

Prayers that Intercede

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Come in there. Take it your Bibles with me, please. Memory device.

Today, this morning, we're going to be looking at Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. His first prayer. Actually, in this letter, he has two. So Paul is a prayer warrior.

We find in every letter of his that he writes to churches, he's always praying. He's always giving thanks for these folks, and he's praying for them regularly.

And so I thought it'd be good for us to take a little bit of time as we walk through the last half of Ephesians 1 to look at how Paul prays, what he prays for, how does he organize his prayer, how does he think through as he prays for these other folks.

So that's what we're looking at today. So we're going to read Ephesians 1, beginning at verse 15 through 21.

[1 : 33] So if you're able, please stand as I read from Scripture, Ephesians chapter 1, beginning at verse 15. Paul writes,

So it reads, let us pray.

Father, Father, we thank you for this opportunity this morning to open your word and to think through what Paul has written to these Christians in the first century and what now you have preserved for Christians today.

To not only understand what it is that we believe, what you have done for us, but now today, Father, how we talk to you, and specifically how we talk to you about our other fellow believers.

So teach us today about prayer, that very channel by which we connect with you and through which your power often flows.

[3 : 43] Open our hearts and our minds today, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. William Randolph Hearst.

You ever heard of him? He has a, not a home, but a castle out in California. And Dylan and I went to go look at this castle.

There were like, I don't know how many tours. You couldn't see the whole castle in one viewing. It was quite the thing. But at one point, William Randolph Hearst once read of an extremely valuable piece of art.

And he decided that he must have it and add it to his collection. So he sent an agent to scour the world to find this piece of art.

And after many months of painstaking search, the agent reported that he had indeed found that piece of art and that it already belonged to Randolph Hearst.

[4 : 58] And was stored in a warehouse for many years. He did not even know what he already had. And there's a tragedy.

Many Christians are looking for more. They're looking for something special. They desire something extra beyond the norm of the Christian life.

And the tragedy is that they don't know what they already have. What they already have. And today, Paul's prayer for the church, we're going to see.

He's praying that they would come to see that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened. That the light would turn on and they could see what they have. What they possess. So we're talking about prayer.

What's. Why do we pray? What's the purpose of prayer? The Lord's prayer teaches us what to pray. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6 and Luke 11.

[6 : 00] And those six requests that we pray. We pray daily. We pray. Give us this day our daily bread. So therefore, thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

Hallowed be thy name. All those things are daily prayers that Jesus teaches us to pray. Five, six subjects. Just something not to repeat in rote, but to have those six ideas upon which to hang our prayers that we pray.

So, but today we're asking why? What's the purpose of prayer? Are we to pray for more blessings? Often we pray, Lord bless us, bless us.

Lord bless this service. Bless this meeting. Bless this relationship. Bless, bless, bless. And yet we see we had just learned in Ephesians 1 verse 3 that the Lord has already blessed us with some blessings, right?

Is that what he says, verse 3? No? Did I read it wrong? Oh, he's already blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Oh, that's kind of inclusive, isn't it?

[7:07] Every spiritual blessing. That includes things like verse 4, a relationship with him where he has chosen us. Before the foundation of the world to be holy before him.

To be his holy ones. And then he's adopted us into sonship, right? Verse 7, he has given us a redemption. We have a redemption in Christ. A salvation.

Forgiveness. Okay. Well, we have all those wonderful things. Maybe what we need is more of the Holy Spirit. If we just had more of the Holy Spirit, we'd have a more on-fire relationship and life before the world, right?

We need more of the Holy Spirit. If we just had more of the Holy Spirit. Wait a minute. Verse 13. Paul said one of the blessings is that we have the Holy Spirit. We've been, in fact, sealed with the Holy Spirit.

He is our pledge. He is our deposit on the many blessings we'll have in heaven. So, why do we pray?

[8:13] Why does Paul pray? Verse 15. He says, for this reason, because I've heard about you, I pray. For this reason, because I've heard about you, I pray.

That's what prompts him. And he prays in two ways. We're going to look at two ways of prayer today. One is thanksgiving. So, verse 15 and 16, he gives thanks for these folks.

He gives thanks for these folks. Every time he remembers them, he's thanking God for these folks. These believers. And then, verse 17 and 18, and the rest is intercession.

Now he's praying for them. So, he's thanksgiving and intercession. That's what we're going to look at today. Those two particulars, those two elements of prayer. What does Paul include in his prayer?

