



Thanks and Please - Eph 1:15-23

Oct 13 - Caleb Wollf

INTRO

Last Sunday we dived into Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus in the second half of Ephesians chapter one. As we see in his prayer, he starts with thanksgiving before going into his requests. This prayer ends in a striking reminder of the power of God that raised Christ from the dead and is with us today.

Open with prayer¹, then read Eph 1:15-23 together as a group. Consider dividing it by paragraph and it may be helpful to use the same Bible translation. SLC preaches from the New Living Translation.

SERMON RECAP

1. Paul starts with thanks then please
 - a. Starting with thankfulness changes the way we see God and our world.
2. Thanks - For Others
 - a. Paul thanks God for the people in the Church in Ephesus
 - b. How can we be thanking those around us?
3. Please - Knowing God
 - a. Paul prays that the people in Ephesus would know God
 - b. This meant to truly know Christ's nature, knowing Him personally
 - c. We can pray to grow in knowing Christ, spending time, reading the word, prayer, confession, and worshipping Him.
4. Please - Knowing Hope
 - a. Paul prays to know the hope to come
 - b. We know this hope. We know the endgame: entering fully into God's presence.
 - c. How can we live lives of eternal significance?

¹ Some groups prefer to begin with a longer time of sharing and prayer. This is a good instinct and ensures that prayer time doesn't get shortened by time constraints.

5. Please - Knowing God's Power.
 - a. Ephesus was a spiritually dark place. Paul reminds the church that God's power is far greater than anything in Ephesus. This is the power that raised Jesus from the dead and has put Jesus in authority over all else.
 - b. How does knowing God's power change the way we pray and act?
 - c. How can we pray big prayers boldly?
 - d. How can we act boldly in care, following Jesus?
6. Please + Thanks
 - a. Let us start our prayers this week with thanksgiving and let us pray and act boldly asking, "Please God" out of His power that is for us right now.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[Questions in brackets are the introductory questions and are designed to be skipped if there is not enough time. For example, if your Life Group is doing two sermons at once, feel free to skip the questions in brackets.]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the start of Paul's prayer, he starts with thankfulness for the church in Ephesus (Eph. 1:15-16a).
 - a. *[Why do you think thankfulness an important part of Paul's life?]*
 - b. What difference does thankfulness make in our lives today and in our walk with Christ?
 - c. How do we practice thankfulness more?
2. Next, Paul prays that the church in Ephesus might grow in the knowledge of God (Eph. 1:16b-17).
 - a. *[What is the importance of praying to know God more?]*
 - b. *[Do we spend time praying for our relationship with God and the relationship with God of our loved ones? Why or why not?]*
 - c. What does knowing God look like? How do we see that in our daily lives?
 - d. What are some practical steps we can take to help us know God more?
3. Following that verse, Paul prays that the church in Ephesus understand the confident hope to which they are called.
 - a. *[Recall a time when you were really looking forward to something. How did that affect the way you acted leading up to it?]*
 - b. What is the hope we are called to in Christ?
 - c. *[Do we often think about our hope in Christ that we are called to? Why or why not?]*



- d. How is the hope we are called to something that affects our lives? How does that play out in the day to day? How can we remind ourselves of our “endgame” daily?
- 4. The final paragraph of Paul’s prayer focuses on the power of God.
 - a. *[When you think of God’s power, what do you think of?]*
 - b. That same power is at work today. How do we see God’s power at work around us?
 - c. What is your opinion on praying boldly? How do you feel we should balance reverence and boldness in our prayers?
 - d. *[If Life Group is comfortable]* Spend some time praying and asking God if there is one area in your life that He is calling you to step out boldly in?

ACT & PRAY

1. What is one key takeaway from today’s study, which will cause you to think or act differently this week?
2. As a group, share areas of praise and need. Write them down so you can be praying for them during the week.
3. Remind yourselves of your Adopt-a-Missionary, and any prayer requests you’ve seen from them.
4. Spend time praying, either all together, or in smaller groups. Feel free to experiment with silent prayer, written prayer, etc.
5. If appropriate, have someone close your prayer time with this prayer:

Psalm 100

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

Acknowledge that the Lord is God!

He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good.

His unfailing love continues forever,

and his faithfulness continues to each generation.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Do you love babies and toddlers? Nursery volunteers are urgently needed. Please contact the office if you're willing. Criminal record check, interview, and safety training are required.
2. Don't forget to get your tickets to Christmas Tales, our dinner theatre event on Nov 30. See the Welcome Centre on Sunday!

