

J.J.

KNOWING WHAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST
Ephesians 1:15-23

Ephesians 1: 15 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 of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 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. 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.

Pray

INTRODUCTION :

What is a “fawn”?

It's a term for a baby deer. Do you know that a fawn can stand and run within minutes after being born? It means, it already has the strength to survive the minute it is born.

Just like a Christian, the minute you received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, God has already given you the strength in order to survive and be victorious against any trials that come your way.

That's what we've been talking about the past few weeks.

Paul's Writing Pattern : If you study the letters written by Paul, you will notice that in the first chapters, it's always describing the strength, the riches that we already have in Christ and the remaining chapters exhorts us what do we need to do knowing we already have those riches.

The pattern for “joyless” and “guilt-ridden” Christianity is that they know “what to do” because they're a Christian without knowing “what they already have” as a Christian.

Example : They know that they are already holy but when they act “unholy” they think they've lost their holiness before God. But what we've studied in one of the first riches of a Christian is that God already *“chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy (there's that word) and blameless in his sight.”* Ephesians 1:4

In short, we were already declared holy and that's the reason we act holy.

Illustration : When a baby is born, he is already a human being. Correct? The baby just has to act like a human being and even if he doesn't act like a human being, he is still a human being.

Heartbreaker : The problem with some parents, kapag naglikot ang bata, ano ang sinasabi, "hay naku, ito talagang demonyitong ito...mana ka sa ama mo." To make it light, nawala na ang pagiging human being niya, naging demonyito na siya.

That's why if you read

Ephesians 1:15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

A spiritually rich Christian

1. **knows the position they have in Christ** "...*for this reason...*" (this phrase naturally refers to the preceding verse)
2. **shows the position they have in Christ** "...*ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.*"

Illustration : A church member in the Philippines said that he would go home to the province in order to borrow money from a "kamag-anak" because his relative won the lottery. In the Philippines, the lottery organization doesn't disclose the identity of the winner. But that church member told me that his kamag-anak is also not telling anybody that he won the lottery but the townspeople have this nagging suspicion that he did win. So I asked him, "If that's the case, why are you so sure he won the lottery?" His answer was, "Because in just a short time, before he was only living in a shack, and now all of a sudden he's having a big house built and already has two new cars." True enough, his relative admitted that he had won the lottery.

Question : Do people around us see the evidences or have a glimpse of the riches we have in Christ?

The two evidences of a spiritually rich Christian :

1. **Faith in the Lord Jesus**

Important : Faith in the Lord Jesus is NOT manifested by saying, "I have faith in the Lord that He will give me the job I asked for." Or "I have faith in the Lord that He will heal me." Yes, they are declarations of our faith but they are not the evidence of our faith.

What is the evidence of our faith in the Lord Jesus?

Remember, that the newly born church in Paul's times were persecuted people undergoing extreme trials.

The evidence of our faith is manifested/seen when in spite of the problems, we still “count it all joy that we are undergoing trials of many kinds.” (James 1:2)

The book of Acts showed the world the Christian’s faith in the Lord Jesus

Acts 5:40-41 - apostles rejoicing after having been flogged.

Acts 12:1-6 - Peter sleeping soundly on the night before his trial which can end up in execution.

Acts 16:22-25 - Paul and Silas singing praises after they have been beaten, flogged and thrown and locked in stocks in prison.

Bro. Butch knows what my favourite song is :

Lyrics

Blessed be your name
In the land that is plentiful
Where the streams of abundance flow
Blessed be your name

Blessed be your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed be your name

Every blessing you pour out,
I turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say...
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be your glorious name

Blessed be your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's all as it should be
Blessed be your name

Blessed be your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be your name

You give and take away...

My heart will choose to say, “Lord blessed be your name.”

THAT'S FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS!!!!

2. Love for all the saints

Read John 13:35 “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Important : I'm glad that I've seen it in this church recently when you have shown your love to us in our time of need. I've seen the “fullness of Christ” in this church when you cooked and brought us food, called us and encouraged us, prayed for us, took care of our kids, cleaned our house and etc. etc. when my wife was in surgery and was recuperating from it.

I PRAISE OUR LORD JESUS BECAUSE OF YOUR LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS

Just like what Paul said in verse 16

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Note : Again, just to remind you “saint” in the Bible is not the one that has been beatified or something like that. The word “saint” in the Bible applies to all who received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Going back... Paul said in verse 16 *“I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.”*

Question : What is the prayer of Paul?

