

Ephesians 1:15–19a | “Knowing Your Spiritual Inventory”
Preached on March 30, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 1, verses 15–19 today. *[pause]*

We are in the midst of Ephesians 1, and Paul has just recounted the spiritual blessings that the Ephesian believers have in Christ.

And now he moves on to talk about what he prays concerning them. *[pauseeee]*

Look down at the passage, as I READ it. *[READ]*

Have you ever taken inventory of something? *[pause]*

Taking inventory is to make a list of exactly what you have in stock. *[pauseeee]*

I remember working for a company that would regularly do an inventory count, and usually the employees hated ‘inventory days.’ *[pause]*

They would have to wait until closing time, and they would have to set aside hours to count every single thing in the store. *[pause]*

By doing this, it gave them an accurate picture of all of their products and supplies.

It basically was a way to take a look at what they had, so that nothing got lost, overlooked, or neglected. *[pauseeee]*

Not long ago, some ladies in our church went through our church kitchen, and they got to see all of what we had in there. *[pause]*

They even said things like, “I didn’t even realize that we had this.” *[pauseeee]*

Has that ever happened to you at your house?...

You look through your garage, attic, or some other place to see everything that’s in there, and you think, “I didn’t even realize that I still had this.” *[pause]*

Or you think, “Wow, look at this!”

Or even, “I didn’t realize that I had THIS MUCH stuff.” *[pause]*

Well in the passage this morning, Paul wants us to see the extent and depth of our *spiritual* inventory. *[pause]*

He wants us to see with accuracy what exactly we have in Christ, not to just have a ballpark idea of what we have, but to have a *deep knowledge* of it all.

And through this spiritual cataloging, it should lead us to think, “I didn’t even realize the scope and depth of all that I had in Christ.” *[pause]*

It should lead us to think, “Wow, that’s amazing!”

And even, “I didn’t realize that I had THIS MUCH because of the Lord.” *[pauseeee]*

Like the stuff in our pantries, garages, and attics, we tend to overlook the depth and extent of what we truly have.

And so this morning, may we be led to see with accuracy and depth our spiritual inventory of what we truly have in the Lord. *[pauseeeee]*

But here’s the thing—we are going to need some help to do this. [pause]

Taking spiritual inventory of what we have in Christ isn’t simply something that we can understand in all of its depth on our own.

Rather, we are going to need God’s help to do so, and that’s why Paul encapsulates all of this in prayer. [pause]

That’s what we find first...

I. The need for constant prayer.

There’s a story of Charles Spurgeon showing five young college students around his church building, and he said...

“Gentlemen, let me show you around. Would you like to see the heating plant of this church?”
[pause]

They were not particularly interested, for it was a hot day in July, but they didn’t want to offend [him], so they consented. *[pause]*

The young men were taken down a stairway, a door was quietly opened, and [Spurgeon] whispered, ‘This is our heating plant.’ [pause]

Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above.”¹ *[pauseeee]*

Do we really and truly believe in the necessity of prayer? [pause]

Do we believe it works? Do we believe God uses it? *[pause]*

Paul certainly did, for note what he says in verses 15–16...

¹ Original from *Our Daily Bread*, April 24. Found at: <https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/prayer.htm>.

“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” *[pauseeee]*

As Paul considers all of what God has done through Christ, and as Paul thinks about the Ephesians’ faith and love, he can’t help, but pray. *[pause]*

He knew that prayer matters because prayer changes things.

God has ordained prayer to be a means of His working in the world—we need to understand that. *[pause]*

Now when I say that, I’m not saying that our prayers have the inherent power to make the difference, as if our prayers have magical power. *[pause]*

No, I’m simply saying that God desires for us to pray, and He has determined to powerfully answer those prayers, according to His will. *[pause]*

We do the praying, He does the work. *[pauseeeee]*

Paul did a lot of great things, but he knew that prayer was indispensable to it all. *[pause]*

He didn’t see prayer as a last resort, but it was where he went to first. *[pause]*

No wonder he prays for the Ephesians—because he knew prayer is powerful and the Ephesians needed prayer. *[pause]*

They didn’t *only* need more instructions, though that’s a part of what they needed, they needed God to work, and prayer is an essential component of that. *[pauseeee]*

As you live your life, do you remember the *necessity* of prayer?

