



Scripture Reading

- *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. (Ephesians 1:15–16 NIV)*
- *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17 NIV)*

Scripture Reading

- *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:18 NIV)*
- *and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:19 NIV)*

Scripture Reading

- *That power is like the working of his mighty strength, (Ephesians 1:19 NIV)*
 - *which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, (Ephesians 1:20 NIV)*
 - *far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. (Ephesians 1:21 NIV)*

Scripture Reading

- *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, (Ephesians 1:22 NIV)*
 - *which is his body,*
 - *the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:23 NIV)*

Introduction

- Ask a group of older Christians to open their Bibles to the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, and you might get the question, “What’s an epistle?”
- Ask a group of younger Christians to open their Bibles to the letter of Paul to the Ephesians, and you might get the question, “What’s a letter?”



Introduction

- Recently, letter-writing has been largely replaced by email, texts and Facebook messages.
- A recent issue of The Atlantic magazine (September 2017) has a list of the most important letters in history.
- They range from a letter written by an ancient Persian queen, to the message that accompanied the Voyager spacecraft into outer space.



Introduction

Other letters, included on this list were . . .

- Martin Luther King Jr's “Letters from the Birmingham Jail.”
- The Letters of Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.
- The “Groans of the Briton” letter of 450 AD.
- Albert Einstein's letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt suggesting that an atomic bomb was possible.
- The Letters of the Apostle Paul.

Other Not so Famous Letters

- Dear Mom, thank you soooo much for being my mom. If I had a different Mom I would punch her in the face and go find you. —Love, Brooke.
- Dear Mom, I'm angry at you and I'm not talking to you today and tomorrow. P.S. all day. P.S.S. I still love you.
- Dear Mrs. McMahon, You are a good teacher but not my most favorite. —Theo

Introduction

- But of all the letters in history, what **tops the list** of the most important ever written?
- The **epistles** of the apostle Paul, according to best-selling novelist Nicholas Sparks.
- They continue to **inform** and **influence** Christians around the world, almost 2,000 years after they were written.
- And Paul's letters have had an impact that **goes far beyond** the life of the church.



Introduction

Without his epistles, no one would say:

- "Love is patient; love is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4);
- "The one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9:6);
- "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right" (Galatians 6:9);
- "Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33); and
- "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Letter to the Ephesians

- In verses 15 and 16 of our reading, Paul writes, ***"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you."***
- In other words, Paul upon hearing a good report about **sincerity** of the believers' faith in Ephesus, doesn't stop giving thanks to God whenever he prays for them.
- And what does the Apostle Paul pray for when he remembers the church? Let us take a look.

Letter to the Ephesians

- *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the **Spirit of wisdom and revelation**, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17 NIV)*
- Paul explains this “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” as the enlightenment of our hearts to know two things.
 - the **riches of our glorious inheritance** that is waiting for us in the age to come (v. 18), and
 - **his incomparably great power** for us who believe (v. 19).

Glorious Inheritance

- In this life of ours, we can be assured that we will have tribulation, trouble, and disappointment.
- However, as long as we keep our eye on the prize, the glorious blessing that is waiting for us in heaven and in the age to come, it will help us not to lose heart and give up.
- As it is written: “*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him*” — *but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit*. (1 Corinthians 2:9–10 NIV)

Glorious Inheritance

- *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. (Colossians 3:23–24 NIV)*
- *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you*. (1 Peter 1:3–4 NIV)

Glorious Inheritance

- *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV)*
- *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance*. (Hebrews 9:15 NIV)
- *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:18–21 NIV)*

Incomparably Great Power

- The second reason for having the Spirit of wisdom and revelation is to understand and grasp the **incomparable great power** we have in Christ.
- According to the Apostle Paul this power is the working of God's own **mighty strength**, which not only
 - raised Jesus from the dead, but
 - seated him in the heavenly realms,
 - far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given,
 - not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Incomparably Great Power

- Jesus has **power** over all things, and he shares this power with us, the members of the church.
- With Jesus, we are never powerless.
- That's the **good news** of Paul's letter to the Ephesians and to us.
 - God wants us to be "strengthened in [our] inner being with **power through his Spirit**." (3:16)
 - Paul prays that we "may have the **power** to comprehend the love of Christ." (3:18-19)
 - Paul wants us to be "**strong** in the Lord and in the **strength** of his **power**." (6:10)

Incomparably Great Power

- *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the **power of God for the salvation** of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. (Romans 1:16 NIV)*
- *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this **all-surpassing power is from God and not from us**. (2 Corinthians 4:7 NIV)*
- *We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, **struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me**. (Colossians 1:28-29 NIV)*

Incomparably Great Power

- *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the **Spirit's power**, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on **God's power**. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NIV)*
- *For God did not give us a **spirit of timidity**, but a **spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline**. (2 Timothy 1:7 NIV)*
- *I can do everything through him who gives me **strength (power)**. (Philippians 4:13 NIV)*

Summary

- When the Apostle Paul discovers that the faith of the Ephesians is **genuine**, he starts praying day and night for one important thing . . .
- For the people in the church to be filled with the **Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation** so that they may know God better.
- Then their hearts would be **enlightened** where they could grasp the
 - riches of their glorious inheritance (future great reward)
 - immeasurable greatness of his power (help hear and now)

Summary

- The problem is without our hearts **enlightened** by the **Spirit of God**, we can't grasp those two important things.
- We can easily get discouraged and think we are powerless to the forces around us and feel that the sacrifices we often have to make are not worth the cost.
- The point is we're not left as orphans and **God's presence** can so fill our hearts that we can not only **discern God's good, pleasing, and perfect will**, but also have the **power to walk it out** where **God's promises** can be fulfilled in our lives.

Watchman Nee

- **Watchman Nee** or Ni Tuosheng was a Chinese church leader and Christian teacher who worked in China during the 20th century.
- When the Chinese Communist Party took control of China in 1949, Christians came under great persecution.
- Watchman was imprisoned and died in a labor camp in 1972 at the age of 68 years old.



Watchman Nee

- Before he went to be with the Lord, he wrote a **correspondence** to the church, entitled "**The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation**."
- In it he wrote that "**spiritual revelation**" means life or death in our Christian lives.
- He went on to say,
 - there is no way of knowing God and His eternal will except through revelation, and
 - neither is there any means of knowing Christ other than by the **revelation of the Holy Spirit**.



Conclusion of the Matter

- There are roughly **two types of revelation** we need, knowledge that comes through the divinely inspired Bible and understanding and wisdom that come from the Holy Spirit, when we apply what the Bible says and pray.
- Both are a means of life for sincere believers in Christ.
- Therefore, let us **pray daily** that God will fill us with the knowledge of His Will.
 - For if we do, we will not be ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of God (See 2 Peter 1:8 NIV), and
 - We will know the riches of every good thing we have in Christ.

My Prayer

That God will fill us with **wisdom and understanding** so that we may have **spiritual discernment and insight . . .**

- on how to apply His Word in every circumstance and situation of our life, and
- do so with great perseverance because we know
 - the **power** he has for those who believe, and
 - the **great reward** that is waiting for us in heaven.