Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Our Resources in Christ, Part 2: Is there Something More?
Scripture: Ephesians 1:18-23
Code: 1907

Take your Bible, if you will, and let's look at Ephesians chapter 1 – Ephesians chapter 1, and we're examining verses 15 to 23 in our current study and looking at the resources that the believer possesses in Christ – the resources of the believer. For some of you who have been a part of Grace Church for some time, this is like Peter said: “This is putting you in remembrance of things you already know.” For others of you who have never yet come across these truths, I trust this will be one of the most wonderful discoveries of your life when you get a grip on the reality of the resources made available to you through the salvation that is in Jesus Christ.

Let me introduce this subject this morning by telling you of a concern that I have expressed in some other circumstances to you. There is a trend in Christianity in America today, and perhaps in other places as well, that burdens my heart. It disturbs me. I often have called it the quest for something more. It's the prevalent idea that being in Christ is not sufficient, that being “in Christ” does not give you all there is to get, and so you have to seek something else

We hear people talking often of getting more of Christ, getting more of Jesus, getting more of the Holy Spirit, getting more power. This is rather common, as if the resources of Jesus Christ were sort of doled out to you like a pharmaceutical prescription one dose at a time, as if you had to land in the right spot to get it or qualify by some particular ritual or routine.

I remember talking to a lady about this who said that she said, “Frankly, I search for every possible thing I can get because – “ she said “ – I want to get all of Jesus that there is.” Well, the implication of such a thing is that when you got saved, you didn't get all of Jesus that there is. It's sort of like getting the right to it all but not really getting any of it in their hearts, in their minds.

Is that true? Is that good theology or bad theology? Do we need to get more of Jesus? More of God? More of the Holy Spirit? More power? Or do we have everything in salvation? That's a very important issue, and, for at least the beginning, look at the answer.

Turn with me, for a moment, before we consider Ephesians, to 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 3. This is what the Word of God says: “According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him,” and you can stop right there. That's a pretty clear verse. According to His divine power, we have already been given all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ.

In other words – listen to this – the biblical view of the doctrine of salvation is that salvation grants the believer everything in Christ, and there is no need for a search for something more. In fact, such a search, really, although not admittedly on the part of those who do it, really is an undermining of the essence of the doctrine of salvation. You really are undoing what Jesus said when He said, " *Tetelestai*, it is completed," or finished or done or accomplished or fulfilled. And you are saying there is something missing that must be sought.

A good way to illustrate this particular conflict is to have you look, also, for a moment, by way of introduction, at Colossians chapter 2. Now, the Colossian church was like so many of those early churches in the Roman world. It was exposed to all kinds of heresies, and there was a prevalent heresy in the Colossian situation which probably could be traced back to the Essenes, although we'll not get into that this morning, because they seem to match it the most closely. But there was a heresy then that basically said this, "Christ is not enough. You've got to get something more." So really, it's the very same thing we see today. It had its roots way back in the second chapter of Colossians.

Now, the apostle Paul writes this letter to Colossae to try to remind them that Jesus Christ is absolutely, totally, completely sufficient, and back in chapter 1 he intimated it when he said, "We have been delivered from the power of darkness, translated into the kingdom of His dear Son." And then he goes on to describe the Son as "...image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation, by Him all things are created. He is the head of His church, and, in Him – " verse 19 " – all fullness dwells."

In other words, you see, Paul is trying to say that fullness is in Christ. As we'll see in Ephesians 1, it is Christ, really, that is everything. It is Christ that fills everything, and in Him is all fullness, and when we are in Him in us is all fullness. That's the message of Ephesians, as well as Colossians. Also, when you come to chapter 2, you see the same thing again, and I'll show you what I mean.

The Colossian church was exposed to these people who were saying you need Christ plus other things, and the "plus" is what makes you spiritual. The "plus" is what elevates you. The "plus" is what gets you on to the really good stuff, and here are the pluses they offered: Number one, they said you need Christ plus philosophy, and what happened in that situation was they had their own human wisdom to add to the reality of Christ. It was Christ plus human philosophy.