He includes two things. Thanksgiving and intercession. So, intercession is going to be the prayers, what he's praying for those folks about. But let's take a moment and look at his thanksgiving.

[9:23] First element of prayer that Paul always includes, as you read through his prayers, he always includes his thanksgiving first. An unceasing, he says, an unceasing thanksgiving for God's work in others.

Do you do that? Do you pray that? When you think of some folks, when you think of other folks in this church, when you think of Christian folks that you've met around the world, give thanks for what you've seen God's work in their lives.

That's what Paul does. In fact, I kind of trace that. I look through his letters. Romans. Yeah, he starts off. I give thanks every time I think of you.

First and second Corinthians. Yep, right in the beginning chapter. I give thanks. Even the Corinthians. I give thanks every time I think about you guys. The Colossians.

Thessalonians. First and second Thessalonians. First and second Timothy. Even the little tiny book of Philemon. He gives thanks. It's just kind of how he starts his letter.

[10:29] Grace and peace to you, but then I give thanks. I give thanks to God in my remembrance of you. Thanksgiving. That's an easy one to forget, isn't it?

It's easy because we're needy, right? So we go to God and I bring my needs. And of course, that's appropriate. Of course, I bring my needs.

But let us not forget to give thanks. I want you to notice what prompts his prayer. He says in verse 15, for this reason, having heard.

He's heard something. He's heard about these folks. I have heard of the what? The faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which exists among you and your love for all the saints.

I've heard of two things about you. Two primary things. Two graces or marks of true Christian lives.

[11:29] Faith in Christ. Love for the saints. You could pretty much boil down. What's a genuine believer? How do I know what a genuine believer is? How can I mark that person?

Do they have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? And do they love the saints? Do they love the saints? So faith.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what is faith? Well, there are synonyms of faith. Faith is belief. Faith is trust. Right?

It's trusting. But here, look, it's faith in him. It's in Christ. So what does that make that faith? It makes it a personal dependence, doesn't it?

I have faith in Jesus. I put my faith in my Lord. I'm walking with him. I'm trusting him. I'm relying on him. I believe what he has promised me, that he will never leave me or forsake me.

[12:31] I trust that whatever shadow, whatever valley I go through, it will end up for good. Romans 8, 28. Right? He intends everything he puts us through, even the dark times, for good.

We just sang, didn't we? We just sang about walking through the dark time. That's part of our journey. Yet we know, right, that he has promised.

And I trust that. I believe that. To trust in him. To have faith in him. It's the realm in which faith acts and lives.

Do you rely on him? Do you trust him? Is your faith like that? Is it a personal faith?

We're not talking about faith, you know, like a statement of faith. Well, I believe these things. I hold to these truths. I believe these things. I have an academic knowledge of that.

[13:37] That's not what faith is. Faith is a personal trusting, relying, right, abiding. All these synonyms in the scriptures. Abiding in him.

Walking with him, right? Are about faith. And then their love. He gives thanks for their love. Their love for all the saints.

Well, what love? In Greek, there's four or five different words for love. Right? And before Jesus came, the top one, the one that Peter thought was the main one was phileo.

Remember that one? Brotherly love, right? Before Christ came and made agape the word, phileo was the one. Remember? Because at the end, Jesus said to Peter, do you love me, agape?

And Peter said, man, I phileo. I mean, I'm there to the end. That's the phileo. Because Peter at the time thought that was it.

[14:38] In his culture, that was the top word. And Jesus took this word agape, which in that culture didn't really mean anything. It was kind of like the word love in our culture.

What does it mean? Depends on who's talking, what context. Right? That's what agape meant back then. And Jesus gave it meaning. Because it was a kind of a superficial word, he gave it depth.

So he talked about that's the love that he had. It's the agape love that the Father sent the Son into the world. It's the agape love that caused Jesus to lay down his life. Right?

It became the word that meant sacrifice. Life-giving. And for another, not for self, but for another. To act sacrificially to meet the needs of someone else.

Is that kind of love. Self-giving. And it's love to what? Their love for who? Here he says in verse... Where am I?

[15:42] In verse 15, thank you very much. Your love for all the saints. For all the saints. Really? All the saints? How about some of the saints? How about the ones that I like?

How about the ones that I'm comfortable with? How about the ones that are like me? Well, wait a minute. I mean, like me, yeah, they need love. So love for all the saints.

