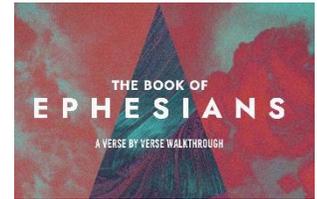


Title: Ephesians, Week 3, Going Deeper in the Faith

Speaker: Neil Chotai

Passage: Ephesians 1.15-23

Big idea: To go deeper in the Faith we must actively know 3 aspects of our Christian Life and respond accordingly.



When I was in grade 10, a friend of mine invited me to join his soccer team for the summer. So I said “yeah - why not, let's try this out.” Now I really enjoy the game of soccer I truly believe it is “the beautiful game”. Even though many of you may not think so - and that is OK for you have a right to have in the wrong opinion.

I had a coach, and he was really nice Irish guy and very encouraging - always wanting us to give it our all. That’s why Thursday night practices for Tuesday night games were a killer – they were brutal and exhausting. Our coach really believed in us and wanted us to know more about the game, skills, techniques, etc... He took time to be with us. Always wanting us go deeper in the game.

Now I remember one game in particular it was on a very sunny summer evening and very humid. And we were doing pretty well as a team - we won more than we lost which is a good thing and we were one game away to the playoffs.

It was time to face off against this team and when we saw the team - they were very different from all of us. Now remember, we're grade 10 students going into grade 11 and the team that we were going up against - it looked like they were in their 8th year college. They were huge – they were like men already. We totally looked out matched. Now think of the movie “Space Jam” and you get the idea.

The position that I was playing was defensive and this team that we were going against, they knew more than soccer, they knew intimidation. You know we were all preppy looking people - they were like heavy metal type. They just looked so rough with their beards and big hair.

The first half of the game we are working as hard as we can and goal after goal after goal after goal went in. When we looked out the weather changed dramatically - we saw dark clouds coming and they were really dark and getting darker. We needed to win this game to move ahead to a potential playoff standing.

It’s halftime - it's time for a break. All of us that were playing defensive are exhausted and we are play twice as hard because our offensive, weren’t doing their job - they were so intimidated by the other team. Our coach who really encourages us is there and he agreed with the defensive players that the offensive line needed to their job.

They weren’t engaging with the other team, but letting them call the shots, literally on us. But the coach in his unique way, was there helping and guiding us during this game. We have no option, but to win and time is critical, because the longer we played, the worse the weather got. At half-time it started to spit a little and if it gets worse a total downpour, and lightening, then the game will but cut and whatever the score is, will be the final. It’s currently 4-0 and we are the nothing.

The whistle sounds and it's time for the second half. It starts to rain and rain and rain I mean we were sliding across the field is like we were figure skating in the Olympics with our cleats. And it’s during that time, we see goal after, goal, after goal, after goal, after goal go by - then the whistle blows – lightening strikes and the game is called off.

We had one vision one goal and that was to win this game to advance in what we are called to do. We dug deep we tried to find the strength to move ahead to complete that mission. we needed to go deeper.

Just like the church in general, we have one mission, and we must go deeper.

So today we're continuing our series in the book of Ephesians if you have your bibles with you or your Bible apps open it up to Ephesians 1:15-23.

We are looking at a passage in which the Apostle Paul has a prayer for the Christians in the city of Ephesus. Now this is a different type of prayer. It's not a prayer to get things as we tend to do when we pray, but it is a very theological prayer over the Christians as they are following Christ to go deeper in their faith with Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:15-23

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.

Today I would like to share a message on "Going Deeper in the Faith".

So here we have a letter from Paul, one of the greatest apostles of all time, to the church in Ephesus. And in the passage that we are looking at today he begins verse 15 with three important words.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people,

Now what does that mean "for this reason"? It refers back to what he wrote before from Ephesian 1:1-14 about God gathering his

- Chosen
- Redeemed
- Sealed people
- Under Christ

In this letter Paul recognizes that these individuals have cross shaped biblical view. That is, they have a:

- faith in the Lord Jesus - vertical dimension of faith in the Lord Jesus in the relationship between them & God and...
- love for all God's people - a horizontal dimension of love for all of God's people no matter their cultural or racial background, Jewish or Gentile.