And that would be a very good picture of what we know today as liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, modernism. They start out with Christ, but it's Christ plus human wisdom, human reason, human logic, human philosophy, and that's exactly what Paul warns them against in verse 8 of chapter 2: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world – " and those two phrases mean the *ABC*s of human religion, which is philosophical rather than theological " – and not after Christ." In other words, Christ is sufficient, don't let anybody say you must have Christ plus philosophy.

Secondly, these errorists were suggesting that you not only needed Christ plus human wisdom to be spiritual, but you needed Christ plus legalism. Verse 16, he says again, “Let no man therefore judge you in food or drink or in respect of a feast day, a new moon, or a Sabbath.” In other words, don't let anybody evaluate your spirituality on the basis of the rituals that you keep because, in verse 17, "Those are a shadow of the things to come, but that which is to come is Christ and He is here.” So it isn't Christ plus philosophy, and it isn't Christ plus legalism.

Thirdly, the errorists facing the Colossian church were saying that it was Christ plus mystical experiences – mysticism. Look at verse 18. He further says, “Don't let these false teachers beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility –“ it really means a false humility “ – that comes from worshiping angels and having visions.” Now, the Greek text says, “...intruding into things which he ‘hath’ seen.” The word “not” should not be there.

Now there are some people who say, “Well, it's not enough to have Christ. You've got to have a vision. You've got to talk to an angel. You've got to have a deeper experience, a far out experience, a heavenly vision.” And it gives them a sense of false humility that really turns out, according to the end of verse 18, to be a “puffed up fleshly mind.” You see, there are people who say it is Christ plus these experiences that get you to something more, or it is Christ plus legalism that gets you to something more, or it is Christ plus human philosophy that gets you to something more.

And then, fourthly, he says there's even asceticism – asceticism being self-denial, a monkish kind of life, a monastic kind of life, going into a hermit existence, and he talks about that from verse 20 to 23, the people, the kind of earthly religion, “the rudiments of the world,” again, that same phrase, meaning the basics of human religion which say, “Touch not; taste not; handle not,” and it goes on to talk about the fact that you neglect the body at the end of verse 23, and so forth.

And here is like flagellation, and anything you do to deprive your body, this is asceticism, monkish kind of life, monastic, self-denial, deprivation. But the point is this: There have always been, since Colossians 2, and all through the church, and there always will be, people who want to say that having Jesus Christ through His marvelous act of salvation is not enough. You've got to do “this” to get it all.

And the answer of the apostle Paul to that is don't let anybody mess up your mind with that kind of stuff, and the key to the whole thing is in 2:9 and 10 of Colossians. This is what he says: “For in Him – " and the “Him” modifies Christ in verse 8 " – in Christ dwelleth all, the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Is there anything missing in Christ? Is there? No. There is nothing missing in Christ. Verse 10, “And ye are – “ what? “ – complete in Him...”

Now, the essence of what Paul is saying is this: You don't need anything else. You don't need anything else. It's done. It's taken. It's already settled. You have been buried with Him in baptism. You have been raised with Him from the dead. You're complete in Christ. That is the doctrine of salvation that the New Testament teaches, and, beloved, there is no reason to chase something more.

It's not a question of finding something more, it's just a question of using the available resources already resident in the believer in Christ. That's the issue, and that's what Paul is saying in Ephesians 1. Let's go back to it.

Now, in verses 3 through 14 of Ephesians 1, Paul has very carefully outlined the believer's resources and position in Christ. He has told us who we are and what we possess. It is an absolutely fantastic, magnificent statement of the accomplishment of salvation and what it does, and there's nothing missing. In fact, in verse 3, it starts out making that clear because it says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with – “ what? “ – all spiritual blessings...” Past tense. Done. He has already done it in Christ.

Now these truths are so profound – listen – and so deep and so encompassing and so beyond the human mind to conceive that after presenting all of the great truths of our position in Christ, our resources in Christ through verse 14, he stops in verse 15, and he begins to pray that the reader will understand the reality of what he's just said because it's beyond the human mind to conceive. And that's why, in Acts 6, it says that a good man of God gives himself to the study of the Word and prayer.

He studies the Word to teach the truths to his people, and he prays that God will release His Spirit to help them to understand it because the human mind can't comprehend it, not even a regenerated human mind. It must have a special work done in it by the Spirit of God and that's why 1 John 2:27 says God has given us an anointing, and that anointing is the Spirit of God who teaches us all these things so that we don't depend on what man teaches, even the best of men.