Not just the ones I like. Not just the ones I'm comfortable with. Not just the ones that are like me. So I can easily get along with. But for all.

And in this letter, Paul's going to talk about how God has brought people from all kinds of different backgrounds together. They're not just Jew and Gentile. But Jews from different places.

And Gentiles from different places. That all have different upbringings. And different values. That they've had. Different backgrounds. Different oddities about themselves. That was dramatic.

[16:44] Jesus said in John 13, this is the new commandment. Right?

This is the one that supersedes everything else. And I believe it even supersedes the original ten. Because if you do the one, Jesus said, you'll do the ten.

Understand what I mean? He said, this is the one that fulfills everything else. And that's love one another. Love one another as I have loved you.

And then he said, if the world sees this love, they'll know you belong to me. That's really. I don't know if we really believe that. Not our love for the world.

Our love for one another. When the world sees that, they will know that we are Jesus' people.

That's evangelical. That gives us a basis on which to reach people.

[17:47] Because we're credible. So he says he does not cease to pray. Verse 16, I do not cease giving thanks for you.

Does that mean he's praying all day long for folks? What does it mean to not cease? I do not cease giving thanks to you while making mention of you in my prayers.

So in my prayers, at the time of my prayers. So the times of prayer for Paul as a Jewish man would have been morning, noon, and evening. That's the way Daniel prayed, remember? Morning, noon, and evening.

And this is what the Jewish folks did. They prayed morning, noon, and evening. They had set times of prayer. That's why we read in Acts where they came to the temple at the time of prayer.

They came to gather for prayer at a certain time during the day. So Paul said, in those times, I remember you. I pray for you. This is Paul's regular practice.

[18:47] When he prays, he remembers people. He remembers these believers, and he gives thanks to God for them. For God's work in them.

So consider, what are the elements of prayer? So we've said there's two that generally, thanksgiving and intercession. Well, what does intercession involve?

So Paul, in Philippians 4, Paul instructs believers to use every element of prayer. Listen to how he kind of adds them up. You know this verse, right? Philippians 4, 6.

Be anxious for nothing. Right? I think that's the old King James version in it. Be anxious for nothing.

Do not be anxious about anything. But in everything, do what?

Now watch what he lists here now, right? By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[19:46] And what's the result of that? I love this verse, right? You know this verse, don't you? And the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, which means the kind of peace that comes when it doesn't make sense to have peace, right?

Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. So if you pray with supplication, thanksgiving, and let your requests be made known to God, you'll have the peace of God.

You know what the secret of that verse is? What is the secret to the request? I mean, to the peace of God coming? Because often we will pray and not receive peace.

What's the secret? Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Because you know what? You know what takes faith in the hard times? Is to give God thanks.

Thank you for this dark time. Right? Only faith can say that. Thank you for this.

[20:59] Now, somebody else hears you say that, they think you're out of your mind. No, no, a natural person would say, no, God, why? Well, and sometimes we do that, don't we?

We say, why? But faith says, no, I know what your promise is. I know my king is still on his throne.

And I know that though the wrong seems off so strong, this is still my father's world.

Right? And I know that my savior has promised that all this will turn out for good. I know that my father has promised he'll give me an unimaginable peace to come to me when I trust him.

And I thank him even for the hard time. Then Jesus will be sitting up there, right, and saying, well done, my servant. Well done.

That's what I'm looking for. I got you. Prayer to God. Supplication. What's supplication?

[22:14] That's a Bible word. What's supplication? Break it down. Supply. Right? We're asking God for supply. Supplication. So my needs. So prayer is general.

That's just talking to God as my friend, my savior, my Lord. Just talking, praising God. Supplication. There's my needs. Thanksgiving, obviously, for whatever's going on.

And then requests. So there's things that I'm wanting. I'm desiring. Things. Ways I want to see God work. Right? My children and my work and my neighborhood and my money problems or whatever, whatever.

So Thanksgiving. Is that part of your prayers? Make it part of your prayers. It's a blessing to have that. Second element is intercession.

So we see, we say intercessory prayer, right? For the church. It means to intercede. Our savior, Jesus, we're told in Hebrews, intercedes for us.

[23 : 23] He is on his throne and he's interceding for us. And I think he's interceding like he did for Peter. Remember when he told Peter, you're going to deny me, you're going to deny me, you're going to deny me.

