



SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH

EPHESIANS

SESSION 2A: THE POWERFUL EFFECT OF PRAYER

Ephesians 1:15-23

“Exploring the new life and new society God has created through Jesus”

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Ice Breaker: This study talks about the things we ask God to do for one another. What’s something you have been praying for recently? _____

After laying out the many heavenly blessings we have been given in verses 1:1-14, Paul continues with thanks and prayer. You can see from verse 1:15 that there are many people Paul is addressing who he has not met personally, yet he has heard about them. Paul’s impact at the school of Tyrannus had multiplied many times over in the lives of people in Ephesus and in the surrounding region (see Acts 19:9-10). There in prison, he kept each of these people in his prayers, and therefore he provides an excellent example of what we can do for each other.

“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.”

-- Ephesians 1:15-16

1. Have you ever felt compelled (or reminded) to pray for someone who was far away or who you barely knew? _____ Was there any result? _____

2. How do Paul’s prayers for his readers cover the past, present and future? How can this be a model for us? (See verses 1:15-19) _____

In Ephesians 1:17-19. Paul’s prayer is divided into three different but related requests. His concern is that his readers understand important spiritual truths.

Wisdom and Revelation

In Ephesians 1:17, Paul wants the believers to have a “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” so that they know God better. Proverbs 2:6 says “the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

"My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God." -- Proverbs 2:1-5

3. In what ways have you sought after wisdom and understanding in your pursuit of God?

The Hope of Our Inheritance

"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."
-- Ephesians 1:18

Understanding the hope we have is a matter of the heart. Paul uses the expression "eyes of the heart" in his prayer that we may be enlightened to know the hope we have in Jesus

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."
-- 1 John 3:1-3

4. How does the hope described in Ephesians 1:18 and 1 John motivate and inspire you?

2 Peter 3:9 says that God "is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance". He seeks after the one who is lost and rejoices when that person is found (see Matthew 18:10-14).

God's predestined plan is to make salvation in Christ available to all of humanity, and that is his choice. We only have a choice because God created that option, but it is finally up to us to accept or reject it.

Praying for one another:

This session gave us valuable insights into how to effectively pray for others. First we begin with remembering the person's faith and love - acknowledging what we see in them. Then we ask for a Spirit of wisdom and revelation and for God's power to be shown in each person's life this week. Finally we ask that they may understand and fulfill the calling that God has for them both here on earth and for eternity. Take time now to pray for each other, using the pattern of prayer that Paul used. First, giving thanks for the person. Second, addressing how they will handle the needs of the day, then finally, praying for spiritual growth in their life.