Or do you try to do things on your own, and use prayer as a final, last lifeline when nothing else works? *[pauseeee]*

Paul was fervent and faithful in his prayer for others.

He was constantly thinking of other people’s needs, and not simply his own. *[pauseeee]*

Are your prayers self-focused, or balanced with prayers for others as well? *[pause]*

Paul cared about others, and it showed in his prayer life.

And that may be one way to evaluate your love for others—what does the content of your prayers demonstrate? *[pauseeee]*

Paul was thankful for the Ephesians, and so gave thanks to God for them in his prayer-life.

But he also interceded on their behalf by praying for them to know God more. *[pauseeee]*

When Paul heard of the Ephesians' faith and love, he was happy for them, but it didn't stop there—he wanted them to grow, grow, and grow more!

And one of the most loving things to do for another person is to desire and pray for their spiritual understanding to deepen. *[pauseeee]*

Too often our prayers are only focused on the physical ailments of others, and that should be a part of our prayers, yet Paul's prayers were primarily focused on people's walk with the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

We mainly evaluate people's physical and material situations, and think, "What ailment do they have?"

"What material possession would be helpful for them to gain so that they can be more comfortable?"

Yet Paul mainly evaluated people's hearts, and thought, "What can I give thanks to God for, and what do they need prayer for in order to grow to be more like Christ?" *[pauseeee]*

Do we care about people's souls?

Do we care about what's most important in their life?

Do we intercede on their behalf? *[pauseeee]*

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if our prayer-life reflected Paul's more and more? *[pauseeee]*

What if we saw prayer as more essential than we do now? *[pause]*

What if our prayers were more fervent and faithful for others? *[pause]*

What if our prayers were more thankful to God for other people? *[pause]*

What if our prayers were more focused on their hearts and most important needs?

Let's pray like this, and just watch God work! *[pauseeeee]*

Speaking of God, that's who Paul prayed to, and who we pray to. *[pause]*

We don't pray to some generic higher power, or simply pray to the sky—we pray to God. *[pauseeee]*

Verse 17 tells us that he prays to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." *[pauseeee]*

Think of all of who God is—eternal, powerful, ever-present, all-knowing, good, perfect, gracious, and so much more.

We pray to God—just think of it! *[pause]*

But that’s not all, for He is “the Father of glory.” *[pause]*

He is our Father, so he’s approachable.

He *wants* us to come to Him, and He cares, and He loves, and He’s tender. *[pause]*

You can go to Him, so go to your Father in Heaven, but He’s not only a Father, but “the Father of glory.” *[pauseeee]*

He’s approachable, yet glorious. *[pause]*

He’s all-powerful, and full of magnificent splendor.

His greatness and majesty knows no bounds, and knows no rival.

Anything in this life that is glorious is only just a reflecting speck of His glory—THAT’S who we go to when we pray. *[pauseeee]*

When we pray, we go to the highest power of the Universe, who is simultaneously the most loving and gracious One in the Universe.

So beloved, go to the Father of glory with your requests, both big and small. *[pauseeee]*

Go to Him in neediness and necessity. *[pause]*

Go to Him in fervent and faithful prayer. *[pause]*

Go to Him with a grateful heart for others.

And go to Him with boldness in loving intercession for other people. *[pauseeeee]*

Paul is desiring something—it’s that the Ephesians would see with accuracy and depth the spiritual inventory of what they truly had in the Lord.

But like I said earlier, we need help to do this. *[pause]*

We need prayer, as we just saw, but we also need eyes to see the glory of our spiritual inventory, and that’s what we will look at next...

II. The need for open eyes of the heart.

Just the other day, I was looking out of the window at something, and my 2 year old daughter couldn’t see because she’s too short. *[pause]*

So what did she do?

