

DAY  
4

## God's Power Ephesians 1:19-21

Paul describes God's power as "incomparably great." After you know the hope you have and the inheritance that is yours, you need to know about God's power for you. Nothing else compares to God's power. No one else comes close. If you want to know how great God's power is, he has given us the perfect example when he raised Jesus from the dead. It's the same power that is now at work in us.

Did you catch that? The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is now at work in you. That's pretty overwhelming, isn't it? God's power is energizing—"endless energy," as The Message translates this verse. There is so much in this world to make us feel weak. We are

**Putting our strength in anything else will always be a disappointment. But God's strength will never disappoint.**

often at the mercy of people who let us down, corrupt institutions, our fallible bodies, and our own tendency to be weak at just the moment we need to be strong. Putting our strength in anything else will always be a disappointment. But God's strength will never disappoint.

God's power rules over all. God has conquered sin, death, and all the powers of this world.

*What have you relied on in the past to be a source of power and strength? How were you let down by those things (or people)? What are the current situations for which you need power? Where does your strength come from? Do you rely on your own strength? Do you put your trust in God when things overwhelm you? Say a prayer asking God to help you depend on his strength rather than your own.*

DAY  
5

## The Church at the Center Ephesians 1:22-23

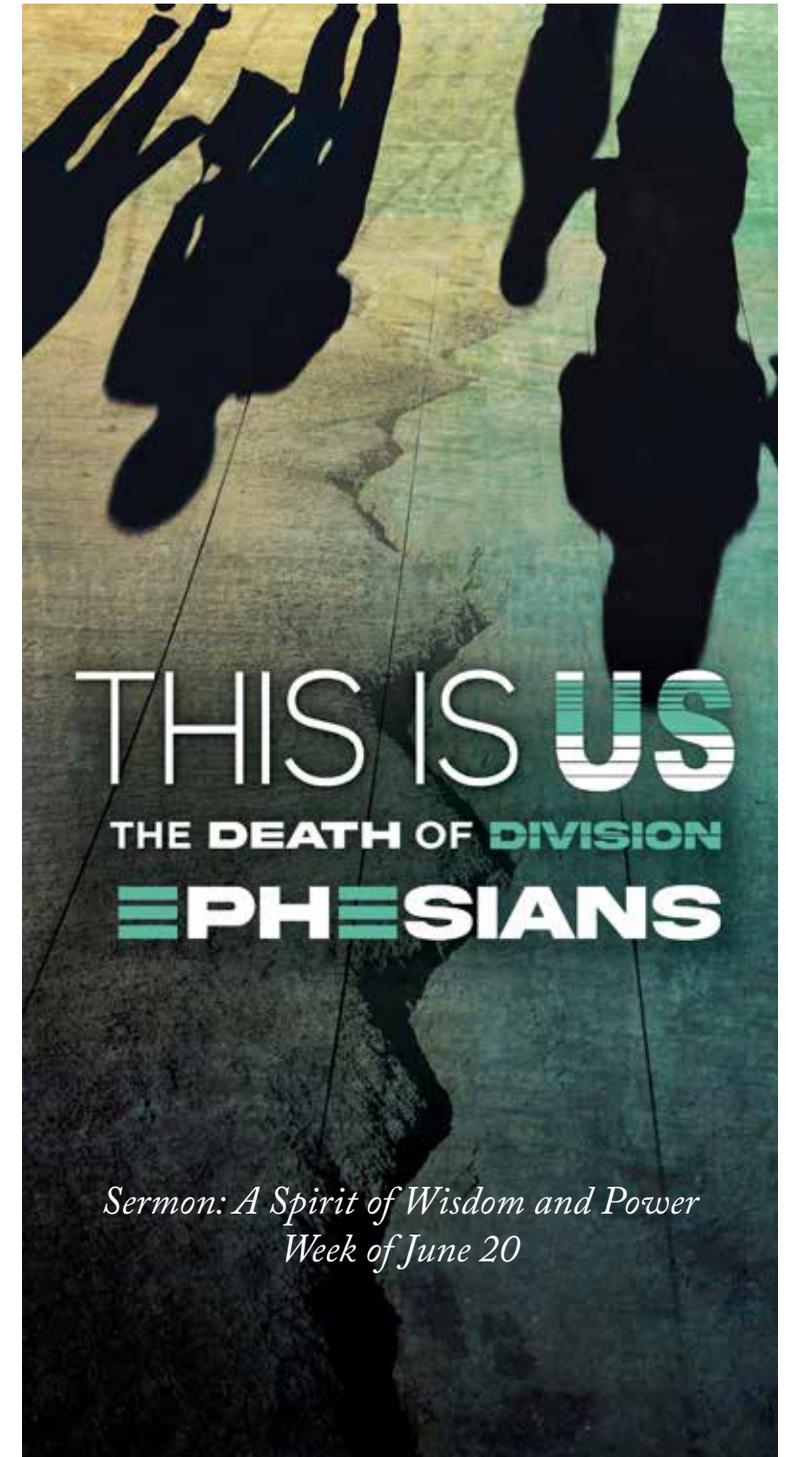
Yesterday we looked at God's power and how Jesus rules over all things. The Message puts it this way:

*God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church.*

Back in verse 10, Paul emphasized that everything is summed up in Christ. Christ, who is in charge of everything, who is the summation of everything, is head of the Church. God's Church stands at the center of his plan and power. Paul has listed many things that Jesus rules over, but he ends by emphasizing that Jesus is the head of the Church. Jesus' power fills up the Church. Paul will have much more to say on the Church community in the other chapters in Ephesians, but this is the first thing he wants us to know: Christ is head of the Church.