Answer : It's the succeeding verses 17-19 in Ephesians 1

First things first :

Question : Why do Paul needs to pray about verses 17-19

Answer : Remember it's connected with the blessings/riches we have in Christ from verses 3-14. But they are “spiritual” blessings. And you can't see something that is “spiritual” (greek word “pneuma” meaning “wind”) unless Someone shows it to you.

Important : To see something spiritual is not “natural” so we will need “supernatural” intervention to “see” our spiritual blessings.

Explanation : When I say “see” here, I mean “understand” e.g. when we say, “Oh, I see.” We mean to say, “Oh, I understand now.”

Story :

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26, 1997. He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to alarmist practicing junk science and spreading fear of everything in our environment. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical “dihydrogen monoxide.”

And for plenty of good reasons, since it:

1. Can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It is a major component in acid rain.
3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.

4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
6. It has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients.

He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew that the chemical was **H2O** (water).

The title of his prize winning project was, “How Gullible Are We?” He feels the conclusion is obvious

Paul’s prayer :

I. AS CHRISTIANS, MAY WE SEE THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST

*Ephesians 1: 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.***

Question : What is the greatest commandment?

Matthew 22:37 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Explanation : We can never truly love someone if we don’t know him/her. And as I’ve explained before “love is not only a feeling, it’s an act of the will.” It’s saying “I love you even if I really know who you are...your weaknesses, your strengths, your ugly side and good side”

Important : Now the reason why Paul is praying that “we may know Him (our Lord) better” is simply because we would discover that He is perfect, He has no ugly side, He has no weakness and the more we know Him, the more we will love Him. Remember, it’s easy to “love” beautiful thing and good things and Paul is praying that we may know Him because He is perfect, He is beautiful and what’s more is that He loves you.

It’s just like being mesmerized by a sun setting in the horizon, there’s a different hue and color every moment...there’s a WOW FACTOR each time you look at it. The same with the Lord, there’s a WOW FACTOR every time we know something about Him.

What is the process involved in seeing the greatness of Christ?

1. God’s grace

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you...”

Explanation : Paul knows that to know Jesus is a gift from above.

Read and explain John 3:8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

2. God’s wisdom

“...the spirit of wisdom”

Etymology : wisdom “Sophia” - practical application of the truth

Illustration : Napansin ko how they study math here in Canada. It's not only rote memory like memorizing $2-1 = 1$. They give them everyday problems where math is applied like Pedro has 2 apples but he gave 1 apple to his friend, how many apples that he has left?

That's wisdom, knowing to apply the truth that you've learned.

Question : How does wisdom apply to knowing Christ more?

Example : it's not just enough to know and memorize a verse like, “My God shall provide all your needs...” if you don't have an opportunity to practice it by being in need. And when that time comes and you hold on to that promise, you will discover that our Lord is faithful and therefore you will “know him more” and then fall in love with him more.

That's why *James 1:5 says “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”*

3. God's revelation

Etymology : “apokalypsis” (hay naku, doomsday event ang naiisip natin when we hear this word) this word means – something unknown now made known

Important : God's revelation is not a mystical thing like hearing voices or God talking in your dream and etc. etc.

God's revelation is found in the Bible, in His Word.

Story : Three Christians—a worship leader, someone serving in children's ministry, and a pastor—were fishing from a boat in the middle of a calm river. The worship leader said, “I forgot the bait, I'll go and get it.” He stepped out of the boat and “walked on water.” The pastor was amazed, but also felt insecure because the worship leader could walk on water. The worship leader returned the same way, walking on water. Then the children's ministry worker said, “Oops, I forgot the fish net, I'll go get it.” He also stepped out of the boat and walked on water. The pastor was astonished again and thought maybe it was because of their faith, making him feel even more insecure. When the children's ministry worker returned, the pastor, wanting to show that he also had faith and could walk on water, pretended he forgot something and said, “Oops, I forgot my Bible, I'll go get it.” Convincing himself that he had enough faith, he stepped out of the boat, but immediately began to sink and nearly drowned.

So his two companions pulled him back into the boat, and the worship leader said to the children's ministry worker, “Didn't you teach him where the rocks are that he needs to step on?”

God's revelation is found in the Bible, you just have to know it and the Holy Spirit to show it.

Example : Remember sometimes those “I see” moments when you are reading the Bible or studying it or when a pastor preaches and explains to you the meaning. THAT’S THE HOLY SPIRIT!!!