She asked me to pick her up in order to see what I was looking at, and so I did. *[pause]*

Without my work in lifting her up, my daughter would have never been able to see out of the window.

So likewise, we must understand that we are like that in our lives—without God, we will never see the glories of what He has given to us. *[pauseeee]*

You see, knowing the greatness and glory of what God has given to us is not just something that we can know on our own. *[pause]*

We can't grasp the depths of all of what God has given to us by just thinking hard enough.

Instead, you need God's help to know it all in the deepest ways possible. *[pauseeee]*

This is clear in Scripture, particularly in a passage like 1 Corinthians 2, which tells us...

*"We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."*² *[pauseeee]*

Consider what Paul prays for in verse 17...

Paul prays "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened." *[pauseeee]*

Paul is showing us that to truly know what God has given to us, God must do a work of helping us to see it. *[pause]*

We need God, "the Father of glory," to give us wisdom and understanding.

We need Him to give us deeper insight into our hope, our inheritance, and His power. *[pauseeee]*

Consider how Paul started this whole thing back in verse 15, where he said, "For this reason," he prays for them. *[pause]*

Well what's the reason?...

Due to all that God has done for the Ephesians, and what God has given to them, he prays that they may know the depths and glories of it! *[pauseeee]*

We need God to help us to truly grasp the greatness of what we have. *[pause]*

Isn't that the testimony of your Christian life over the years?

You haven't grown because you received some new spiritual thing, you grew over time because you have simply come to know what you have in an even deeper way. *[pause]*

² 1 Corinthians 2:12 (italics is mine).

God never loved you less 10, 15, 20 years ago, but you have simply grasped His love for you more and now your heart is in a better place than it was back then. *[pauseeee]*

The point that Paul is making is that in order to truly grasp the depth of what you have in Christ, it cannot come from you.

True, deep understanding of the things of God must come from God. *[pauseeee]*

So often we think that if only we just put in more effort that we will grow in our walk with the Lord. *[pause]*

Though, of course, there is effort involved and a certain amount of self-discipline, it is foolish to think that that's all you need to grow. *[pause]*

Mere self effort in godliness *without the aid of the Spirit* is like trying to fly a kite without any wind—it's not going to work. *[pauseeee]*

We need God's Spirit to give us wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.

We need the Spirit to open our eyes to the glories of the gospel. *[pauseeee]*

You cannot do the Christian life alone, but you need the Spirit to work in your heart to ingrain the truth more and more deeply into it. *[pause]*

God must "give" or "grant" us this Spirit of wisdom and of revelation, Paul emphasizes. *[pauseeee]*

Paul knew that unless God gave them wisdom and knowledge—unless God opened up the eyes of their hearts to see—they would not truly grasp the greatness of what they had. *[pauseeee]*

Do you realize this, or do you try to learn and grow in your walk with the Lord by your own self-effort? *[pauseeee]*

We need prayer to God in order to open the eyes of our heart to see our spiritual inventory—but what exactly is it that we need to know? *[pause]*

That's what we see next, as we see...

III. The need to know what you have.

When you are about to start a project at your home, an important part of the process is to first recognize what you have. *[pause]*

You must go and see, 'Do I have the tools and the supplies needed, or do I need to go buy some?' *[pause]*

So also, Paul wants us to truly see what we have, and thankfully, we never have to go and buy it, for we have it in Christ. *[pause]*

Paul prays in verse 18–19...

“That you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.” *[pauseeeee]*

What do people often view as the solution to their problems, or as a way to grow in life? *[pause]*

They think that they just need something *new*. *[pause]*

They think, “If only I were in a new situation, my life would be so much better.”

Or, “If only I had that new house, new car, new product, it would change everything.” *[pause]*

Some who profess to follow Christ even say, “If only I receive a new second blessing of the Spirit, then I will reach some higher level of spirituality.”

But that’s not the way that Paul talks or thinks at all. *[pause]*

Paul is not praying for something new to be given to the Ephesians, do you realize that?