And so Paul stops after this great statement of position and resource and says, “I pray for you that God would grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” That's what he says in verse 17, that you would understand these things.

Beloved, I'm telling you this, I'll say it all my life till I die, you will never be able to live out principles you do not understand. God wants you to learn the truths and the Spirit is the Teacher who takes the Word of God and makes it live in your understanding.

And so Paul stops his message and starts his prayer in verse 15: “Wherefore – " let's look at it " – I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” And what do I pray for you? “That the God of our Lord

Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." Stop right there.

"I'm praying for you," he says. "I'm not praying for anything more than I'm praying for this, that you would just be able to understand, and I'm asking God to release the Holy Spirit to work on your human spirit to produce a spirit of wisdom, spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him." And, beloved, I remind you of what I told you last time; this is a work of the Holy Spirit.

Look with me at 1 Corinthians chapter 2 for just a moment. First Corinthians chapter 2, and in verse 9 it says this: "But as it is written – " and he quotes out of Isaiah here " – Eye hath not seen nor ear heard..." In other words, this is not available to human perception, externally. You can't see it, you can't hear it, "...neither has it entered the heart of man..." It isn't even available to intuition. You can't even know it rationally, "...the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Listen. The things that God has given to us in Christ are beyond the human mind to think and beyond the human sight and sound to hear and touch and see. Say - How do you get them? Verse 10: "God has revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes the deep things of God." That's the only way we'll ever know them, and so we have received, verse 12 says, "...not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

Listen to me. There are some people who want to tell us that when you become a Christian you don't receive the Holy Spirit. If that's true, you will never understand any of the principles you're supposed to be living. That's why Paul says in Romans 8:9, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he's none of His." All Christians possess the Spirit. He's the resident truth Teacher, the resident Anointer, the one who touches the mind to conceive the things that are beyond conception humanly speaking. He is the only one, verse 11 says, who "knows the things of God."

And so Paul prays, "Oh, God, may Your Spirit work on their human spirit to produce a spirit of understanding that they may know what their position is." Beloved, I'm telling you, if we really ever get the grip on this, boy, it's life changing. I can only tell you, when this first came and dawned in my life, when the Spirit of God really – and He's still teaching me because I, still, am not there – but when I first began to realize what was mine in Christ, it literally changed my entire perspective in life dramatically.

Now, Paul's got three things in mind that he wants us to understand, three magnificent, incomparable truths: one, that we would understand the greatness of His plan; two, the greatness of His power; three, the greatness of His person. There's no way that I could ever begin to even scratch the surface of these realities in one session this morning. This will introduce it to you. You take it from there.

First of all, Paul prays, “Oh, God, may they understand the greatness of Your plan – Your plan – for them.” Verse 18, “The eyes of your understanding be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” That's it.

The calling before the world began, the hope after the world has ended, the whole plan is in that one verse, and he says, “I pray that they would understand the plan.” Boy, it's so important we know who we are and what God has prepared for us.

Let's 1ook at verse 18, first phrase, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...” Now, this introduces us to a very important thought. The word here in the Greek for “understanding,” is the word *kardias* from which we get “cardiac.” The word means what? Heart. Literally, the Greek says, “The eyes of your heart being enlightened.”

Now, that's most interesting. The source of spiritual enlightenment is God. We know that in verse 15 to 17 because that's Paul's prayer to God. He knows God is the source of this understanding. The channel of that understanding to us is whom? The Holy Spirit. The object of it is at the end of verse 17, “...the knowledge of Him.” Paul is saying, “God, You do it through the Holy Spirit that they may have the knowledge of Him,” that you may really know God.

And now, here is that organ of that understanding, the source is God. The channel, the Spirit, the object that we may know Him, the organ of it is the heart. It is the heart that must have understanding.

Now, we've got a problem with this term, so I have to explain it to you because, for us, the heart refers to emotions. American culture has so designated the heart to refer to emotions. All of our love songs talk about the heart, and we passed out little hearts, recently, on Valentine's Day. Everybody is giving hearts to each other, and it's supposed to convey feeling – how we feel. But that is not the way the ancients looked at it, and that is not the way the Jews approached it at all. Let me show you

The Jews spoke about feelings not in terms of the heart but by using the word *splankhnon*, the Greek word, and the word translates “bowels.” Okay? Now, we have a different significance for that word. We don't think of that word today. We don't say to our wife, “I love you with all my bowels.” That just – you know, something definitely missing in such a designation.

