

# The Christian Arsenal

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## EPHESIANS 1:15-23

Last week we began our study of Ephesians. We saw last week that Paul wrote this letter so believers would know the riches that **belonged to them** because **they belonged to Jesus**.

Paul wanted to make sure the believers at Ephesus and all believers who would read this letter knew beyond a doubt who they were in Christ Jesus and all they possessed in Him.

Last week we also saw certain things God the Father does for believers, and certain things God the Son does for believers and certain things God the Holy Spirit does for believers...we'll not teach that lesson again, but we need to remember that...

As believers, we are children of the King. Our Father is the God of this universe. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and all the other cattle on all the other hills and all the hills, as well...and even though we are heirs of all that wealth, many times we allow ourselves to be pressed into a mold the world presses us into.

It's much like the duck that thought it was a dog.

Scientists know that ducks tend to imprint soon after birth. To "imprint" means that they attach themselves to the first thing they see after they hatch...thinking they are "that" thing. This is **supposed** to work **for** the duck, since, when they hatch, the first thing they normally see is a mama duck.

Bu, sometimes this backfires. For example...once a duckling was hatched under the watchful eye of a motherly collie dog. The baby duck took one look at the collie and decided that the dog was its mother. It **followed the collie around, ran to it for protection, and slept with it at night**.

It spent the hot part of the day under the front porch with the collie. When a car pulled into the driveway, both the dog and the duck would run out from under the front porch quacking viciously, trying to peck the tires.

The duck still did some "duck things" however. The duck still quacked, enjoyed the water, and flapped its wings. Sometimes it acted like a duck, and sometimes it acted like a dog.

Christians often experience a similar confusion in identity. We have been born into and have grown up in a fallen world, so we have learned the ways of the world. We have become like it.

**When we become a Christian, we are in Christ. Too often, however, we don't see ourselves correctly. We act like the thing we *think* we are, rather than what we really are. We believe and try to do the right things; but for the life of us, we can't get seem to get it exactly right.**

When we least expect it, a car pulls into the driveway of our life, and we explode from underneath the front porch, quacking viciously and pecking at the tires.

We're not supposed to do that. We're supposed to be swimming around in clear blue lakes – not quacking at cars and harassing the cat.

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**Ephesians 1** helps us to see who we really are as Christians. See, God has told us not to be conformed to this world, not to be pressed into the world's image or mold. God has told us instead to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we **may prove what God's will is...that which is good and acceptable and perfect...**and we're going to see today as Paul prays to that end for the Ephesian believers and for us as well.

Paul doesn't want us to think we're one thing when we're really something so much better!!

Ephesians 1: 15-23...

Paul says, "In light of what I've just said...in light of all that God the Father has done for you and in light of all that God the Son has done for you and in light of all that God the Holy Spirit has done for you...and having heard of your faith in Jesus and your love for all the saints I want you to know I never cease giving thanks for you and I never cease calling your name in my prayers."

Paul commended them for their faith toward God and love toward men. These two things cannot be separated. The Christian life has two essential dimensions...**a vertical dimension, which is faith toward God; and a horizontal dimension, which is love toward men.**

But Paul knew that faith and love were just the beginning.  
The Ephesians needed to know much more.

**Paul couldn't go to these people and personally teach them this...Paul was in a Roman prison.**

But Paul **could** pray for them...and he **could** send this letter that would be read again and again by them and by other believers in surrounding areas **and by us...2000 years later!**

Paul wanted these folks to know the riches that were theirs because they were believers. Too many Christians then and now don't have a clue how God has provided for them.

More often than not we're like the late newspaper publisher, William Randolph Hearst, who invested a fortune collecting art treasures from around the world.

One day, Mr. Hearst found a description of some valuable items that **he felt he absolutely must own.**

So, he sent his agent abroad to find them. After months of searching, the agent reported that he had finally found the treasures. **They were in Mr. Hearst's warehouse!!**

Had Mr. Hearst read the catalog of his own treasures, he would have known that what he had been searching for...he already had!!!