He’s praying that God would open their eyes to know what they already have in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Now when Paul prays for them to know some things, it’s not just head knowledge. *[pause]*

We all know that it’s one thing to know something, it’s another to truly *know* something. *[pauseeee]*

He doesn’t just want us to know what our hope is in an unemotional, detached, formal way, but to truly know it in our heart. *[pause]*

He doesn’t just want us to know what our inheritance is, but to know the *riches* of them in our hearts. *[pause]*

He doesn’t just want us to know the power of God from a distance, and say, “Yes, God is powerful.”

But he wants us to truly, deeply, and intimately know the greatness of God’s power towards us. *[pauseeee]*

That makes a world of a difference! *[pause]*

You may be able to write the right answers in a theological test, but have those truths been impressed deeply into your heart?

Because that’s what Paul is asking for God to do! *[pauseeee]*

When these truths are seen with our hearts, that's when real, true, and lasting growth happens in us. *[pauseeeee]*

We are often too content with head knowledge of these truths, but we shouldn't be content with mere head knowledge. *[pause]*

Paul doesn't pray merely for the eyes of our *minds* to grasp the truth, but the eyes of our *hearts*.

And we should be regularly praying to the Lord...

"Lord, I need you to help me to know You more and to know what you have given to me. Please give me wisdom and insight into this today, and let my heart see it." *[pauseeeee]*

I remember growing up when Bible trivia competitions were big, and on the one hand, they may help us to know God's truth.

But we cannot simply approach God's truth, as if it were mere Bible trivia. *[pause]*

The truth is not simply trivia answers to be known, written down, and moved on from.

His truth is something that Paul wants us to grasp, appreciate, utilize, and know deeply *in our hearts*. *[pauseeeee]*

Many of you have been Christians for a very long time.

And you have all the answers and you may have all the head knowledge of what's true, but do you truly grasp these things in your heart? *[pause]*

Go to God in prayer!

Ask Him to give you wisdom and knowledge and to open your heart to truly know them deeply! *[pause]*

Trust in Him to do the work, and don't just try to muster up the strength. *[pause]*

Don't trust in your ability to translate the knowledge into your heart, but rely upon Him to do this work. *[pauseeeee]*

Now what are the three things that Paul prays that the Ephesians would come to know deeper?...

Their hope, their inheritance, and God's power. *[pauseeee]*

So first, Paul wants us to know our hope. *[pause]*

A Christian's hope is not wishful thinking, as if we just kind of hope something happens—no, our hope is a confident expectation of good to come. *[pauseeee]*

Our hope is what God has promised to those who are His.

And so our hope is our eternal life,³ the promise of our resurrected bodies,⁴ our salvation,⁵ and Christ and His return.⁶ *[pause]*

Our hope is really then our glorious future that God has promised to us, and that we look forward to with confident expectation. *[pauseee]*

It's this hope to which God has called us to, and so this is God's doing, not our's.

He has called us to someday experience a blessed, living hope⁷—what a good, gracious, promise-making God that we serve! *[pauseeee]*

It's this hope that God wants you to know deeper, and for your heart to be impacted with. *[pause]*

So imagine if that happened in your life, and what a difference it would make...

To confidently and deeply know what my hope is would give me assurance today. *[pause]*

Worry and fret would flee at the thought of my sure hope to come. *[pause]*

Suffering would look light and momentary compared to the “eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” that is to come.⁸

And even death would look not like defeat, but like the pathway to glory. *[pauseeee]*

May God impress this more and more on your heart—may you remember your hope! *[pauseeee]*

Along with that, Paul wants us to know “the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.” *[pause]*

This is similar to our hope, but it's emphasizing more so the greatness and glory of what it is to come. *[pause]*

It's pointing to the *scope* of what God has in store for us. *[pause]*

We are not receiving something small or insignificant, but we are going to receive and experience a glorious inheritance that is absolutely, immeasurably *rich*. *[pauseeee]*

God wants to impact our hearts with how amazing and glorious all of what He will give to us really is. *[pauseeee]*

³ See Titus 1:2 & Titus 3:7.

