

The Power of Knowing God More

Rev. Taek Kim

Scripture: Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵ I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸ so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰ God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²² And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

God never ceases to amaze me. There are so many reasons why I am in awe of God. Among the many reasons include the gift of friendship, old and new.

In the past few weeks and months, I have talked with people I've known all my life as well as people I just met for the first time. In fact, God blessed me one morning, the day before my mom's birthday, when she called me after receiving a picture of our children. Typically we talk for a short while when on the phone, maybe averaging about 3-5 minutes, sometimes less and sometimes more. God pleasantly surprised me when my mom enthusiastically talked with me for almost 50 minutes! She was telling me how she was recovering from chemotherapy, how dad was doing, updates of my siblings, and a bunch of other things about our family. At one point she started telling me about when my father came to the U.S.A. and beginning his job as an orthopedic technician making prosthetics. I was surprised to learn that we first moved to Detroit, staying in an apartment on Woodward Ave. and E. Willis Ave. I had not known we lived in Detroit for a time when my parents first arrived from South Korea.

I share this because this has happened so many times when I've taken the time to talk with people and they are willing to share more of their stories. As you read these words, I know you and I have had visits, talks, and exchange of stories that allowed us to get to know each other more and better. Thank God for those times that we were able to build stronger connections that strengthen our hearts, minds and souls.

God created us to be in fellowship with one another, whether it's worshipping together, having a meal together, speaking over the phone or in person. God created us to experience and learn about life and love in Him through the conversations and interactions we have with others, whether you've known each other for a long time or have only recently met or started talking.

The other day I was talking with and supporting a close friend who I've mentored for many years. And as we were talking, God's Holy Spirit moved strongly in me to tell him that I thank

God for him and our trusting friendship. I was led to say that though he has leaned on me much of our friendship that I was going to lean on him a bit more.

We all need to remember that God created us to be there for each other. Jesus sent out his disciples in pairs when they first went out to do what Christ called him to do. Throughout the Bible we are told how two or more are better than one, whether it was through the life of Ruth and Naomi or David and Jonathan. Sometimes one is supporting the other more at times. And then there are times it's reciprocated. When it comes to God's love working in and through us, it matters not the burden. We gladly bear and share it with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Today's Scripture reading from Ephesians 1:15-23 has a verse that God's Holy Spirit impressed upon me more than any of the other verses. Verse 17 helped me see how the other verses were woven into that one verse, which reads, "I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him."

The words "as you come to know him" touched my heart as I realized more that God wants us to know him more and more. Just as I have been surprisingly blessed to know more about my parents' lives, my own life, the lives of my friends and church family, so it is with getting to know God more.

As we come to know God more we cannot help feeling more blessed with God's hope, peace, joy, love and all that God has for us. We can sense and feel more of God's presence in our lives through God's Holy Spirit. Whenever you draw closer to God, just as you build stronger relationships with family and friends, you draw closer to the heart of God.

Today's verses tell us that when we come to know God more and more we do so with a spirit of wisdom and revelation. God created us to love to learn and discover new things, whether it's about others, ourselves, the world or even things out of this world and in outer space. We also are given a spirit of wisdom and revelation for living life well as testimonies of God's love through Jesus Christ. By how we live and how we love, we are able to share God's saving Good News with all. God's spirit of wisdom and revelations allows us to do so through truths of life, of God's Word, and of all things that we need wisdom and insight.

Though I don't use the word enlightened often, in verse 18 we find that the eyes of our hearts are enlightened by knowing God more. That makes absolute sense because God knows us because he created us. God can help us see with spiritual eyes with the heart of Christ so that we may grow in love for God and for others. I will add that God wants us to love others as ourselves. Therefore, God shows us how to healthily love ourselves. This makes a lot of sense when you think about those who typically do not like themselves being the ones who typically do not like others, treating others poorly in one way or another. Though not always true, it is often times the case that hurt people tend to hurt other people. So when we are enlightened, made more aware of God's love and how we are to love, then we are able to know better the hope to which we are called.

Like a chain of events, we find such blessings flowing from knowing God more!

Think about all the times you have been blessed when you made a new friend, built stronger friendship by getting to know better those God put in your life, and the closer relationships built between your family members. The blessings flow and even overflow with how you care for each other in good times and bad.

So in knowing God more and more you are reminded of and renewed with the hope we have in Christ of abundant life here on earth with Christ always being with you, and the promised life eternal we have in Christ for when the day comes we go to our heavenly home. This hope we have is what we have more of when we draw closer to God through prayer, service, reading God's Word, sharing, giving, receiving, and all that we are able to do, whether it seems like a small or big thing. They all are precious to God.

We are told in our Scripture reading today that we are rich with the inheritance among the saints. As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, we have heavenly riches as well as spiritual riches for life and love while we live each day God grants us. In fact, we are told that we are given immeasurable greatness in God, the very power that raised Jesus from the dead. Now that doesn't mean we can do such powerful things whenever we want. But look at it this way. We are able to share the very gift we were given when we came to know and believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We are able to share the immeasurable gift of Christ's salvation, the power to save souls! And you have if you've gone to church, taken others to church, invited others to church, loved others with Christ's love, prayed for family and friends and even "enemies," as well as anything you've done for the Lord.

As believers of Jesus Christ, we are part and members of Christ's body, the Church. And because we know and are always drawing nearer and nearer to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, we do grow in wisdom and revelations, we do grow in hope, we do grow in our desire to share God's love and saving grace, and we grow in love for God, others, and yes, even ourselves.

So take time to draw nearer and nearer to God through every means possible. It could be a silent moment in the morning or several times a day. It could be when you feel lonely that you not only pray, but also reach out to someone who also may be feeling alone and needing a friend to join them over the phone or in person if possible. We know Christ is always with us, and ever more present when two or more gather in his name. It could be in enjoying something God put in your heart to enjoy, whether that is nature, a good book, a nice walk, or something else. Know God put certain delights in your heart to enjoy the life God has given you. Of course, read the Bible, sing a hymn or song that lifts your spirit, have a conversation to learn more about someone else, and do not shy from sharing about your own life that surely will bless the one who is able to hear your story.

There are so many other ways in which we can draw nearer to God and find greater hope, wisdom, revelations, enlightenment of our hearts, the power of God's immeasurable greatness offer to us through Christ and the Holy Spirit, and the joy and love found in being in fellowship with Christ and one another as the Church, the body of Christ.

God has truly blessed me with getting to know each of you and your stories. Your stories have allowed me to see how God has loved you, blessed you, worked in and through you as you blessed so many through and outside of our church doors. Your love and support and faithfulness moves me so much, blesses me, and shows me, your pastor, so much more of God and God's love. So let us all continue to draw nearer to God so that in doing so we help draw others closer to God too! Amen.

This week's prayer requests:

- The entire Duby family as they grieve the passing of Earl, Betty's husband, who passed away Sunday afternoon.
- Theresa Miller who has had a high fever early last week and has begun chemotherapy.
- Mark & Bev Buell's sister-in-law who has been hospitalized with COVID and pneumonia.
- John Rutkowski as he recovers from surgery.