Illustration : Before I became a Christian, I’ve always heard the phrase, “Christ died for me.” I never understood it until one day, I heard it preached and explained through His word and I totally understood what it meant. And because of that I know now an important thing about who and what Christ did.

II. AS CHRISTIANS, MAY WE SEE THE GREATNESS OF HIS CALLING.

v.18 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, (NIV)

v.18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling (KJV)

Question : What is the calling?

Again, we must remember this passage succeeded the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. So the Christian is called

1. to be His children
2. to be redeemed by His blood
3. to be forgiven so therefore our relationship with God has been restored already
4. to be part of His plans

What does God need to do?

“....that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened...”

Verse : You remember the verse *“...many are called, but few are chosen” Matthew 22:14*, it means everyone is given the message but NOT everyone UNDERSTANDS it.

Notice : You have already explained to them the Gospel several times but can’t seem to receive it or accept it. That my beloved must need the work of the Holy Spirit...

Read 2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Story : I remember in one of my Bible studies, I was giving them an illustration of how Chicay’s gynaecologist prevented her from using “dahon ng bayabas” after giving birth because studies showed that it increases the acidity of her private area which can lead to infection after giving birth and besides it doesn’t have any effect in the healing process because our body naturally heals itself. One of the participants in that Bible study was really adamant and even almost angry that the doctor is wrong simply because her grandparents and her parents always did that and nothing happened to them and etc. etc. In short, this woman relied more on her “tradition” rather than the truth already proven by science. In short, she just doesn’t want to believe, that’s why she can’t accept the truth.

Exposition : “...that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.”

Etymology “ heart” kardias – heart here doesn’t mean “emotion”, sometimes the Bible uses heart for the emotions but most of the time it uses the word “bowels” splanchna in Greek, for the emotions.

Meaning – “kardias” means, an act of the will, it involves the mind

VERY Important: Christianity must never start by appealing to the emotion. It must appeal to the understanding of the Truth. Sometimes we are touched by the Truth which is normal...e.g. knowing that Christ died for your sins as truth can touch your emotions and give you joy.

Remember this sequence = Facts then Faith then Feelings

NEVER MUST IT BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND. The sad fact is, most Christians base their faith on what they feel. But the problem is, pabago-bago ang feeling. Kawawang Kristiyano!

III. AS CHRISTIANS, MAY WE SEE THE GREATNESS OF OUR CAPABILITIES

v. 18b -19a “...the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe...”

1. We are capable to live victorious lives because we have God

“... the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...”

Explanation : Last week, we’ve learned that our inheritance is GOD HIMSELF...that God is our portion...we have CHRIST IN US... that’s our inheritance. If you have Christ, you have everything.

Lesson : I love how John McArthur explained this, it goes something like this. People are looking for things that they already have. Example, they are asking God for strength when God has already promised, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me.” They are asking God to help them to love when we have it already because “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” Romans 5:5 Peace? Christ has said in John 14 :27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” The question is what should we ask for... we should ask for wisdom to know what we already have.

Example : Instead of saying, “Lord give me strength.” We say to Him, “Lord thank you for the strength that I already have in Christ.” And then move on. Don’t wait for strength to come because it’s already there with us because of Christ.

2. We are capable to live victorious lives because of God’s power.

v.19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength

We have the word power there in four forms:

- a.) dunamis – “incomparably great power”- to be effective
- b.) energia “the power is like the working” – to have the capacity to be affect

- c.) ischus “mighty” - a force
- d.) kratos “strong” – dominating force – mapaglabanan ang lahat

What kind of power do we have?

a.1. The power to rise above impossible situations

19. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms

a.2. The power to rule over our enemies – self and our weakness and Satan and his temptations

²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

To whom did Christ give this power?

v.22 -23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

b.1. The power was given to Christ

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything”

b.2. The power is manifested through His church

“for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

Of course the question is, ARE WE MANIFESTING THIS POWER?

Or are we like the world? Always worried about what's happening around them or can't forgive the ones who've hurt us and etc. etc.

CONCLUSION :

Story : There's this story of the millionaire who had a vast collections of the world's major paintings in his warehouse. One day, he heard the news that there is one rare painting that is so precious that everyone is looking for it and nobody knows where it is right now. So he asked his assistant to search all over the world for this rare painting so he can add it to his collections. So he and his assistants travelled all over the world to find this painting. But they didn't find it. So they gave up.

After a few months, while the assistants was doing an inventory of the hundreds of paintings that he has in his warehouse, he found out that the rare painting was already part of his collection.

IN CHRIST, WE HAVE EVERYTHING.

S.G.D.