But that is precisely the way the Hebrews would have spoken and that is why that word appears so very, very frequently in the Bible. Why? Because the Hebrew always associated feelings with his – basically, his organs right here in his stomach. We say we have a gut feeling. When you get nervous you get an upset stomach, you get pain and anxiety right here. You feel things here. This is the area of feeling. You don't feel in your heart. You feel here, and the Hebrews saw things that way.

For example, in Song of Solomon, when the bride and the bridegroom see one another, it says, "My bowels were moved." In other words, there was a feeling of anticipation and excitement right in here, and it talks about that throughout the Old Testament.

Even in Psalm 22, Christ is dying on the cross, and He talks about His bowels suffering, agony, and pain. And in Lamentations 2:11, when Jeremiah is crying over the destruction of his people, it says, and he hurts in his inward organs, right in here, in the bowels. It even uses the word “liver.” “My liver is distressed,” because this is where they feel it.

And in 1 John 3:17, even in the New Testament, it says, “If you see somebody who have need, how could you shut up your bowels of compassion?” See, they felt it right here in the stomach.

And the heart, you see, to the Hebrew mind, did not mean feeling. It meant thinking. Thinking. That's why the word *kardias* can be translated either “heart” or “understanding.” “As a man thinketh in his – ” what? “ – heart, so is he.” “Out of the abundance of the heart – ” what? “ – the mouth speaks.” The heart is the thinking process. “The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, and who can know it?” It's the thinking. It's the will, the thinking, the understanding part, and that's true all through the Scripture.

So watch this: The organ of comprehension for the believer is the thinking process, not the emotions. God is not trying to appeal to the emotion. He's trying to appeal to the mind and the will and the thinking, and that's what the term *kardias* means. Christianity is not designed to appeal to the emotions. Emotions are designed to do this: They are to respond to the mind, and when your emotions get in front of your mind, you're going to run wild. And any brand of Christianity that appeals at the emotional level and bypasses the mind is only asking for trouble because it generates response as apart from truth.

Let me give you an illustration. Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 6 – 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 11: “Of ye Corinthians – “ sort of a sighing introduction there “ – our speech to you is candid; our heart is wide open." He says, “I've got an open mind before you.” He's using the word “mind.” “My mind is so open to you. Oh, everything that’s in my mind to say to you, my will, all that I know, I want to convey to you.”

But look at verse 13: "I speak as unto my children in fair exchange – " he says " – open wide your mind to us." In other words, “Hey, I got some things I want to teach you, and we need to get our minds together on this thing. There needs to be some learning, some understanding, but you've got something in the way.” And that's verse 12 in the middle, "On our part there's no constraint, but there is constraint in your bowels," *splankhnon*.

He's saying, “I can't take God's truth from my mind and give it to your mind because you're emotions are in the way.” Literally, the Greek says, “They were tightened in their bowels.” We would say, today, they were emotionally uptight.

And you see what he's saying? The work of God in the lives of the Corinthians is hindered because they have their emotions in the way of the truth. Whenever you put your feelings in front of God's truth, you short circuit the truth, and emotion will run wild. The heart comes first.

So I'm just pointing out that when Ephesians 1 says, “The eyes of your heart being enlightened,” it means exactly what it says. It's talking about the understanding of the thinking process. Paul prays, “Oh, God, may their minds know these things.” It's so important.

When the Holy Spirit works on the believer's mind, He enriches that mind to understand divine truth that is deep and profound and thus to relate it to life. And that's exactly what Paul meant when he said to the Colossians in chapter 3 verse 16, “You don't need human philosophy. You don't need human wisdom. You don't need legalism, asceticism, mysticism. This is what you need. You let the word of Christ dwell in you – ” what? “ – richly," Colossians 3:16.

That's the whole point, and I'll tell you something. If the Holy Spirit doesn't quicken the truth, it doesn't have the same effect. That's why Paul is praying, “God, do this in their hearts. They know it. Maybe it's there in skeletal form. Oh, God, by Your Spirit, drive it deep in their understanding.”

