separate. Whatever the reason, separation and divorce has become a normal part of daily life.

In contrast to this daily news of broken relationships, we will now delve into the second part of apostle Paul’s letter in chapter 1. In chapter 1:1-14, we have learned every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Apostle Paul wants the Gentile believers to know how valuable it is to know God better so that we may fully appreciate all the blessings we share in Jesus Christ. Instead of breaking relationships daily, we are in better and growing relationships thanks to Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross. May the Lord help us to grow in meaningful relationship to Christ and one another in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church. May we do this in this increasingly broken and fragmented society. Amen.

1. Read verses 15-17. For what did Paul give thanks whenever he remembered the Gentile believers? (15) What can we learn from Paul who did not “stop” giving thanks for them? (16) What was his prayer topic for them? (17b) Why? (1Cor 2:6-16)

1-1, Read verses 15-17.

 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, **16** I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. **17** I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ephesians+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29224f)] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

1-2, For what did Paul give thanks whenever he remembered the Gentile believers? (15)

 ***For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people,***

* “For this reason…” - Paul is saying, all of those things he has just told you in verses 3–14 are the reason he do not cease to give thanks and pray for them.
* He said God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world so that we should be holy. He has predestined us to the adoption as sons and daughters, according to His will. He’s redeemed us and forgiven us according to the riches of His grace. He’s made known to us the mystery of His will, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit until the redemption of our bodies.
* It’s for these things that Paul was thankful when Gentiles had faith in Jesus and began to love all of God's people.
* This was also because their faith and love were evidence of their participation in this great work of God.
* Paul gave thanks not only for their love for God, but for their love for all the saints. Real evidence of God's work in us is not the love we claim to have for Him, but our love for His people that others can see

1 John 4:20-21 reads,

 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. **21** And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

John 13:14 reads,

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.

John 13:34-35 reads,

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

1-3, What can we learn from Paul who did not “stop” giving thanks for them? (16)

 ***I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.***

* He gave thanks for them, not just one time, but constantly. He did not stop giving thanks for them." Here we learn from Paul how we should see fellow believers.
* Even though they lack something, we should see the work of God in them and give thanks, not just once, but constantly.
* And if we find that they are lacking something, we should pray for them, not criticize them.

1-4, What was his prayer topic for them? (17b)

  ***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.***

* Paul prayed for the Ephesians to "know God better." Though they knew God already, they needed to grow in the knowledge of God.
* Paul prayed that the Father would grant the Ephesians the spirit of wisdom and that He would give them revelation.
* But these are not so they may see into the lives of others or have the ability to predict events. He wanted them to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they would know God better.
* It is important for us to have an accurate knowledge and understanding of who we are. Yet it is more important and beneficial for us to know who God is.
* Charles Spurgeon stated, "It has been said by someone that 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father."
* "For philosophy comes to man with the message, Know thyself; the Gospel meets him with the far more glorious and fruitful watchword, Know thy God."
* So our Christian life must be centered around this purpose - to know God as He is in truth, as revealed by His Word, and to correct our false, idolatrous ideas of who God is.
* God is unsearchable and lives in unapproachable light. No one has ever seen him nor can they see him (Ro 11:33; 1 Ti 6:16).
* However, this God revealed himself through our Lord Jesus Christ!

John 1:18 says,

 "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."

Colossians 2:9 says,

 "For in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form." So when Philip said to Jesus, "Show us the Father and that will be enough for us,"

John 14:8-9 reads,

 Jesus replied, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father"

* To truly know God we must listen to what God has revealed about himself in the Scripture.
* Without knowing God, we have no life. Here "knowing God" is not just theoretical; it is relational and experiential; this knowledge of God gives us eternal life (Jn 17:3).

Isaiah 11:9 reads

 "They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

* Without knowing God, we cannot really know ourselves.

1-5, Why? (1Cor 2:6-16)

 ***We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him—10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 15 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 16 for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.***

* So we need the revelation of the Holy Spirit in order to know God better and deeper.

2. Read verses 18-19a. What things did Paul want the Gentile believers to know? (18-19a) What is the hope to which God has called us? (Ro 8:29-30; 1Jn 3:2-3) How did Paul describe God’s inheritance? (1Pe 1:4)

2-1, Read verses 18-19a.