And as Christians, we spend a large part of our lives searching for riches and blessings that God has already given to us.

I want us to see four things Paul prays **these folks** and **we would come to recognize and know...**

**1) That We Might Know God...verse 17b...**

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The atheist claims there is no God for us to know.

The agnostic states that they really don't know if there is a God, but if there is, we cannot know Him.

**But, Paul knew better! Paul had met God in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Damascus road and Paul knew that we really cannot understand much of anything else without a knowledge of God!**

Now, bear in mind this is not a "saving knowledge" of God that Paul is talking about. These folks are already saved...

There are different ways we can "know God."

**Some folks willfully *refuse* to know God.**

**Some folks know *about* God. They know Scripture. They can even quote it...but they don't know God as their Creator and Jesus as their Savior and the Holy Spirit as their Comforter.**

**Some folks know God as their Savior, but that's as far as they've gotten. They've never sought to know Christ any more or grown in Christ any more than when they were first saved.**

Paul wrote in *Philippians* that his desire was to know Jesus. Paul meant he wanted to know Jesus **by experience**. The word Paul uses in *Philippians* means "**to understand.**"

Paul goes on to say in that passage of *Philippians* that he longs to know and understand **the power of the resurrection of Jesus, and the fellowship of the suffering of Jesus.**

And if you were here Sunday night, Bro. Bob's sermon gave us a glimpse of just how much God had allowed Paul to know and understand the fellowship of the sufferings of Jesus.

But, you know what? Paul goes on in that same passage of *Philippians* and says, "I've not yet obtained that knowledge of Jesus. I've not yet become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of it...I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Well, if Paul had not obtained that kind of knowledge of Jesus, we can know for certain we haven't either.

But, there must be a knowledge we **can** have. Paul wouldn't ask God for something the Ephesians could not have.

This word for knowledge here in *Ephesians 1* is "**discernment.**"

Paul was asking God to give these folks a spirit of wisdom and revelation in discernment of God. God doesn't expect babes in Christ to suddenly become mature Christian, but He does expect babes in Christ to grow.

You and I must grow in our knowledge of God.

**To know God personally is salvation.**

**To know God increasingly is sanctification.**

**To know God perfectly is glorification.**

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Paul was praying these folks would have an **increasing knowledge**. Paul was praying for the **sanctification** of these folks!

I hope **we're** a little beyond the personal knowledge of Jesus that comes with salvation. I hope we're not content with just being saved. I hope we're into the increasing and discerning knowledge of God. I pray God will give us a deep longing in our hearts to know Jesus more and more each day. I hope we're longing for God to sanctify us more and more day by day.

Not only is Paul praying these folks and we might know God, but He was also praying

## 2) That We Might Know God's Calling...verse 18a...

Did you notice that Paul didn't ask that the eyes of their **mind** be enlightened? It's a very comforting thing to me that we don't have to be **super-intelligent** nor even **highly educated** to have our **heart** enlightened by the Spirit of God. Scripture puts more emphasis on the understanding of our heart than the understanding of our head.

And have you ever thought about the fact that you've been "called"? The word "called" is a very important word in the Christian's vocabulary.

The word "church" is a combination of two Greek words that mean "**called out.**"

**Paul used this word a lot.**

He said in **Galatians** God called him "**by His grace.**"  
He reminded Timothy that the believer has a "**holy calling.**"  
He tells us we should "**walk worthy of our calling.**"

Peter tells us we've been called "**out of darkness into His marvelous light.**"

And here, Paul refers to "**the hope of His calling.**"

Some callings offer no hope, but **our** calling carries with it a blessed hope. Years ago, when we lived in Whitehaven and we attended Trinity Baptist Church. They had a billboard on Elvis Presley advertising the church and it said, "**We preach the Book, the Blood and the Blessed Hope.**"

Keep in mind that the word "hope" doesn't mean "hope so" like we use it... "I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow..."

This word means "**confidence**"; it means "**assurance for the future.**"

What is our **hope**? What is our **confidence**?