I'll give you a good illustration of it, Luke 24, and just you don't have to turn to it. I'll just remind you of it. The disciples on the Emmaus Road, remember? They're walking along. Jesus is right beside them, and they've been with Jesus for three years and what happened? They didn't know Him, right? They knew Him, but they didn't know Him. I mean they knew, but they didn't know. They had all the information. There He was, but they didn't know.

And finally, it says in verse 31, “And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished out of their sight,” and then this comment: “They said one to another – " I love this – “Did not our heart – " what does that mean? Our minds, our wills " – burn within us while He talked with us along the way and opened to us the Scripture?”

You see, to have the Scripture, to have the information, doesn't make your heart burn. It's when the Christ of God takes it and drives it deep in the heart that their hearts burned, and the same is true now. Christ is not here, but His Spirit is here, and His Spirit comes to us who possess the Word, and He makes it burn in our minds. That's His work. That's the eyes of your heart being enlightened, see.

And what does He want us to understand when we're enlightened? The first thing I told you, the greatness of His plan. Look at it in verse 18: “That you may know what is the hope of His calling and

the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." I don't know what else to say about that, folks, except that that says everything there is in the whole Bible and I'm not going to start from the beginning to the end and tell you all of it.

He just says, "I hope they understand what you've got planned for them. I hope they understand what it means that you elected them and redeemed them and promised them an inheritance. I hope they understand what it means to have been called from before the foundation of the world – " chapter 1 verse 4 " – chosen in Him to have been redeemed in order to inherit all that there is in the Kingdom of God that God could conceive for His children."

Do you understand the plan, man? I mean, do you understand what is going on? That's what Paul is praying: "Oh, God, may they understand that this is not some afterthought in human existence. This is the master plan of the eternal God forever and ever and ever." You've been master planned into it from before the world began.

That, beloved, is your identity, and Paul knows well that when you understand that you'll be more apt to act like it. So he says, "I pray that they would understand with their minds the eternal destiny of the Christian, ordained in eternity past, possessed in time and anchored in the eternity yet to come," and Paul wants us to understand.

Do you know what it ultimately means to me? All I ever think about is this: Someday I will be like whom? Jesus Christ. That, to me, is inconceivable, that I would be conformed to the image of His Son, that I would be like Him when I see Him as He is, that I would be a joint heir with Christ. That's God's plan, the greatness of His plan.

And not only is it a great plan but it's a rich plan. Look at verse 18. He just tells you what's involved: "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." We're saints. We're the *hagios*. We're the holy ones, made holy in Jesus Christ, and there is an inheritance – not only an inheritance but the glory of His inheritance, and not only that but the riches of the glory of His inheritance.

What does that mean? That just means that whatever God's got for us, there aren't words to describe it. It's too much. It's just as if Paul says, "It just goes on and on, the inheritance, the glory of the inheritance, the riches of the glory of the inheritance. You never hit bottom." It's a marvelous magnitude of the blessings of salvation that he wants us to understand.

You know, when you get an understanding of this, you realize, all of a sudden, who you are. You are a child of God, and that's the beginning and the end of everything, and there's nothing more to seek. I mean this is it, folks. What else are you going to ask for besides the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints?

Somebody will come along and say, “Well I think there might be a little more out there. We'd better seek.” There's no more. Believers must understand their resources, and that's the beginning. What a plan and we're a part of it.

Secondly, Paul prays that we not only understand the greatness of His plan but the greatness of His power – the greatness of His power, verse 19: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of His mighty power.”

Now, this is really kind of humorous. The Holy Spirit wrote this, but He always used the human agent. And Paul, here, is trying to describe how powerful we are, and he just throws in every word he can think of. In fact there are four different words for “power” in verse 19 alone – four different Greek words for power.

First, you see the word “power”: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power..." That's *dunamis*, from which we get the English word – what? Dynamite.

Then, there is the – it says, “...power toward us who believe according to the working...” Notice this power is only for those who believe. It's for all those who are saved. There's no more power to get. It bothers me so much when people seek more power, more power, want more power. There's no more to get, folks. “The greatness, the exceeding greatness of His power is toward us who believe,” not who believe plus have a vision, who believe plus keep certain rules, who believe plus do this. It's just to those who believe. Then, he goes on to say “according to the working,” and he used another word the word *energeia*, which is the base of our word “energy.”