That they have something right here.

He goes on to tell the church in verse 16...

¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Here is Paul continually, consistently praying for this church, but he also does that for all the other churches as well.

Paul is known as a person of prayer. He has made prayer a part of his regular life. Prayer is important and we need to have a set time during the day to pray but also, we need to make it part of our daily routine. For example, when I'm driving and I notice that either there's a police car, ambulance or fire truck that's going to a certain destination I take the time while driving to pray. I'm not talking about pulling over and getting out of my car and to tell everybody I'm having a prayer meeting come and join us - I'm talking about taking a few moments and praying for a situation when it happens.

And it's after this verse that he begins to pray for the Christians in Ephesus and by extension us. These are called, redeemed, sealed people under Christ.

His desire for them is to know God better to go - deeper in the faith.

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.

Let's look at the word "know". This does not refer to knowledge. In our western culture, we take this word and make it very academic – we make it head knowledge. This is not what Paul stating. Remember these letters were written in classical Greek and when translating from the original to the English, it can be very hard to get the right meaning conveyed. It's ἐπιγνώσει (epignōsei) It's the fullness of knowledge acquired through personal relationship and in this case it is a relationship with Jesus.

Paul is saying to us may we be full of the Spirit, which God has given us at the point of our salvation. Being a Christian is not just saying the sinner's prayer at a point of time, but it's taking that decision from our heart to put it into practice in a relationship with Christ, through the Spirit of God that He has given us.

Spirit of Wisdom is what the Holy Spirit was referred to in the Old Testament, Isaiah 11:2ⁱ, so that phrase would have been known during the time of this letter.

But the Spirit of Revelation, is quite new. Paul introduces this term to emphasize the new and exciting revelation of the Gospel. In the Old Testament the fullness of prophecy in the Messiah was a 'hidden mystery,' but in the New that 'mystery' is the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the reconciliation of humanity and God.

There is no suggestion that the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation will bring new information of God outside scripture, but rather a deeper understanding of God, as it is revealed within Scripture, so we can know him better.

Now look at the order of the words – "wisdom" comes before "revelation", because to Paul "the Gospel was so wonderful that it was impossible for people to see the revelation of it unless they were taught by God, the wisdom to know God personally."

John 17:3ii "3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Philippians 3:10 iii I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death

It is our privilege to not just know God, but to know God personally, who Paul describes as the glorious Father

He is the father to whom all glory belongs for all the power and majesty revealed in creation, providence and redemption are his and he is the source. It gives us a sense of awe and strengthens our faith in God

We desperately need to know God well in a relationship with him through prayer and through the scriptures.

And now as we approach verse 18, Paul begins to give us 3 ways we must go deeper in our faith.

It now in verse 18 where Paul highlights 3 aspects of Christian Life. Here is the big idea...

Big idea: To go deeper in the Faith we must actively know 3 aspects of our Christian Life and respond accordingly.

First, we must know the Greater Hope.



Remember, knowing is not academic - It's the fullness of knowledge acquired through personal relationship.

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,

Paul uses the phrase the eyes of your heart, a biblical expression of the heart. The heart is not just the source of emotions or intellectualism or understanding but it is the centre, the core of who the person is. It is the inner man, it is the inner woman, in their entirety – it's their essence of who they are.

So, open up yourself, open up everything that is about you, so that you can be enlightened by God... Know the Greater Hope.

Paul speaks about calling when he talks about hope.

This calling has already taken place from when God called you into relationship with him.

2 Timothy 1:9 “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,”

This greater hope also represents an ongoing calling.

1 Thessalonians 2:12 “encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory”

and the future calling.

Titus 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Being a Christ follower, we live in a confident hope that is so different from this world. We have a future that is certain of eternal life, incorruptible righteousness, heaven, God's Glory. In the world that we live in, there is no hope like that found anywhere through any other religious thinking for philosophy of life.