Right? And Peter's like, no, no, no, no, no. Can't even conceive of it. Ain't going to happen. Right? And then Jesus says, but. No, Peter, you're going to deny me. But I prayed for you. Remember this? I love this. Luke 22. How did Jesus pray for Peter? That he wouldn't fall? No. That what?

That his faith would not fail. And I think that's how Jesus prays for us. That our faith won't. He's not praying that we get out of the hard situation. Right? He's put us in that. He wants us to go through it. And he wants our faith not to fail.

[24 : 20] I'm sure there's other ways he's praying for us. But I think that's one of the ways he's interceding for us. And so he's given us the privilege to intercede for others. For one another in a similar way.

So here's Paul. Paul, he's interceding for these dear folks that he's heard about. And notice who he addresses.

Verse 17. This is a little different. He doesn't just pray that God will do something. Watch this. He prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

Two titles. In fact, two unique titles. He addresses the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why is he saying the God of Jesus?

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we saw that phrase earlier. Verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He's the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[25 : 23] But he's also the God. So does that mean Jesus as the second member of the Trinity is less? Is he not really God?

No, that's not what he's saying. And the clue is that he says the Lord Jesus Christ. When did he get the name Jesus? When he came to earth and took flesh, right?

That was not his name before. He was Lord. He was Yahweh. Now his name's Jesus. So he's referring to Jesus as he took on flesh.

The God of the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who was made Lord and who was the Christ. And his name was Yeshua. Right? So that's that.

And then he also calls him the Father of glory. That's interesting. In fact, Paul's obsessed with glory. Back in verse 6. He's talking about that we were adopted.

[26 : 22] Verse 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace. Verse 12. He talks about our inheritance. Is to the end. That we who were the first to hope in Christ.

Should be to the praise of his glory. And then again in verse 14. The Holy Spirit who is given to us as a pledge of our inheritance. With a view to the redemption of God's own possession.

Unto what end? To the praise of his glory. There it is again. Three times. To the praise of his glory. To the praise of his glory. To the magnification of his glory. What's his glory? What's glory?

It's one of those. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Right. If a non-Christian. If an unbeliever. Right. Asks you. Or a child asks you. What's glory? Um. Let me go Google real quick.

Shining. Radiance. Maybe we could say. It's something along the lines. The sum of his absolute perfection.

[27 : 27] Something like that. His splendor. His radiance. In the Old Testament we saw his glory revealed in fire and smoke and light.

Remember God descended on Sinai. What happened to Sinai? Right? Fire and smoke and shaking. Glory. Such glory. Such glory that the Israelites said.

You talk to him. I don't want to talk. Right? So why this address? Why the father of glory?

Well. Paul's a thinking guy. And I think he's always kind of thinking ahead a little bit. As he's writing this letter. The father of glory. Why?

What is he going to ask for? Look at verse 18. He prays that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened. That the light would come on.

[28 : 23] That the eyes of your heart. In other words. Internal. Understanding. Not just head knowledge. But lights will come on for you. I'm praying that you'll be enlightened. By the father of glory.

We give you some of that light. To see with understanding. Now we've been given light. What we need is help to see how it applies.

How it is significant. So Paul has talked to us in the opening verses about this. How he's blessed us in every way. And he's blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.

He's chosen us. He's adopted us. He's given us redemption. He's given us the Holy Spirit. He's given us an inheritance. For which the Holy Spirit is a first part of that.

So we can take all that. And we can write that down. And say okay. Okay. Check. Check. Check. But do we get it? Do we understand it? Do we understand it to the extent that we don't pray carelessly like saying God bless me?

[29 : 41] Well he's already blessed me. So what do I mean? So I mean something more than that. I'm not saying that's totally wrong or ignorant to pray God bless me. But what do you mean by that?

What do you mean by that? What does that mean? What does that mean? Because he's already given. He's blessed us with everything. So maybe I should pray.

Lord help me understand my blessing. Lord open my eyes to see all these blessings. So I can praise you. So I can live more confidently.

So that my faith is strengthened and bolstered. Maybe that's how I should learn to pray. If that's what I've done. Right? And that's nothing wrong. It's a sincere prayer.

But maybe let's step that up a little bit and make that a little more accurate. Give me eyes to see that. Let me get it. So his main request is in verse 17.

[30 : 44] How does he intercede for these folks? He prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of glory, may what? May give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation.

In what? In the knowledge of him. To know him. That's the goal. That's what we need more than anything else.