⁴ See Romans 8:23–24.

⁵ See 1 Thess. 5:8.

⁶ See 1 Tim. 1:1 & Titus 2:13.

⁷ “Blessed, living hope” is a combination of Titus 2:13 & 1 Peter 1:3.

⁸ 2 Corinthians 4:17.

If you truly grasped the riches of your glorious inheritance, wouldn't that change your life?
[pause]

To think, "God has provided something amazing for me in the future, so I'm going to keep trusting him!" [pause]

To consider, "God has provided something amazing for me in the future, so I'm willing to sacrificially love you, knowing that I have something better than the comforts of this world."
[pause]

To know, "I have a glorious inheritance to come, so I can face this today."

Now that changes things, doesn't it? [pauseeee]

Thirdly, we can come to know "what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe." [pausee]

As God opens the eyes of our hearts, we get to know God's power more and more, but it's not just knowing God's power, but knowing the *immeasurable greatness* of His power. [pause]

As we get to know God more, we come to know how truly great His power is for us...

It's a power that is far greater than any power you could think of, for it surpasses all the rest.
[pauseeee]

Oh, how often we underestimate the power of God, and we think, "I don't know if I can do this thing that God has called me to."

And Paul would say, "What!? Don't you know the immeasurable greatness of His power towards you?!" [pauseeee]

Know the greatness of His power. [pause]

He doesn't say to know the greatness of *your* power, which many in our world would try to proclaim.

No, know the greatness of *His* power. [pauseeee]

So often we get way too focused on our strength, or lack thereof, and God is showing us this morning, "Look at *My* strength." [pauseeee]

Because the truth is, we are weak. [pause]

The world can't give us power—just some positive thoughts won't supply the needed power.

And after looking to those things, we continually realize that they might produce short spurts of a little power, but eventually they short out.

And we are looking to so many of these dead sources of power when we have an endless supply of power available in Christ! *[pauseeee]*

Know the greatness of God's power towards you, looking to God to impact your heart with how truly, immeasurably great it is. *[pauseeee]*

Paul prays that God would enlighten the eyes of the hearts of the Ephesians, so that they would come to truly and deeply know their hope, their inheritance, and the power of their God. *[pause]*

So likewise, we need God to work in our lives to see the glory of all that He has given to us, our spiritual inventory. *[pausee]*

This passage shows us this truth...

Our need is not to receive something *new*, but for God to help us to see the glory of what we *already have*.

Some Christians are looking for new circumstances or new possessions to change their lives for the better. *[pause]*

Other Christians are seeking some new, special revelation, some new experience of second blessing to make all of the difference.

But Paul is simply saying, "No, you need God to help you to know Him deeper, so that you may know the amazing blessings already given to you!" *[pauseeee]*

We are like a wealthy person, searching all over for what we already have. *[pausee]*

We fear and are filled with anxiety when we meet hardships. *[pause]*

We think that we don't have much, and we get downcast about this. *[pause]*

We feel inadequate when we face the power of sin and we feel like we can't overcome temptation.

And Paul is praying, "Lord, help them to truly know their hope, know their inheritance, and know your power!" *[pauseeee]*

It's the Lord who enlightens the eyes of our heart to see the depths of His person and work. *[pauseeee]*

We need to see the amazing glory of what we already have in Christ.

So pray to God, relying upon Him to help you to come to see the wonder and glory of what you have in the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

Come to know your spiritual inventory by praying to God for help, for we have so much in Him! *[pauseeee]*

How often do we actually pray this way for ourselves or for others? *[pause]*

How often do we pray to God to help us to know Him more, and to help us to understand and grasp what we have? *[pauseeee]*

All of this is possible and comes to us, not because of our efforts, but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again victorious. *[pauseeee]*

All of this comes to us, who have been called to a sure hope, who are privileged to be saints, and who believe in Jesus Christ our Lord.