

## Session Two - Ephesians 13-23

Question: Have you ever doubted your own self-worth? How does seeing yourself through God's eyes help you see the value you really have in the eyes of God?

Question: Have you ever trusted the world to provide for you more than God? If so, how do you trust the world?

Verses 13-14

The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that we belong to Him and that He will do what He has promised. The Holy Spirit is like a down payment, a deposit, a validating signature on the contract. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God's children, and secures eternal life for us. His power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity.

God's sovereign choice works, but it does not exclude human cooperation. These ones who were so sovereignly chosen were also the ones who **trusted, heard the word of truth, and believed.**

Also essential in God's work is the sealing work of the Holy Spirit. His presence in our lives acts as a seal which indicates ownership, and which is a **guarantee of our inheritance.**

The sealing does not come *before* we believe, and those who demand some assurance from God before they will believe treat God as if His word could not be trusted.

So, this sealing of the Spirit is an invisible mark.

But the sealing of the Spirit should not be confused with some of the other things the Spirit does for the believer.

The Spirit regenerates us (John 3:3; Titus 3:5). This is the act of God which gives us eternal life when we believe.

The Spirit also indwells us (John 14:16-17). This is the Spirit coming to live within us and abide or remain within us.

The Spirit baptizes the believer (1 Cor 12:13). This is a spiritual baptism, not a water baptism. Water baptism symbolizes what has already happened to us spiritually. This spiritual baptism gives us the basis for victory over sin.

It should be noted that all four of these things are one-time events that happen instantaneously the moment we place faith in Jesus for eternal life. Once they happen, they cannot be repeated, and they cannot be reversed. In other words, during your life, the Holy Spirit will not repeatedly baptize you. Some people teach this, but that is because they do not understand the Spirit baptism. These events cannot be reversed either. You cannot become un-baptized any more than you can become unborn. You cannot become un-regenerated any more than you can become un-alive. People who are unregenerate, have never been saved, not that they were saved and then became unsaved. So, these four actions of the Holy Spirit, regeneration, indwelling, baptizing, and sealing, are one-time events that happen the moment we receive eternal life.

Question: What is the difference in knowing about someone and knowing someone? Do you really know God or just about God?

Verses 15-17

Faith and love do not *earn* us participation in this great work of God. They are *evidence* of our participation in God's plan. This is why Paul gave thanks not for their love for God, but for their **love for all the saints**. The real evidence of God's work in us is not the love we claim to have for Him, but our love for His people that others can see.

Paul not only gave thanks for God's work among the Ephesians; he also prayed that it would continue with greater strength. Paul shows us here that preachers must do more than preach to their audience - they must also *pray* for them. Paul prays specifically that the Ephesians might gain spiritual wisdom, and insight so they can continue to grow in the knowledge of Christ.

When it comes to acquiring spiritual wisdom, the truth is what while many of us may desire it there are probably few who know what it really is. Wisdom is not the same thing as knowledge. As a matter of fact, you can very easily be acquainted with facts, truths or principles, but if you don't apply this information to your life, you are actually the opposite of wise. Wisdom, especially spiritual wisdom, is not just about *knowing* what's good for you, but *applying* that knowledge into your everyday life. When you do that, this is when you know that you are truly wise.

Insight is the capacity to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of a person or thing. Insight is a deeper and clearer perception of life, of knowledge, of wisdom.

Question: Why do you need wisdom, knowledge, and insight to understand the word of God?

Verst 18

The New Testament translates the word “understanding” as *heart* in other passages. “Heart” does not refer to emotions but to intelligence, a **total** apprehension of God. The heart in biblical times meant the essence of life that originates thoughts. The “eye” or inner vision, the ability to look within, looks at the core of our lives.

Information or gathering of fact is not the same as “understanding.” It is possible to have information but not **spiritual** intelligence. Meaning and significance go beyond facts.

Paul said that the Ephesians had spiritual insight and his prayer was for a permanent work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. He wanted their capacity for understanding God’s truth to last. If believers are to see things clearly from God’s viewpoint, it is necessary to have an attitude of receptivity or positive volition.

“Being enlightened” is in the present tense, indicating continual process and implying **accumulated** understanding of principles of Scriptures resident in the soul that are ready to be applied to experience.

The enlightening of the soul does not occur at the point of salvation. Neither does it occur at any one point in the Christian life. Spiritual living is progressive. Our spiritual understanding must grow every day; otherwise, we will go into reversion in our spiritual life. Dependence on what God has to say about how we live is at the core of this. The Holy Spirit will minister to us when we take this approach.

Spiritual comprehension is important to God. Satan is in the business of spiritual blindness ([2 Co 3:3-6](#)). God is in the business of light that shines in our hearts ([Eph 5:14](#)). Christians need to sharpen their spiritual eyesight.

Verses 19-20

The world fears the power of the atom, yet we belong to the God of the universe, who not only created that atomic power, but also raised Jesus Christ from the dead. His incomparably great power is available to help each one of us. There is nothing

too difficult for Him. Believers need to know in **present** time something about the greatness of God's power toward us. His power is "exceeding."

"Exceeding" means *to throw beyond*, with the ideas of *excellence* or *superiority*. God's power is beyond measure; it is surpassing operating power. This power **defies** definition.