To know him. Now as we come to Christ as he gives us new birth. We do begin to know him. We begin to walk with him. He begins to reveal himself to us.

But Paul's praying that we're given even more a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowing of him. The spirit.

So does your translation have that he would give you the spirit of wisdom? I think the ESV has that. I'm reading the numeric standards a little more accurate.

[31 : 43] Well, in this instance it is. Because in the Greek it's not the spirit, it's a spirit. So sometimes translators are doing more than translating.

They're interpreting. And that just comes with the territory. But here he says that he may give you a spirit of wisdom. What does that mean?

What spirit? Well, spirit, besides being the Holy Spirit, sometimes spirit means small as spirit in the sense of an attitude. A disposition. Right?

An outlook. That the Lord may give you an attitude of. Or a disposition of. Wisdom and revelation. Does that make sense?

Is it Psalm 51 where we pray, Renew in me a right. Spirit. Spirit. Right? And sustain me with a willing spirit.

[32 : 45] So it's an attitude. Renew a right spirit. Right attitude. A right disposition. Right? And so here, it's a disposition of wisdom and revelation.

In other words, we're putting it together. I like to say connecting the dots. That we bring it together. We'll be given all these truths.

Are we connecting those dots? See, that's what the Jesus decided. That's what Jesus was wanting his disciples to do. Right? To connect dots. And they couldn't connect dots.

They couldn't connect that he's Messiah and he's not going to rule on the throne of David. On earth. They couldn't connect. That didn't work in there. They didn't have that connection.

In fact, none of the Jews of the first century got what Jesus, what kind of Messiah he was going to be. Oh, he's going to be on the throne of David, but that throne wasn't on earth.

[33 : 51] That throne, as he told Pilate, my kingdom's way above this world. A spirit, a disposition of wisdom.

Wisdom is the skill to discern. Wisdom is the ability to apply truth. Right? And then a disposition of revelation, of unveiling in the knowledge of him.

So here's the knowledge of him. What do we mean by that? What's that word knowledge? It's not the word that is knowledge, academic knowledge or theoretic knowledge. It's not the word for knowledge that is, you know, I know about.

Because we can know a lot about. We can know a lot of theology. We can define a lot of theological terms. We can cut and parse and we can do all of that and be very accurate. That can be a kind of knowledge.

And the Bible talks about that kind of knowledge. That's not this knowledge. This knowledge is way beyond that knowledge. This knowledge goes deeper. It's not theory.

[35 : 00] It's not abstract facts. But it's a full recognition of who Jesus is. Let me steal a little bit from Martin Lloyd-Jones.

He says, This term knowledge is a very strong, very powerful term. It does not convey the sense of casual cursory acquaintance. It does not mean a superficial knowledge.

There is such knowledge, of course. But the apostle's term conveys the ideas of accurate and exact knowledge. Certain knowledge. Certain knowledge.

And also an experiential knowledge. It is profound knowledge. He is not used. He could not have used a stronger term.

He's praying that they may come to this full knowledge. This full orb'd knowledge. This accurate, precise, exact, experiential knowledge of the one who is the God of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[36 : 03] He is not praying that we may have an intellectual or theoretical knowledge of God only. What we have here is quite staggering and astounding. He is concerned that we should have an immediate knowledge of God.

A real fellowship with God. To use the current theological expression, He is concerned that we should have an encounter with God.

He means a knowledge of God which is personal and intimate. I love Martin Lloyd-Jones. In other words, not mere theory, not abstract or academic, but personal, real, experiential knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and God Himself.

Do you have that kind of knowledge? Well, after you read all that, no. But I'd like more of it.

And that's what we're praying. That's what He's praying. And we come to full or full of that. We learn to walk with Him. Truly walk with Him. Not a superficial, you know, sentimental, you know, walking with Him, but a true walking daily through all life's issues with my God.

[37 : 26] That's what made Noah distinct. That's what made Abraham different. Enoch walked with God.

And he was not. First rapture. Walking with Him.

Walking with Him. Hebrews 11. That's the people that did that kind of stuff. So it is this spiritual understanding, this coming to the eyes of our hearts being enlightened, to us gaining a spirit of wisdom and revelation in that knowledge of God that transforms us.

