

That You May Know Him
(Ephesians 1:15-23)

Introduction:

Remember when you fell in love, you wanted to know all about that person.

Everything you learned was precious.

So it is with the knowledge of God, to those who love Him.

Paul loved the Lord supremely and knew the beauty of knowing Him. He desired that for the Ephesians as well.

What I want you to see this morning is, as Christians you ought to be so in love with God, that the knowledge of Him and His works are the most wonderful you can obtain.

Context:

1. After giving God thanks for His work in them, he prays for them.
2. It is interesting to see what he prays for: greater knowledge of God and His works.

I. Only A Heart Enlivened by Faith Desires the Knowledge of God.

A. Faith Precedes the Desire for Knowledge.

1. Paul had heard of their faith.
 - a. It was not a secret, closet commitment.
 - b. Real faith is expressed in actions.
 - c. He had seen it first-hand, and continued to hear.
2. It was their faith in the Lord Jesus.
 - a. There's no other name whereby a man may be saved.
 - b. Since the Fall, faith terminates on our Mediator.
 - c. There is no other Mediator besides Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).
3. The reality of their faith was evidenced by their love (*ἀγάπη*) for the brethren.
 - a. It could only be the fruit of the Spirit's work.
 - (i) This is not a humanly generated love.
 - (ii) Nor a "brotherly love."
 - (iii) But a love which seeks to emulate and glorify God.
 - b. It was a love that did not discriminate. (*For all the saints*)
 - (i) Godly love does not play favorites.
 - (ii) It loves *all*, not just the beautiful.
 - c. Godly love especially loves the saints <Ps. 16:1-3>.
4. It is on account of this, that Paul offers thanksgiving.
 - a. He continually thanks God in His prayers.
 - (i) An important part of prayer is thanksgiving.
 - (ii) We must thank God for all of His blessings.

- b. And he prays for **them**.
 - (i) Not for his own benefit, though he does benefit.
 - (ii) But for the Lord's blessing upon them.
 - (a) Are you concerned for other's welfare?
 - (b) You ought to love your neighbor as yourself.
 - (iiil) He prays that they would go on in growth.

B. The Illumination of the Spirit Also Precedes the Desire for Knowledge. (***The eyes of your heart having been enlightened [a parenthesis]***).

- 1. Spiritual eyesight is also the result of faith.
 - a. When they believed, they were sealed by the Spirit.
 - (i) They were marked as God's own.
 - (ii) The Spirit began to indwell them.
 - b. The Spirit also gave them spiritual illumination.
 - (i) The tense indicates a previous experience.
 - (ii) "Heart" refers to the whole spiritual nature.
 - (iiil) They were given spiritual eyes to see.
- 2. Without this, you cannot understand spiritual things <1 Cor. 2:14>.
 - a. Man has the ability to reason.
 - b. But his reason is used sinfully to cover-up God.
 - c. He considers it foolishness, though he knows its true.
- 3. So Paul prays for them to advance in their knowledge.
 - a. They had a measure of spiritual illumination.
 - b. But he prays that they might know Him more intimately.
 - c. A greater measure of the Spirit for a greater knowledge

11. Paul Prays that Their Knowledge of God Might Deepen.

A. The Knowledge of God Himself.

- 1. Paul prays to the Father.
 - a. He is the God of Christ.
 - (i) The God who sent Christ.
 - (ii) The God whose work Christ came to do.
 - (iiil) The God whom He acknowledges and whom He came to reveal.
 - (iv) Christ often spoke of the Father as "My God" (John 20:17).
 - (v) He is the God of Christ as to His human nature.
 - b. He is the Father of glory.
 - (i) The Father who possesses glory, the glorious Father.
 - (ii) All glory belongs to Him, for He is the source.
 - (iiil) This should give us a sense of awe in prayer and strengthen our faith.
- 2. He asks for a spirit of wisdom and revelation.
 - a. The Spirit of wisdom.

- (i) Either the Spirit, or that which He alone gives.
- (ii) He is the source of all knowledge and wisdom.
- (iii) He gives a two-fold wisdom.
 - (a) He inspired the apostles.
 - (b) He gives illumination <1 Cor. 2:4-13>.

- b. The Spirit of revelation.
 - (i) Not forth-telling, prophetic gift, inspiration.
 - (ii) A clearer revelation of God's excellence.
- c. Now that the veil is lifted from their hearts, they may know the true God.

- 3. That they might know ($\epsilon\pi\iota\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\psi$) God.
 - a. Not merely an intellectual enlightenment.
 - b. But a true experiential relationship.
 - (i) Every true believer desires to know God.
 - (ii) It is the highest knowledge attainable to man.
 - (iii) Paul desired earnestly that knowledge <Phil. 3:10>.
 - (iv) Eternal life primarily consists in that knowledge <John 17:3>.
 - (v) It is the knowledge of life in union and fellowship with Him.

B. And the Knowledge of His Benefits to Us.

- 1. To know God gives a greater appreciation of His benefits.
- 2. First, the hope of His calling.
 - a. The hope of which His calling is the source.
 - b. Not the external call, but the internal.
 - (i) It begins in time with the enabling call.
 - (ii) It looks forward to the final consummation.
 - (iii) To **see Him face to face, and to be conformed to His image, what greater hope could there be?**
 - (iv) This is a prayer for their sanctification.
- 3. The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.
 - a. He labors to bring out the greatness of the inheritance.
 - b. In the saints.
 - (i) Cf. vv. 11, 14. We are God's inheritance.
 - (ii) What will it mean to God to see His purpose complete, to see His people redeemed by His grace reflecting His glory for all eternity?
 - c. That their thoughts might be elevated above the temporal
- 4. Surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.
 - a. The power by which He raised you from the dead.
 - (i) Not a mere moral persuasion.
 - (ii) But a change due to the almighty power of God.
 - b. The same power that raised Christ and exalted Him.
 - (i) God raised and exalted Christ, so also you (2:5f)
 - (ii) Luther said, "Faith is no such easy matter as

our oppressors imagine, when they say, 'Believe, believe, how easy it is to believe!' Neither is it a mere human work, which I can perform for myself, but it is a divine power in the heart, by which we are new born, and whereby we are able to overcome the mighty power of the devil and of death; as Paul says to the Colossians, 'In whom ye are raised up again through the faith which God works'" (Hodge 46).

- (iii) The conversion of a soul is no small matter.
- (iv) It is due to the resurrection power of God.

d. This is the power that is at work in you (Eph. 3:20).

Conclusion:

1. Do you love God?
2. Is the knowledge of Him that which you seek above all else?
3. Do you rejoice to read His Word, to read the great classic books about Him?
4. Is God really your chief delight in life?
5. If so, then God has brought you from spiritual death to life by His mighty power which He purposed toward you in Christ.
6. If not, may God be merciful to you and give you the desire to find in Him the fulfillment of your heart through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. Let us pray.