Paul used **four** different Greek words for power in this verse:

*Dunamis*, which is not explosive power like dynamite but residual power like a **dynamo**. This is the word in "greatness of His power."

*Energeia*, **energizing** power. This word is in the word "working."

*Kratos*, **dominion** power, authoritative power. This word is translated "mighty" in this verse.

*Ischus*, **endowed** power or ability. This word is translated by "power" in "mighty power."

Paul did not pray that power be given to believers, but that they **recognize** God's power in them. We have the power in us to function as Christians and to evangelize.

Question: Do you think Christians exercise the power they have in any area of life?

Christians should never underestimate God's power in our lives. We have it for trials, temptations, and testimony. It is a power that God exercises. This is delegated power from God out of His unadulterated grace. It is important for believers to operate within the sphere of God's power for our lives. We cannot function in that power without a comprehensive understanding of the principles of Scripture and applying them to experience.

Possessing this kind of power should deliver us from being immobilized by fear. Power from God allows us to look fear in the face and move on with confidence. No matter what situation or pressure may come upon us, we have the power of God to address it. We must not lose sight of the power of God in our lives. This power moves us on toward spiritual maturity.

Verses 21-23

Verses 20 to 23 set forth **three** manifestations of God's power seen in Christ. First, we see God's power in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

"Which" refers to God's great **power** of the previous verse.

## He worked [*exerted*] in Christ

God worked His power in **Christ**. Our living union with Him shares this power. He meets our spiritual needs in Christ. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead raises the believer from spiritual death.

## when He raised Him from [*out from*] the dead

It took some exerting to **raise** Jesus from the dead, never to die again ([Mark 10:33-34](#)). Death is the greatest fear of man, but Jesus conquered death by His resurrection.

## and seated *Him* at His right hand

God the Father set Jesus at His right hand ([Ps 110:1](#); [He 1:13](#)). That is more than raising Him from the tomb. The seat at the right hand is a place of **honor**. It is a place of completion of God's work in Jesus. There He shares the Father's throne ([Rev 3:21](#)). Jesus will remain seated at the Father's right hand until all enemies are put under His feet ([1 Co 15:24](#)).

The Bible affirms the importance of the **seating** of Christ at the Father's right hand as the place where He oversees victory over all enemies and intercedes for His own:

Ro 8:<sup>34</sup> Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the **right** hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

God never asked angels to sit at His right hand ([He 1:13](#)). He asked only **one** person to hold universal dominion over everything—Jesus Christ, the God-man ([Ps 2:7-8](#)).

Heaven is not merely a state; it is a **place**. Jesus did not disappear into a vacuum but went to a place. This was a place of ultimate honor and final victory over forces alien to God.

Because Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, He now possesses the full **authority** of the Father. There is no authority greater than the Father's. God exalted Christ by His ascension above **every** order of authority, whether human or angelic. The scope of Christ's victory was universal, even over cosmic powers. His exaltation was not only above but "far above" any other power or authority. Again, this phrase shows the universal rule over any cosmic force anywhere ([Php 2:6-11](#)). Because the above list of authorities is not exhaustive, Paul made a **comprehensive** statement that includes any other authority that could possibly exist.

It is important that believers understand the greatness of the person of Christ who empowers them. Christians can claim Christ's superiority over the powers of this world. There is no excuse for allowing evil to defeat us. The ascension of Christ placed Him above any other being in the universe. His seat at the right hand of the Father indicates His defeat of any and all enemies ([Ps 110:1](#)).

God made spiritual forces in the world subject to Jesus because He is exalted above them. We have the authority to take our case against spiritual battles to God ([Ja 4:7](#)). We do not resist Satan in our own strength but submit ourselves to God. When we do this, Satan will flee from us. The challenge is to remember the power of the resurrection of Christ ([2 Ti 2:8-10](#)).

The second manifestation of what God did in Christ (in addition to seating Him on the right) is to place "all things" under His feet. This is Jesus' **dominion** over everything. He made Christ head over all creation (1:10), which will be fully manifested in the future. Jesus is Lord and supreme over the cosmos. He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

"Put under" is a military term carrying the idea of *subjecting*, to put under authority. There is a chain of **command** in God's order of things. King Jesus will rule the world in time and eternity

The **third** manifestation of God's power in Christ is His employment of Christ as head of the church. "Head" connotes prominence, honor, and rulership. The Father made all creation subject to Christ. Further, the Father appointed Christ as head over the church (4:15; 5:23; [Co 1:18](#)).

The supremacy of Christ's sovereign status is important for the believer to see ([1 Co 15:25-27](#)). The first Adam failed to rule over his creation; the last Adam will succeed in ruling over all creation or cosmic reality. Everything one day will be subordinated to the exalted Christ.

The **church** is Christ's "body." "Body" here refers to the universal church of all believers, regardless of denomination. The body, then, is not literal but metaphorical.

The church is the complement of Christ. Just as the body is the complement of the head, so is the church the complement of Christ. Christ fills the church, His complement, with the sovereign care of His blessing.

Christ fills the church with gifts and blessings. The church should be the full expression of Christ, who himself fills everything. Ephesians was written to the entire church. The image of the body shows the church's unity. Each member is involved with all the others as they go about doing Christ's work on earth. We need each other to fulfill the work of the church.

## **End Session Two**