Listen to how Paul writes about it in 2 Corinthians 3. And he talks about initial conversion here. He says, When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, speaking of we believers, we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, watch this, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

[38 : 52] Wait a minute. How'd that go? How do we get transformed? How are we presently being transformed? Beholding the glory of the Lord. So if I behold the Father of glory, the more clearly I behold the Father of glory, the more clearly I behold the Son of glory, I am being transformed from one image of glory to another.

See, He shares His glory with us. Not all His glory. He gives us a little bit of that glory. A little bit of that light. A little bit of that fire. A little bit of that smoke on the mountain.

He goes on, For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart, but we, Paul is now speaking of He who gives out the gospel to others, but we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.

We refuse to practice cunning or tamper with God's word. That's not how we do it. But by the open statement of the truth, we just tell it like it is.

By the open statement of the truth, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. Wow. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

[40 : 20] In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing what? To keep them from seeing the light of the gospel, of the glory of Christ.

That's what Satan is blinding. He doesn't want them to see the glory, the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ, because that would transform them.

Christ, who is the image of God, for what we proclaim is not ourselves, but we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God said, here we go again, for God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That's a Paul statement, isn't it? I mean, it's like all packed. It's just, can you just, no, I can't make it easy. Paul's too, because he wants to be accurate.

[41 : 33] The light has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge, the experiential, full knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, and that transforms us.

You want to be transformed? You want to keep transforming from one image to the next? You want to grow as a Christian? Well, you got to do this and this and this.

No. Pray that your eyes are open. Pray that the light shines so that you can behold the glory.

And as you behold the glory, that's your part. His part is transforming. Growing you. Changing you.

Now I thought, when we're saved, aren't we all good?

Aren't we all clean? Yeah. Aren't we good? Aren't we full of Christ then? Aren't we good? Don't we? Is there still bad stuff? How come there's still bad stuff?

[42 : 39] Because we haven't died yet. That's how Christ wanted it. So that we work through those things. We learn to put off the old, put on the new, which is what he'll get to in chapter four.

So what Paul prays for is not a new blessing or a new power or an add-on to their Christian life to transform them. Paul doesn't pray like that. What he's praying for is a God-given ability to see what they already have, to see the glory of Christ that transforms them.

And most particularly, he prays that we come to some more complete knowing of Jesus Christ, a real experiential relationship with Christ, that our intimate knowledge of Jesus will increase in wisdom and understanding, that our walking knowledge of relationship with Jesus involves not just walk, but some wisdom in it, and then an unveiling of more understanding of it.

So, can I meddle with you for a minute? Do you know the Lord Jesus? I don't mean know about him. Do you know him?

Do you have a relationship with him? Do you know him? Like you know an intimate friend. Do you know what he's like?

[44 : 19] Do you know how he feels about you? Do you know what he thinks about you? Do you know what he wants for you? Do you know him so personally that you trust him every day and you talk with him every day?

You walk with him every day. And even in the dark times, you know he's right there. He's right there. Do you spend time, do you intend, make intentional times to spend with him?

You know, we talk to the Lord all through the day. That's our privilege, our gift. But here Paul is, this is an intentional kind of prayer Paul's praying.

He's on his knees, you know. This is one of his prayer times where he's, this is something he's praying for. Right? You spend time with him. Devote yourself to a relationship with him.

So, so much time that you, you don't just talk to him but you, what's the other side of that? Listen. Do you listen?

[45 : 31] And we have a hard time with that. I have a hard time. First sabbatical I went on, I'm like, I'm going to listen. I'm going to take these quiet walks and I'm going to listen. And, and somebody kept interrupting.

And it was me. It's really hard. It's really hard. It's a, you know, but learning to listen. Not that you're going to hear this big audible voice but sometimes you get this, hmm, okay.

And it's not some weird thing. It's like, okay, yeah, repent of this. Okay, all right. Go talk to that person and get right with that person. You know, it's something like that. It's like, oh, okay, gotcha. that's walking with him. All right. I'll stop meddling. Let's pray. Father, we thank you, oh Lord, that we can talk to you.

That we can walk with you. That you desire that we know you. That we come to an understanding, a knowledge that is, that is exact and accurate and precise and all of that but it's also extremely experiential in terms of our experience that we walk with you.

[46 : 57] We know you personally. So help us to grow in that, Lord, and we pray with Paul that you give us insight into our prayers for others that we would become those who are thankful for the way you're working and those around us and that, Lord, we would adopt these prayers to intercede for others that their eyes too would be open to know you.

and see you and walk with you. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.