

“Empowered”

Life Group Lesson

Ephesians 1:15-23

April 19, 2020

OPEN: What are some of the physically darkest moments that you have ever experienced, the kind where it is hard to see your hand in front of your face? (a cave, a dark field in the middle of nowhere?)

Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^g of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray 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 his holy people, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

DIG: Read Ephesians 1:15-23

Note: The earliest manuscripts of this letter do not have the specific address to the church at Ephesus. This combined with Paul's statement in Ephesians 1:15 that he has "heard about" these churches, have led some scholars to assume that this letter might have been intended to be circulated to several churches (perhaps in the area of Ephesus). After all, we know that Paul was very familiar with the church at Ephesus and so probably would not just be hearing about them.

- If this is intended as a circular letter to be distributed to several churches, rather than addressed to one specific church, how might that affect the way we read it today? How might that affect the way you read it?
- What two qualities has Paul heard about these churches?
- Why does Paul pray that God would "give" them the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" when just before this he has already assured them that they were marked with the Holy Spirit as a seal when they believed? What is he praying for here?
- How might a Spirit of wisdom and revelation help them (us) to know him better? Is there a difference between "knowing him better" and knowing more about him? If so, what is the difference?
- How has God "called" us to hope? What does that mean?
- What has the incomparably great power of God done in the past according to 1:19-23? Why does Paul pray that our hearts might be enlightened to that power for us who believe now? What difference does that power make right now?

- What do you make of the words “for the church” in 1:22? What does this “incomparably great power” have to do with the church?

REFLECT

- What has God been enlightening the eyes of your heart to hear recently? In what way have you experienced the light coming on in your heart personally?
- Have you discovered something about God this year that you hadn’t known or noticed before? If so what?
- Which of these three things are easiest for you to see right now?
 1. The hope to which he has called you
 2. The riches of his glorious grace in his holy people
 3. His incomparably great power for us who believe
- Which of those three is the most difficult for you to see right now?
- If God’s incomparably great power is “for the church, which is his body,” what ought that to look like in our day? How should the church be responding during this current crisis? How is that going? What should we do?
- How should you be responding during this current crisis? How is that going? How can this group be praying for you?

PRAYER TIME:

Open our eyes, Lord.
 We want to see.
 We pray, God
 give us eyes that are curious,
 eyes filled with wonder,
 eyes still searching,
 eyes of faith,
 to discover something new about the Holy One,
 something new about ourselves,
 and something new about those around us.
 Open our eyes, Lord.
 We want to see.
 In Jesus name we pray, Amen.