I pray 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 his holy people, **19** and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

2-2, What things did Paul want the Gentile believers to know? (18-19a)

 ***I pray 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 his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.***

* The word 'heart' in Scripture signifies the very core and center of life. The word, ‘eye’ functions as real knowledge and understanding.
* The hope to which God has called you
* The riches of His glorious inheritance
* God’s incomparably great power

2-3, What is the hope to which God has called us? (Ro 8:29-30; 1Jn 3:2-3)

 ***For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*** (Ro 8:29-30)

 ***Dear friends,now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*** (1 Jn 3:2-3)

* God called us to belong to Christ, have fellowship with him, grow in his image, and eventually become like Jesus.
* We will all be like Jesus, holy and blameless in God's sight (1:4). This is our hope.

2-4, How did Paul describe God’s inheritance? (1Pe 1:4)

 ***and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,***

* The inheritance God has given us is so rich that everyone can be fully satisfied. This inheritance is glorious; it will never perish, spoil or fade away.

***the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,***

* ‘His glorious inheritance’ may encompass riches of love, riches of wisdom, riches of suffering, riches of glory. These things accrue to a rich inheritance in the saints(holy people).

3. Read verses 19b-23. Describe how God’s power was revealed through Christ. (19b-20) What is the extent of God’s power in time and space? (21) What can we learn about Jesus who is the head of the church, and who fills everything in every way? (22-23)

3-1, Read verses 19b-23.

 That power is the same as the mighty strength **20** he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, **21** far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. **22** And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

3-2, Describe how God’s power was revealed through Christ. (19b-20)

and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (19a)

 ***That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,***

* Paul wanted them to know how great the power of God is toward us who believe.
* We could say that the promises of verses 3-14 might come true in the lives of the Ephesian Christians in and through God’s great power.
* Here the word "power" comes from the Greek word "doo'-nam-is," from which we get the word "dynamite." This refers to God's unlimited, almighty power.
* *Born on October 21, 1833, in Stockholm, Sweden,* ***Alfred Nobel*** *worked at his father's arms factory as a young man. Intellectually curious, he went on to experiment with chemistry and explosives. In 1864, a deadly explosion killed his younger brother. Deeply affected, Nobel developed a safer explosive: dynamite. Nobel used his fortune to establish the Nobel Prizes, which has come to be known for awarding the greatest achievements throughout the world. He died of a stroke in 1896.*



* This power was revealed when God created all things out of nothing, and through His miracles.
* The Israelites once demanded meat in the wilderness. God said, "I will give you meat...for a whole month." Moses had a hard time believing this. But the Lord told him, "Is the Lord's arm too short?" (Num 11:23)
* Then he gave them enough quail to eat for a month. God is Almighty. He exercises his power according to his will. God's almighty power is always related to his will.
* We cannot demand God to use his power according to our will. Yet when God wills something, he will surely do it; nothing can stop him.
* God has incomparably great power for us who believe. (19a) When we ask God's help, we can have confidence that God is able to help us.
* God is able to provide for our needs. God is able to help us overcome all temptations. God can give us victory over any hardship or difficulty.
* We are weak. We need God's power. Paul wants us to know that this great power is for us who believe. Paul tells us that God's power was displayed through the resurrection of Jesus
* After raising Christ to life, God seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, giving him the place of highest honor and executive authority.

3-3, What is the extent of God’s power in time and space? (21)

 ***far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.***

* Here "rule," "authority," "power," and "dominion" refers to demons, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
* The words "every name" refers to angels and people and every conceivable intelligent being.

3-4, What can we learn about Jesus who is the head of the church, and who fills everything in every way? (22-23)

 ***And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.***

* Christ reigns over all, and his enemies are being put under his feet. Revelation 5:13 describes Christ's reign over all: "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”
* Furthermore, God appointed him to be head over everything for the church. Jesus is the head of the church, which is his body.
* Christ fills his church with his presence which brings life and power to every part of the body. Christ fills everything in every way.
* Christ is the center and provider and source of everything that we need. Christ is supreme and sufficient.
* With this mighty power available to us, we will never experience a "power shortage" in our believing lives.

**Conclusion**

 The great Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu said, “Know yourself and know your enemy and you will have victory in every battle.” But the Bible teaches that if we know Christ we will have victory. I think that one of our great problems in the church today is that we spend so much time getting knowledge of self, rather than knowing Christ. May God give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we know him better. May God open the eyes of our hearts so that we may know the hope to which God has called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

**One word: That we may know Him better!**