**Our hope is that we are kept in the palm of God's hand. Our hope is that we have an abundant life on earth and an eternal life in the presence of Jesus in heaven. And our hope should motivate us to live like Christ each and every day.**

**When we were lost, we were without hope. But in Jesus we have a "living hope."**

## 3) That We Might Know God's Riches... verse 18b...

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This doesn't refer to **our** inheritance in Jesus but **His** inheritance in us! Bro. Clayton touched on this Wednesday night.

Does it amaze you that God should look on you and me **as part of His wealth?**

Warren Wiersbe said this:

**“God deals with us on the basis of our future, not our past. He said to cowardly Gideon, ‘The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.’”**

**Jesus said to Peter, ‘Thou art Simon...thou shalt be called Cephas (a stone).’”**

Gideon **did** become a mighty man of valor, and Simon **did** become Peter, a rock...

God sees us in the future tense. **Our past sins and our present sins are under the blood of Jesus.** God sees us **as we shall be** when Christ returns...**without spot and without blemish!**

God has given us to Jesus...we are part of His inheritance. Knowing that should motivate us to live **committed** and **devoted** and **dedicated** lives!

Well, Paul prayed that they **we know God** and that they **we know God's calling** and that **we might know God's riches**, but also...

#### 4) That We Might Know God's Power... verses 19-23...

**These are some of the richest verses in all the Bible...**

**God says He has made His surpassing great power available to you and to me.**

By making us His **inheritance**, God shows His love!

By promising us a **wonderful future**, God has encouraged our hope!

By giving us His **power**, He has enabled us to use the wealth He has given us!

**Why do we need God's power? For two primary reasons...**

**Without God's power, we could never truly use the wealth He has given us...**

**Without God's power, the enemy will come along and rob us of the wealth He has given us...**

And to make certain we understand the extent of the great power...He tells us what the power has accomplished...

In the **Old Testament** people measured God's power by His

Creation, or by His deliverance,

But today, we measure God's power by the **Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

We put a lot of emphasis on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead and we should! The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is what makes Christianity different from all other faiths. All other faiths have gods who are dead!

But not only should we emphasize the Lord's resurrection, we need to emphasize the Lord's ascension. This passage tells us He's not just above ...but **far above** all rule and authority and power and dominion...and every name that is named **not only now, but forever!**

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Let's not forget that God has put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet and has made Jesus head over all things...**He is the Head of the church...we are His body!**

Because we are believers...we are His body and He is our Head. That means there is a **living connection** between us and the Lord Jesus. This means we share in His **resurrection**, and we share in His **ascension** and we share in His **exaltation**. Next week we'll see that we, too, are raised up and seated us with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

Well, what does mean to you and me in this year?

Paul is saying, "Lord, let these folks see what they already have. Let them see that they can know You and they can know Your calling and they can know Your riches and they can know Your power."

## For instance...

We **already** have the power to evangelize the lost...to tell someone how to be saved. I mean, we already know the gospel, don't we? The Bible says, "***The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...***"

All we have to do is share it!

We **already** have the power to do God's will... The Bible says, "***It is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.***"

We **already** have the power to live godly lives... **Peter says we have all we need for life and godliness.**

We **already** have the power to lead a peaceful life... The Bible says, "***The peace of God which surpasses all our understanding shall guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***"

We **already** have the power to live victorious lives, free from **defeat** and **depression** and **discouragement**.

The Bible says,

**"Cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you..."**

**"Be content in all your circumstances..."**

**"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God..."**

And we could go on and on and on...

The bottom line is this... Paul's prayer for them in ***Ephesians 1*** is **not for them to get something they don't have...but for them to know about some things God has already given them, isn't it?**

And as I studied this week, it occurred to me that this just might not be a bad way for you and me to pray...

**Maybe we just need to come before God in prayer one day and not ask Him for anything...just put our long list down and come before God and ask Him to enlighten our understanding to all those many, many riches He's already blessed us with.**

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You know, I believe God would be pleased to do that for us! I believe God would love to show us the calling and the riches and the power we already have!

I believe He would be pleased to reveal to us more of Himself...that we might have a deeper and greater knowledge of Him!