We must always remember this Greater Hope that we have, it is who we are now, once we become Christ followers...and Paul's prayer is for us to go deeper in this faith that God has called all of us to.

Secondly, we must know the Greater Inheritance.



Remember, knowing is not academic - it's the fullness of knowledge acquired through personal relationship.

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,

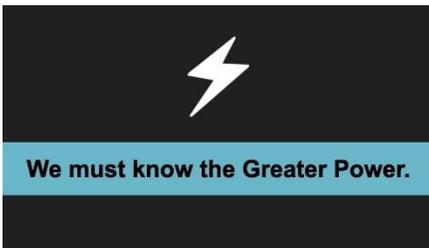
When we first read this part, in verse 18 of the riches of his glorious inheritance, we may think it is what we will inherit from God.

God had promised Abraham the land of Milk and Honey – Canaan and the Israelites received that. People die and they leave something to others – and that is their inheritance. You read about people inheriting, houses, cars, vacation homes, etc...

But Paul doesn't say what we will inherit, it's totally opposite of that. The riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people" – that is us. Think about how incredible this sounds. God has chosen, redeemed, adopted and sealed us, sinful people are forgiven to be his children. And on top of that, we who gather together, as a church of God, become the bride of Christ.

God could have chosen anything to be his inheritance, but he chooses us. He has called us by his mercy and love – we who were His enemies, wants us to spend eternity with us. That is unbelievable, it is mind blowing. And we need to constantly know this. This is important what Paul is sharing the scriptures...

Thirdly, we must know the Greater Power.



Again, we need to remember, knowing is not academic - It's the fullness of knowledge acquired through personal relationship. So, there is an action involved which is having a continued relationship with God that goes deeper each and every day.

Verse 19 Paul speaks about God's Power.

¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength but he states" incomparably great power = incomparably great is the thought of it is unimaginable – you just can't compare it to anything else, that there just no comparison at all.

Have you ever tried to describe something, but you just didn't have the words to explain it. You to find as my words in your vocabulary and you just can't find the word and if you do, it's not really good enough. Paul is in this situation right now as he is trying to describe the power of God. And Paul was a very smart man and if he had a problem trying to find the words of God's power can you image how amazing God's power really is.

^{19b} and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power=refers to effective/ operational power – it has energy to it.

strength=is power exercised in resistance and control

mighty=used of muscular body force a vital power

Paul's prayer concerning power is that God's power becomes known to the people in experience and in operation. The apostle is confident that this power belongs to men and women on this simple condition of their faith in God.

Let's go back to the book of Acts chapter 1. Jesus tells the disciples "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift the Father promised, For John baptized with water, but in a few days, they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

[Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."](#)

Ten days of praying, seeking and waiting, the Holy Spirit descends on the people, the first time in history, that the Holy Spirit comes upon all people. In Old Testament days, it was only reserved for certain people like prophets and kings, BUT after the ascension of Jesus – HE is given to all those that believe.

The power is to be shown to the world.

Paul goes on they say that this power was demonstrated with Jesus.

²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, within the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and his ascension to heaven. Again, it was power to be shown as a witness.

God not only raised his son from the grave but exalted him to the seat of power.

There is a reference here to ivPsalm 110:1, in which King David said the Lord says to my Lord sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

The resurrection and ascension were approval by the father of the work of Christ. It also refers to that Christ's work on earth was finished and that expresses the measure of the

father's power made available to all of believers.

Paul prays in Philippians 3:10 that I may know him in the power of his resurrection. Paul believed that these mighty acts of God not only as a measure of the power that Christians can possess but indicates the divine strength that can raise us to a new life with Christ.

When Paul brings about the resurrection and ascension of Christ, he is declaring Christ's position is far above all rule and authority in power and dominion.

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.

When Paul used the words rule, authority, power and dominion it was to counteract Jewish mystics, those who believed in an angelic hierarchy that controlled human destiny. But Paul is clear to the any type of Jewish mystics or heresy and declares that Christ is over the angels Jesus the one who controls the angels with absolute authority because he is infinitely superior to all.

Further Paul goes on to say that Christ is superior than to any other name that will ever exist in his present age. No other name is superior to that of Christ Jesus.