And then he goes on to say “according to the working of His mighty,” and the word “mighty” is *kratos*, another word that could be translated “power,” is sometimes translated “dominion,” and then he ends with another word “power,” which is *ischus*, which isn't the same as the other words.

The first word, *dunamis,* means inherent power. His second word, *energeia,* means operative power. The third word, *kratos,* means ultimate power. The fourth word, *ischus,* means endowed power. And what Paul is saying is there’s power, power everywhere you cut it, and it's yours.

And then it just bothers me to hear some Christians say, “Well, I don't know if I have the power to do that,” where Paul would say, “That's why I'm praying for you, friend, that you'll know that. We have power – inconceivable, exceeding, great power.”

We have power to evangelize. People say, “Well, I'm afraid I don't have power to witness for Christ.” You have the power to evangelize. Listen, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto – “ what? “ – salvation..." You have that power. You have the power to evangelize

The apostle Paul went into Thessalonica in chapter 1 verse 6. Then, he said, "Our gospel came not in word only but also in – “ what? “ – power and assurance...," power for evangelism.

Secondly, God has given to us power to suffer and endure it victoriously. In 2 Corinthians 4:7, “We have this treasure in earthly vessels that the excellency of the power may not be of us but of God.” Therefore, he says, “We may be distressed but we're never cast down,” and he goes on to say all those things.

Then finally he sums it up by saying, “We may bear in our body the dying of Jesus all the time but we also know what it is to have that resurrection life.” Power to evangelize, power to suffer, power to do God's will. People fear they don't have the energy, the resource, to do God's will. In Philippians 2:13, it says, “It is God who works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” The power is there.

Power to serve, Colossians 1:29, Paul says, “It's His power working in me mightily as I labor.” You say, “Oh, I don't know if I have that power.” Yes you do. Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you...," and the Holy Spirit came upon you when? When you were saved. You have the power. In fact you've got so much power you're dangerous.

Ephesians 3:20 says, “Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think according to the power that works – ” where? “ – in us.” Incredible, incredible power. Do you understand that? Don't go running around looking for something more. That's an affront to the gracious, total love of God who, in Christ, has given us everything. Everything.

In fact, He wants us to get a good understanding of this power so he gives an illustration in verse 20: “It's the same power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies.” He says, “Look, you may question the power of God, but look at this. It's the same power that raised Jesus and took Him to His coronation. And in case you're worried about whether or not God is going to be able to come off with His promise, whether or not God's going to get you out of the mess here to the glory there, just remember He did it in Christ, and He'll do it to you because the power is still the same.”

That's really what he is saying. The whole message here is not so much that we understand the power for service as we understand the power for His keeping, His securing us, and fulfilling the marvelous hope that is ours in Christ.

I suppose all of us doubt now and then and wonder whether God's going to really be able to pull it off. He pulled it off with Christ. He raised Him out of the grave. He splattered the bands of death. He shattered the chains, and Christ came bursting forth alive. And He drew Him to His side in heaven and crowned Him King of kings and Lord of lords and Majesty forever, and He'll do the very same

thing for you.

The Bible says He'll raise you out of the grave and you will sit with Him in the Father's throne, and it says just no reason to be insecure because the same power that raised Christ and brought Him to His coronation will do the same for you. So he says, “I hope, God, that You’ll help them, by Your Spirit, to understand the greatness of the plan and the greatness of the power that will make the plan happen.”

And then he says, thirdly, that they'll understand the greatness of His person – His person. Then, he goes on to talk about Christ in verse 21: “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

He just moves from talking about the resurrection and the coronation of Christ into talking about the majesty. His might is matched by His majesty. You know, it's so important that we know who it is that is in us. We have Christ. Christ secures us. Christ empowers us. Christ makes the promises of God, yea and amen. It is Christ who holds us. You don't have anything to fear, nothing to lose. Everything is possible. Nothing more to seek. It's Christ here. What could be more? “He giveth not the Spirit by measure.”

