

"Prayer for the Ephesians"

Ephesians 1 and 3, selected verses

Ephesians 1

15 I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people.
16 So I never stop being grateful for you, as I mention you in my prayers. 17 I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit. The Spirit will make you wise and let you understand what it means to know God. 18 My prayer is that light will flood your hearts and that you will understand the hope that was given to you when God chose you. Then you will discover the glorious blessings that will be yours together with all of God's people.

19 I want you to know about the great and mighty power that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used 20 when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven. 21 There Christ rules over all forces, authorities, powers, and rulers. He rules over all beings in this world and will rule in the future world as well. 22 God has put all things under the power of Christ, and for the good of the church he has made him the head of everything. 23 The church is Christ's body and is filled with Christ who completely fills everything.

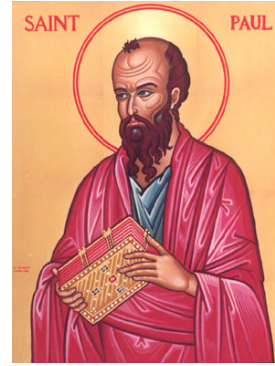


Ephesians 3

14 I kneel in prayer to the Father. 15 All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from him. 16 God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that his Spirit will make you become strong followers 17 and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in his love. 18 I pray that you and all of God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. 19 I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. 20-21 I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. His power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

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- All through faith history, God's people seem to respond to blessings by becoming self-satisfied and self-indulgent. Why do you think this is?
 - We begin to feel we don't need God.
 - We believe that we're already where we need to be.
 - Our frivolities and indulgences jade us so that we're lethargic and apathetic.
 - It's difficult to be humble when things are going well.
 - Material pursuits can be intoxicating.
 - We're most motivated to pray and worship when we need something.
 - Other
- Why do you suppose Paul believes that those who have been blessed should be particularly remembered in our prayers?
 - Blessings bring with them responsibilities.
 - Blessed people may drift in their commitment.
 - It might be easy for us to forget that blessed people have prayer needs also.
 - A blessed person has much potential.
 - Difficult times will come, so people reveling in blessings will need grounding and strength.
 - It's difficult to be jealous of people if we're praying earnestly for them.
 - Other
- What is your prayer pattern? What are your prayer priorities?
 - I pray for my family members.
 - I pray for those in need or for those on prayer concern lists.
 - Prayers of thanks and praise
 - I ask God for the things I need.
 - I pray for things to change for the better.
 - I confess my sins and ask for help as I seek to repent and be forgiven.
 - Other
- What aspects of God's power and glory resonate most with you?
 - God's promise of the Holy Spirit.
 - The power by which Christ was raised.
 - The authority of Christ over all.
 - Jesus Christ is head of the church.
 - The height, width, and breadth of God's love.
 - God's desire to bless his children.
 - We are forgiven by Christ's atoning death.
 - Other
- When the Christians at Ephesus received this prayer, it must have been a glorious blessing to them. Who could you bless with your words and prayers? Is there someone you've overlooked because they seem to be blessed already?
- Paul prays that the "eyes of our hearts" might be opened. What does this mean to you?
 - That the light of Christ's love would change our hearts
 - Truly seeing and understanding is more a product of faith than of physical sensations.
 - That we know the hope we have in God
 - That we would not be self-centered
 - Other
- Inspirational truths from Paul's prayer!
 - ✓ The Holy Spirit will bring us closer to God.
 - ✓ Our hope is in the Lord.
 - ✓ God's blessings are ours today and forever!
 - ✓ Christ is risen!
 - ✓ Christ rules over all things.
 - ✓ Christ is the head of the church, and we are the body of Christ.
 - ✓ In Christ we have life and hope!
 - ✓ Christ's love is too wonderful to be measured!
 - ✓ God's work in us can do far more that we would ever dare ask or imagine.