The Church is a supernatural work and place and people where hope, inheritance, and power are poured out on us. Even when the Church is (or seems to be) falling short, it is still the place where the power, love, and grace of Christ is at work. Jesus loves his Church. Jesus gives the Church every spiritual blessing. Jesus fills the Church with his powerful presence.

*Pray that Living Word would be a place where we experience Jesus in all his power, grace, and glory. Pray that you would so experience Jesus that you are one of those in and through whom, others experience the power, grace, and glory of Jesus.*



DAY  
1

## A Prayer of Thanks Ephesians 1:15-16

The next section of Ephesians begins with Paul giving thanks for the people of Ephesus. If you followed along in last week's devotional, you know that the section just before this was all about God's great work of adopting us into his family. Paul began with prayers of praise to God, but now he moves into a prayer of thanksgiving for others. He is prompted to pray for the Ephesians because he has heard such great things about them. Their reputation has preceded them. Paul has heard about their great love for others and their strong faith in God. What a fantastic thing to be known for!

The people of Ephesians had faith. They had heard the wonderful message that Paul had described in the previous section, and it had moved them to belief. They believed that Jesus was who he said he was.

But it wasn't only that they believed the right things, they also did the right things. In addition to their faith, they were known for loving others well. Perhaps Paul had heard of specific things the Ephesians were doing. Perhaps he had met someone who had been a recipient of their love and kindness. Whatever the case, Paul knew that this was a community that had right beliefs and right actions.

**What an incredible gift, to know that when someone thinks of you, they are moved to prayer of thanksgiving.**

Because of the outstanding reputation of the people of the church in Ephesus, Paul is moved to prayer. He says that he hasn't stopped thanking God for them! The Message translates this as "every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks." What an incredible gift, to know that when someone thinks of you, they are moved to prayers of thanksgiving.

*What are you known for? Do you have a reputation for being a loving follower of Christ? Are you known for your strong faith in God? For whom do you give thanks? Pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the people who show you a good example of faithfulness and love. Ask God to help you be a good example to others.*

DAY  
2

## Knowing God Ephesians 1:17

The life of a Christian is one of constant growth. Even though Paul has established that the Ephesians have the right beliefs and behaviors, Paul wants more for them. Paul wants them to know God even more completely and intimately. He wants them to experience God.

Think about the relationships that you have. Some of them are surface level. You might be a friend or an acquaintance of someone, you might hang out occasionally, you might know a little about one another, but you don't know them deeply. You don't know their motivations or the things that are important to them. Now, think about your best friend. The relationship is different, isn't it? Relationships are different when they are deeper.

God wants you to know him deeply. He doesn't want a surface-level relationship with you. How do we know God? First of all, we study scripture to know God. The Bible teaches us how to know and love God. It teaches us how God has loved his people and built them for himself. It teaches us God's heart, what he values, and how he wants us to act.

Psalms 119 describes a man who wants to know God so that God would change him. The writer says, "I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws" and "teach me your decrees" and "Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart."

In his book *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer wrote, "The psalmist was interested in truth and orthodoxy, in Biblical teaching and theology, not as ends in themselves, but as means to the further end of life and godliness." We must learn more about God and then apply that knowledge to truly know God.

When we take the time to really know and reflect on what God has done for us, it changes our relationship with him.

*Do you want to know God deeper? How strong is this desire? Ask God for a "spirit of wisdom and revelation" to take your relationship deeper. Every time you begin to learn about God, pray and ask God to enlighten you on what you are learning and experiencing about him.*

DAY  
3

## Knowing Your Hope and Your Future Ephesians 1:18

Yesterday we read about how Paul *really* wants us to know God more fully. Paul wants us to have a divinely originated understanding so that we can know God better. Yes, we read, study, think, and learn . . . and God gives us enlightenment about who he is and what he does for us. We do part of the work and God joins us in helping us to understand.

In verse 18, Paul points out that he wants his readers to know two things in a much deeper way: first, to know the hope to which God has called us, and second, to know the riches of his glorious inheritance.

What do you put your hope in? What are you hoping for? What sort of hope has God called us to? Paul has already described it, back in verses 3-10. He called us to be his chosen children. He called us to grace and redemption. He called us to have wisdom and understanding. God calls us to a new life, a better life than we could imagine on our own. Our hope is in these things and that God promises he will bring them to completion (see Philippians 1:6).

Paul also wants his readers to know "the riches of his glorious inheritance." When we become God's children, when he adopts us into his family, we become his heirs. Romans 8:17 says, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." Can you imagine being co-heirs with Christ, receiving the same sort of inheritance? The Message translates this as, "the glorious way of life he has for his followers." All that God is, all that God does, and all that God provides—this is your inheritance!

*Do you really understand and appreciate the hope you have in Christ? How does that hope make a difference for you day to day? Every day, thank God the Father for all that he does for you and all that he promises he will give to you. Pray every day that your heart would be enlightened to know this even more.*