Paul said to Timothy – Timothy was getting kind of timid, and he was getting kind of beaten down. He was getting discouraged in his ministry, and some of the people were hassling him because he was young, and some of them were hassling him about his doctrine, and some Ephesian errorists were confusing him and people were stringing out genealogies. And Timothy was kind of petering out of his ministry, and so he was getting a little bit discouraged, and Paul says, “Listen, fellow, you'd better fan the flame a little bit, man. You better stir up the gift of God that's in you. You better get the act back together. Take a little wine. Get your stomach organized. Get your gift organized,” and then he says, “Above all, do this,” 2 Timothy 2:8, “Remember the Lord Jesus Christ, born of the seed of David, risen from the dead.”

What does that mean? He's saying, “Remember the greatness of the person who lives within you, born of the seed of David. That's His humanness. He understands. He is sympathetic. Risen from the dead, that's His deity. He is enabling and powerful enough to accomplish all His good will through you. Remember who He is, and remember He's in you.” That's the essence of it.

You know, I'll tell you, that's what every Christian ought to focus on. That's why the Bible says to, “Gaze into the glory of the Lord, and you'll be changed into His image by the Holy Spirit.” If we focus less on our psychological problems, less on our little spiritual problems, less on the little ditties that we do and more on the person of Jesus Christ and understood more His power and understood how

it is that He is in us, we would be free from a lot of the hang-ups.

It bothers me so much that we read so many books on all the peripheral things and so few on Jesus Christ. When is the last time you read a book about Jesus Christ – who He is? His might matches His majesty. So he says, “Oh, God, may they understand His person. He is far – ” verse 21 “ – far above all principality,” *arch*, “...and power,” *exousia*. *Arch* is the word for the first leader. *Exousia* is the one for the second leader with delegated authority.

He says, “I don't care whether they're good or bad angels, principalities and powers and dominions and all these other things. Those are all names of angels, all titles and ranks of angels. He's far above all the angels. He is above every name that is named – ” which means every person in the universe, anyone with any identity “ – is under Him, in this age and in the age to come, and He has put all under His feet, gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, and the church, which is His body, is nothing more than the fullness of Him that filleth all.”

Beloved, we are filled with Him. That's what he's saying. Incredible thought. We are filled with his fullness. And I’m telling you, as you get a grip on the greatness of the plan and the greatness of the power, all made possible by the greatness of the Person, it’s going to change the way you live. It has to. Nothing supersedes Jesus Christ. There’s no greater power. No one can ever change anything that He's planned because no one has greater power. No one can love you more. No one can ever do more because he's impotent compared to Christ. No one could ever love you more because He is love by nature, and so we're secure in Him. Great truths.

Hebrews 1 tells us He's above the angels. Philippians 2 tells us He's above every name that is named so that “...every knee should bow of things in the earth and under the earth,” and Paul reminds us, here, that He is the one who is head over everything, even the church, which is the fullness of Him that filleth all and all. That last verse, if we had the time, we could spend hours studying it. Do you realize that you are the fullness of Christ in the world? He has chosen to radiate Himself through you, so He made a great plan, and so He energizes the plan, and so He dwells within us to bring the plan to fulfillment.

No wonder Paul says we are *hupernika*, super conquerors, super *nikes* in Christ. No wonder he says, later in Ephesians, at the close of the book, in 6:12, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers,” and so forth and so forth, and all we need to do is take the armor of God. And then backing up to verse 10, he says, “Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.” It's all available to us. He needs us, beloved, to be His fullness in this world.

John Calvin wrote these words: “This is the highest honor of the Church, that, until He is united to us, the Son of God reckons Himself in some measure imperfect. What consolation it is for us to learn, that, not until we are in His presence does He possess all His parts, or does He wish to be regarded

as complete!”

What a fabulous – He is in us now, and, in that sense, He is scattered, and one day, when we go to be with Him, He will be united. Paul prays that we'll understand it. That's what I pray for you. Let's bow together.

My prayer, Father, for these people, and for myself as well, is not that we would find something more. That's foolish. There is nothing more, but that we would understand the everything we already have. And I pray with the apostle Paul, oh God, may these dear people, Your people, called by Your name, redeemed by Your blood, indwelt by Your Spirit, may these people have the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Your Son that they may live with confidence, that they may live with power, that they may live with the secure faith that literally transforms their life to the praise of Your glory. We offer ourselves as an act of worship to You to so live that You are made manifest through us and receive all the glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

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