

Knowing God Your Treasure – Eph 1:15-23

The Treasure that is Your Life in Christ #3

Introduction – In his famous book, “Knowing God,” J.I. Packer creates a little catechism. “What were we made for?” “To Know God.” “What aim should we set ourselves in life?” “To know God.” What is the eternal life that Jesus gives?” “Knowledge of God” (John 17:3). “What is the best thing in life?” “Knowledge of God” (Jer 9:23-24). “What in a man gives God most pleasure” “Knowledge of Himself” (Hos 6:6). To know God is far different than knowing about God. To know God through Jesus Christ is to know the greatest treasure one could ever have. But what sort of activity is it that can properly be described as “knowing God?”

Prayers for Powerful Knowledge (Eph 1:15-23) – Paul has proclaimed the saving wisdom of God, the Father’s predestination of the elect, the Son’s effective redemption through His blood, and the Spirit’s sealing of those regenerated (vv1-14). It is mind-blowing theology. It seems that now he stops to pray that God would give these believers the ability to understand it all, “*the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened...*” Notice all of the “knowledge” words. There are three things Paul prays that we would really “get” in ways that will radically change the way we live from the inside out.

Hope of Your Calling – You were no afterthought in the plans of God for creation. Eons before we existed, He chose us. And then He loved us, predestined us, blessed us, lavished grace upon us, sealed us, and on and on. And to what end? That we should be “*holy and without blame*” (Eph 1:4) and that we would be “*conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom 8:29). Paul prays we would “get” this.

His Glorious Inheritance in Us – Paul wants us to grasp the fact that when this happens, Christ also is getting something – we are His inheritance. In other places we see that we are His bride (5:25) and that in this union, we reign with Christ in the heavenlies (2:6). He is pleased that you are “*in Christ,*” He is pleased with where He is taking you, and He is pleased to use His great power which guarantees His triumph in and through you. Paul prays that we would “get” this.

Exceedingly Great Power (vv19-23) – Paul also prays that we would know “*what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...*” and now there are all kinds of “power” words to express all that has been given to us. This is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at God’s right hand. This power has set Christ “*far above*” all current and future authorities. That power exists now in the life of His body, for He is the fullness of the body “*who fills all in all.*” Paul prays that we would “get” this – for this is the activity of knowing God.

Power Given – This is not a prayer for power. It is a prayer for knowledge of power already given. The new birth grants every believer everything in Christ (2 Pet 1:3). It is a prayer for enlightenment for us to unleash that power as the church community, the body and bride of Christ, to the rest of the world. We don’t need power to evangelize; the gospel is that power (Rom 1:16). We don’t need power to endure suffering; that power exists in these earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7). We don’t need additional power to obey God; that power is at work in us (Phil 2:12-13). But notice, we all struggle with these things, just as did the Ephesians – that is why Paul is writing to them (and why this letter quickly circulated to all the churches). What we do need is this prayer to be answered – what we do need is the fresh revival of this knowledge that can only be given by the Holy Spirit.

Seeing Jesus, Knowing God – Jesus made clear that He is the only way to the Father (John 14:6) and then He told Thomas that if he had seen Jesus, he has seen the Father (John 14:9). We might despair that we cannot see Jesus and that our celebration of the Incarnation is the celebration of something we do not enjoy. But we have something far greater. First, we “see” Jesus in the preaching of the gospel far clearer than the disciples did prior to His death (Heb 2:9). Second, as we keep His commandments, His Spirit dwells in us so that it is just as true for us as for His disciples that He has not left us as orphans, that Jesus has come to us (John 14:15-18). Third, His love for us is so strong that we know we shall be like Him when one day we do see Him as He is (1 John 3:1-3) and that hope purifies us even today.

Not Facts, but a Person – We do not worship a set of ideas; we worship a Person. We do not love a creed; we love the One that the creed proclaims. Knowing God, we are told, is likened to “*...a son knowing his father, a wife knowing her husband, a subject knowing his king, and a sheep knowing its shepherd...*All four analogies point to a relation which the knower looks upon the one known and the latter takes responsibility for the welfare of the former” (Packer). Proper theology points us to a Person. Theology on fire unites us to that Person.

The Grace of Knowing God – The initiative for this relationship is perfect because it was not and never will be your initiative. It is God’s. “*But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God...*” (Gal 4:9). We may only know in part now; but praise God, we are fully known by Him now and forever (1 Cor 13:12).

A Challenge This Advent Season – Join Paul in his prayer for you and for those you love. We are seeking Jesus, always looking for His coming that we may know Him. Pour over His Words to His people, listening to Him as Father, Lord, King, Shepherd and Friend.