



Sermon Notes

Term – Spring 2019

Series – Wholeness: Ephesians

Gathering & Date – the 10, 3 February

Title – to know him better

Preacher – Paul Langham

Reading – Ephesians 1:15-23 & Ephesians 3:14-21

Main message of this talk in one sentence – we need a shift in our perspective if we are truly to understand how much we are loved & blessed and promised by God

Recap –

The word ‘wholeness’ – which is the umbrella title for our series at both the 10 & the 5 – is an invitation

To be more fully loved that we may more fully love

We’ve also seen how our salvation has been signed off by the Father, sealed by the work of Christ on the cross and delivered to us by the Holy Spirit.

Main points –

There are two key concepts I want us to be aware of as we read these passages:

- Knowing, seeing, grasping, perceiving, understanding
- Power, energy, strength

1:15-18 ... on the basis that our salvation is signed, sealed and delivered (guaranteed by the work of the Trinity, each person of the godhead playing their part), Paul prays that the Father may give us wisdom and revelation ... why? ... that we may **know** him better (the Greek word refers to ‘contact-knowledge, i.e. that gained by first-hand experience)

3:16-17 ... a very similar prayer, that Jesus may dwell in our hearts – the word for ‘dwell’ suggests taking up permanent residence. Jesus doesn’t look at our lives and think, ‘Oh No, what a mess, I can’t bear the thought of living there ...’ Rather, he sees our lives as 5* accommodation.

Both prayers call upon God’s agency to make them come true – in 1:17, its ‘wisdom’ and ‘revelation’; in 3:16 its that God, out of his glorious riches, will strengthen us with power through his Spirit ...

We’re reminded that knowing God and having Jesus live within us by the Holy Spirit is his gift, which we cannot achieve by our own means. But the fact that it’s his initiative also means it is his desire.

Then, in 1:18-20 Paul prays that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened in order that we may know 2 things, 1 future and 1 present ...

1. The hope to which he’s called us, defined as the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people (again Paul’s insistence that what defines us is Christ’s righteousness rather than our own sin – so we are named ‘hagios’, holy ones, saints ...)
2. His incomparably great power for us who believe

The word for heart here is ‘kardia’, from which we get ‘cardiology’ and so on. But, in over 800 instances

across the entire bible, 'kardia' is never used for the organ which pumps blood around our bodies. It always refers to the inner essence, the driving force of our being. It carries the meaning of mind, character, inner self, will, intention, centre ... the affective centre of our being, the capacity of our moral preference ... the desire-producer that makes us tick ... the decisions that establish who we really are ...

The Spirit of God wants us to be expectantly confident of our place in eternity – the word for inheritance here is used of the Land of Israel in the Old Testament: our inheritance is a completely restored cosmos ...

But our faith isn't just pie in the sky when we die ... there's steak on a plate while we wait too. The very power that God exerted (here the word is *energeo*, from which we get energy) when raising the corpse of Jesus of Nazareth to life is at work in us and available to and through us.

In 3:18-21 Paul prays that we may be able to grasp (to seize, take hold of, capture) the fathomless, measureless, limitless agape love of God. He then confesses that this love is impossible to contain or understand with our limited human intellect ... it surpasses knowledge.

So he closes his prayer by pointing us to 'him who is able' ... it's one of my favourite NT phrases, because everything that has gone before drives home the fact that there's nothing outside the scope of God's 'able'.

What is your immeasurably more today? As you think of that, hold level with it that you do so in the presence and under the loving gaze of 'him who is able ...'

For further thought and prayer –

Do you want to know God better? Ask for the Spirit to give you wisdom and revelation ...

Do you long to make Jesus more at home in your life? Ask God, out of his glorious riches, to strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being ...

Do you need more security in your eternal destiny? Do you need resurrection power in your life? Ask that the eyes of your heart (kardia – see above) may be enlightened that you may know them both ...

Do you long to be more fully loved that you may more fully love?

What's your immeasurably more today ...?