

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

The Benefits of Really Knowing God

Ephesians 1:15-23

¹ What are the benefits of really knowing God? The scripture today will point some of these out. ²

From Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 15 through 23 we read, For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 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. ¹ ³

I pray also 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 the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. ² ⁴

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the

¹ v15-17.

² v18-19.

heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. ³

Most of us, when we come to the Lord, start attending church. That's good; but there's more. ⁵

In verse 15 ⁴ the Ephesians had developed a faith and love for one another. That's good. ⁶

In verse 17 ⁵ God wants you to know Him better. He said, in Matthew, chapter 7, verse 7, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” ⁷

³ v19-23.

⁴ v15 - For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

⁵ v17 - 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.

God really wants to walk with you in the cool of the day ⁶. I believe that the reason God created you was so He could enjoy your companionship. God created you to have fellowship with Him! ⁸

But why bother developing a personal relationship with your Creator? How would you benefit from that? The answer is in verse 18; ⁷ **an enlightened heart!** ⁹

The first benefit is . . .

⁶ Genesis 3:8-9 - Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

⁷ v18 - I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened . . .

I. You Will Know the Hope to Which God Called You - v18a

You will know the hope to which God called you. ⁸

The hope is salvation. ¹⁰ So, what is salvation all about? ¹¹

It takes care of your past; **a forgiven life.** In verses 7 and 8 it says, **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.** ¹²

It takes care of your present; **an abundant life.** John, chapter 10, verse 10, ⁹ **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.** ¹³

It takes care of your future; **an eternal life.** John, chapter 3, verse 16, **For God so loved the world that**

⁸ v18a - I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you . . .

⁹ New King James Version.

he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.¹⁴

What comes along with the hope? Verse 17; ¹⁰ **the Spirit of wisdom and revelation**. You have the Holy Spirit to help you understand the word of God and implement it in your life!¹⁵

First Corinthians, chapter 2, verses 14 through 16¹¹ tells us that the world can't understand spiritual things, but you can **because you have the mind of Christ!**¹⁶

The second benefit is found in the second part of verse 18 . . .

¹⁰ v17 - 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.

¹¹ I Corinthians 2:14-16 - The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God . . . because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

II. You Will Know the Riches of His Inheritance - v18b

You will know the riches of His inheritance.

What are the riches of His inheritance? ¹⁷

First let's see what they are probably not! ¹⁸

They are probably not an abundance of material possessions! ¹⁹

Let's first look at a passage of scripture that might give us this false hope. It's Malachi, chapter 3, verses 9 and 19, "You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it". Doesn't that sound like the Lord is waiting to shower tithers with wealth?

Here's the context. This is the Old Testament where the focus is God's blessing in this earthly life. ²⁰

The Old Testament people had a foggy idea of life after death. To them, Hades ¹² was just the place where dead people stayed. ²¹

In the New Testament you give to please your Redeemer, not out of fear of robbing Him! Tithing, then, becomes just the minimum. Your offerings are the expression of your gratitude to Him for the cross!

Some tithers are well off and do genuinely give God the credit for that. They are the exception. Most of us live in a lot humbler circumstances. But we also give God the credit for every blessing! ²²

So, what's the message here? God wants you to **be content with what He provides you!** First Timothy, chapter 6, verses 6 through 8, **But godliness with contentment is great gain.** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if

¹² Sheol (שְׁאוֹל).

we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. I believe it is a slap in the face of God when you complain about His gifts! ²³

So, what are some of **the elements of God's inheritance**? ²⁴

The first element is **the divine principles** by which we live. Psalm, chapter 119, verses 111 and 112, **Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.** ²⁵

The second element is **our salvation**. Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 13 and 14, **And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.** Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is **a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.** ²⁶

The third element is **eternal life in heaven** with God. Matthew, chapter 19, verse 29, **And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.** ²⁷

The fourth element is **being included in God's Kingdom!** Colossians, chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, . . . giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves . . .

The church is the earthly part of that kingdom. This is the place God designed to be His earthly support group; the arena in which you can grow in your faith!

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The third benefit is found in verse 19 . . .

III. You Will Know His Incomparably Great Power in Your Life - v19

You will know His incomparably great power in your life. ²⁹

Let's see what this power is probably not. ³⁰

It is probably **not the power to perform supernatural wonders routinely. The Lord does perform miraculous wonders through prayer today; but not routinely!**

According to Wikipedia, “A miracle is an event not explicable by natural or scientific laws. Such an event may be attributed to a supernatural being (especially a deity), magic, a miracle worker, a saint, or a religious leader . . . A true miracle would, by definition, be a non-natural phenomenon, leading many rational and scientific thinkers to dismiss them as physically impossible (that is, requiring violation of established laws of physics within their domain of validity) or impossible to confirm by their nature (because all

possible physical mechanisms can never be ruled out).”¹³

The definition of a miracle, then, is an event which is not usual or normal, right? So, if miracles were performed routinely, they would cease to be miracles!

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It is probably **not the power to have consistent faith**. Even the strongest biblical heroes in faith had weak times.³²

There was Moses.

He didn't want to go to Egypt at first.¹⁴ But he finally did go.³³

At Meribah, he disobeyed God and struck the rock instead of speaking to it like God instructed.¹⁵³⁴

¹³ Miracle, Wikipedia.

¹⁴ Exodus 3:10-11 - So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

¹⁵ Numbers 20:11-12 - Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to

There was Abraham. He was the father of the faith, right? But when things got scary in Egypt, fearing for his life, he allowed Pharaoh to take his wife, Sarah, home. ¹⁶ God intervened and Sarah was returned. But do you think Abraham learned his lesson? ³⁵

A few chapters further on Abraham, again, lets Abimelech take Sarah home to be his wife. ¹⁷

He was a mighty man of faith, right? But not consistently! ³⁶

How about **Peter**, the Rock! He who said to the Lord that he was willing to die for Him, buckled that same evening when he denied the Lord three times! ¹⁸ ³⁷

honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

¹⁶ Genesis 12:14-16 - When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman. And when Pharaoh's officials saw her . . . she was taken into his palace. He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, menservants and maidservants, and camels.

¹⁷ Genesis 20:2 - For a while he stayed in Gerar, and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for Sarah and took her.

¹⁸ Matthew 26:74-75 - Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then

A few years later Peter buckled again, and the Apostle Paul had to confront him about it. In Galatians, chapter 2, verses 11 and 12, **When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face . . . Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the **circumcision group**.** 38

How is this power demonstrated? 39

We see it in verse 20 ¹⁹ **through the Lord's resurrection and His majesty in heavenly places.** 40

Again, it is demonstrated in verses 22 and 23 ²⁰ **through the Lord's authority over us in His church.** 41

How does this power affect you and me? 42

Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

¹⁹ v20 - That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms . . .

²⁰ v22-23 - And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

It's the power to, potentially, **live a victorious life.** ²¹ ₄₃

It's the power to **produce spiritual fruit,** God's character, in your life. ²² ₄₄

It's the power to **develop the mind of Christ** in your life; ²³ to see things the way the Lord sees them. ₄₅

God doesn't want you to be a dormant pew sitter on Sundays. He wants you to know Him better. He wants you to be involved in His ministry. He wants you to develop spiritual fruit in your life.

He wants you to grow!

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

²¹ John 10:10 - The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (New King James Version)

²² Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²³ I Corinthians 2:16 - For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.