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.

We as Christ followers should rejoice in the fact of this power can never take us away from Christ. No satanic power can come against the relationship that we have with Christ because we are sealed with him by the spirit of God. That we are his and he will and shall always be our God. As one song puts it so well "No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand."

Christ is superior to all that is out there, and it is incredible to note that God has placed all things under Christ's feet - He has appointed him to be head over everything.

²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

There is a reference clear to Psalm 8:5-6

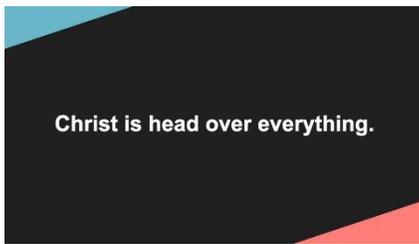
⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:

Psalm 8 refers to a place where God wanted humanity to be, however because of the fall of Adam, men and women were brought into bondage by their sin. Psalm 8 could only be attained if God did something for humanity...

and this is what God did ...

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything [why??] for the church, It was for the church, that Christ, as the 2nd Adam, the perfection of God, that we are restored to our true dignity before the fall.



Christ is Head over everything...

Christ is God's gift to the church he is the head over every power and authority and is given to the church. He is the head of the church for the churches benefit.

The church has authority and power to overcome all opposition because her leader and head, is the lord of all.

The church is described as Christ's body.

23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

The church is not a cold institution but the living breathing Organism - it exists in functions only by reason of the relationship with Christ who is the head.

23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

The church is filled by Christ not only with his own presence, but also with the gifts and blessings that Christ gives to the church.

God is present in the lives of every believer in every church. He demonstrates his victory over death, hell and the grave in that is shown through the church to the world that God has placed us in. It is only when the church is full of God can it meet an important place in the society that it is in.

We must always know this Greater Power that we have through the Holy Spirit.

Paul's prayer for us is to know God by going deeper in the Faith...
Greater Hope, Greater Inheritance, Greater Power.

The prayer of Paul is for us to get to know Christ – deeper in the faith, more of the Gospel in us. As a pastor, instead of seeing the church full of people, I would rather like to see the people full of God.

As we get to know him...the Greater Hope, the Greater Inheritance, the Greater Power... we must respond.

Now what is our response?

That we all do our part to become the Gospel centered church that He wants us to be. We must all do our part. because each one of us is a part of the church. An integral part of the body of Christ.

When we all do our part, the impact will be unimaginable.

Look at the state of the world today. There's almost 8 billion people on the planet, and we currently all have a shared experience. For the last 2 plus years we have had a worldwide disruption take place.

The person in London ON has the same shared experience as a person in London England to the person in Africa to the person in Asia to the person in Australia to the person in South America. There is confusion, people not knowing what's going to happen next, in the best of times there was confusion in our society, but now even more on what morals are, what is right and what is wrong.

So, this is the right time for the church to rise up and take its place to be in mission to what it was called to be. The body of the Lord and savior of Jesus Christ with the message of the gospel - the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of this world, the forgiveness of sins, so that we could have an eternal relationship with God through the great resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is in with every single person that makes up the church.

We have one mission to be the Gospel to be people who go deeper ...

The church has one mission to show the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and through all the odds that come against us, the church must fulfill its mission as Christ is the head of the church and the church, can be called off early too...to be called home, so there is an urgency that we, all of us, must do our part in the body of Christ, the Church of God so that we can impact our world for Jesus.

We looked at the 3 aspects of our Christian life for us to go deeper:

**To go deeper in the Faith
I must actively know...**

-  **Greater Hope.**
-  **Greater Inheritance.**
-  **Greater Power**

1. Greater Hope
2. Greater Inheritance
3. Greater Power

We serve as the body of our Lord to show the world the hope that is in Christ Jesus which is salvation so that they who are saved who are the redeemed are the inheritance of God in are filled with the greatest power which is God himself.

THIS NEXT WEEK:
How will you respond in getting to know God better?

Pray this prayer...prayer for others; be the church that knows Christ.