

# A Prayer for Knowledge

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 October 2016

Preacher: David Jackman

[ 0 : 0 0 ] We are going to turn now to our Bible reading for this morning, which you'll find in Paul's letter to the Ephesians in chapter 1. If you have one of our blue church visitors' Bibles, that's page 976.

And we're going to be reading the second half of chapter 1, which is this great prayer of the Apostle Paul for those in the church at Ephesus to whom he's writing.

And that begins at verse 15, and we'll read through to the end of the chapter. And Paul has introduced his great gospel to the church there, and then in this great long sentence, breathes out his prayer for the church.

For this reason, he says, What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints?

And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 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 one to come.

[ 1 : 5 8 ] And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Amen. And may God bless to us his word. Well, let me begin by thanking you very much indeed for your welcome.

It's always a great joy to come back to the Tron and to meet many old friends and doubtless some new ones. I've been this morning earlier at the service at Calvin Grove. Wonderful to see that church building now and the extension of the ministry there.

It's a great joy to be with you and thank you so much for the privilege of sharing together today. Now, if you would turn with me back to our reading in Ephesians chapter 1. We're going to look at this great prayer that we read a few moments ago.

And as we open our Bibles, let's ask the Lord to help us to understand his word. Our Father, we take your word into our hands and open it. And we pray that you will take our lives into your hands and open them.

[ 3 : 1 9 ] And so we ask that there may be a meeting between us, your people, and you, our living, loving Lord. That we might hear your voice, that we might find your spirit softening our hearts to your truth, and that we may experience our wills being strengthened to live and work for your glory.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I've always rather enjoyed those puzzles which are photographs of everyday objects or well-known landmarks, but taken from unusual angles so that you don't really know at first what you're looking at.

And as you take the photograph into your hands and turn it round and look at it from different angles, there is often an eye-popping moment when suddenly it all comes into focus and you say, oh, I see.

Oh, that's what it is. That's what I'm looking at. Now, we don't always realize what we're looking at. A little while ago in the press, there was the story of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh traveling by train, ordinary train, to a weekend with some friends, apparently, in East Anglia, on one of the greatest states there.

And the people on the train at Liverpool Street were slightly amazed to see a gentleman in a sort of bow tie and black jacket carrying some rather expensive glassware and cups and coffee mugs and coffee percolators and things.

[ 4 : 49 ] And they thought, what's happening? And there was a whole carriage that no one could go into, which was reserved for the royal party. When the Queen got off the train at Ipswich and there were one or two people who had realized what was happening, there was a little buzz in the crowd.

And one lady was heard to say to her friend, oh, oh, it's that lady I've seen on television. You don't always know what you're looking at, especially if the context is a surprising one.

So after this mind-blowing opening statements of Ephesians, which we have sung in that wonderful hymn that Pete Dixon wrote, picking up the big ideas about redemption and adoption and the riches of God's grace in the Lord Jesus, we come now to the prayer, which is a prayer for an eye-popping experience for Paul's readers.

It's a wonderfully rich and hugely encouraging prayer for us, this text of Scripture. And I'm praying myself that it will be a great stimulus to your faith this morning.

Because sometimes we do feel as though we're in situations that are overwhelmingly difficult, where the negatives are so much easier to concentrate on than the positives. And we need to have our minds shaped by God's Word constantly, day by day, especially as we gather together on Sundays under the preaching of the Word, so that our perspective is clear and our faith is strengthened.

[ 6 : 20 ] You'll notice at the beginning that Paul defines for us what real Christian experience is. Verse 15, for this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, that is, faith in Jesus as Lord, and your love towards all the saints.

And those first three words for this reason, of course, link us back to the realities of their Christian experience in the preceding two verses. Just look back with me, if you will, at verse 13.

You heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation. You believed in him, because Christ is the Word of Truth and is the Savior. And you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Now, that is genuine Christian experience, isn't it? If you're a Christian this morning, it's because you heard the Word of Truth, and because as the Holy Spirit enabled you, you believed in the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and therefore God has sealed you.

He's put his mark of ownership upon you with his Holy Spirit. And that is what marks us out as Christian believers. It's true of every Christian that this is the process, all sorts of different circumstances, all sorts of different times.

[ 7 : 34 ] But we heard, we believed, and we were sealed. Now, Paul says, that faith in the Lord Jesus has been demonstrated in your love for all the saints.

So, here are the marks of Christian reality in the New Testament. Faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Not faith in faith, but faith in Jesus.

And then love to all the saints, to all our fellow believers. And what Paul is saying in that first verse is that the unseen faith is demonstrated in a visible lifestyle.

A lifestyle of love. If there is no love for believers, there is no real faith in Jesus. If there is real faith in Jesus, we will love one another because we all belong to one another.

We're his children, God's children, through his beloved son. And the gospel change is a very clear change. It's so remarkable that Paul says, I never cease to give thanks for you, for what God has done in you, and for what he is doing through you.

[ 8 : 39 ] Now, Paul says, because I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus. And some of you will know that he was in Ephesus, to which this letter is directed, for the longest settled period of his ministry, as far as we know, nearly about three years.

So why would he say, I have heard of your faith? Didn't he know them? Yes, he probably did know the Ephesian Christians. But if you remember, in Acts 19, we're told that when Paul was in Ephesus, he was teaching every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, probably hired it during the lunch hour when everybody else would be on siestas.

And he was teaching the truth of the gospel. A multitude of people who came into Ephesus, because it was the capital of that province, of Asia Minor, heard the word of the Lord day by day.

And from that preaching, in that lunchtime service, if you like, that lunchtime ministry, day after day after day, people went back to their towns, their villages, in the hinterland, and little congregations would have been set up.

Paul didn't know all of them. But this letter that went to the Ephesian church would have gone around to all the satellite churches. And so he says, I have every confidence that I'm praying for you who are real Christians, because your faith is in Jesus as Lord, and you love one another.

[ 9 : 56 ] You love the brethren and the sistren, and you love all those who love the Lord Jesus. Now, let's take a step back for a moment to try and get the context of this, because the change had been dramatic and very far-reaching.

Ephesus was a city marked not by faith and love, but by superstition and fear. I mentioned Acts 19, which is a great chapter to read in conjunction with this letter, because it records for us what happened when Paul came to this capital city of Asia Minor.

Luke tells us that God did extraordinary miracles, which testified to the power of the Lord Jesus. Miracles are wonderful, but these were extraordinary miracles.

by the hands of Paul. Why in Ephesus? Well, because Ephesus was a city that was given over to the occult. It was a city of spells and incantations, curses, charms, sorcery, and there were many, many practitioners of black magic and satanic arts in Ephesus.

In the center of the city was the great temple of Diana, the goddess, the great goddess of the Ephesians, as she was called, but she was actually worshipped by more people groups in the Roman Empire than any other goddess.

[ 11 : 23 ] She was called the queen of the cosmos, the savior of the world, the goddess of the departed spirits, the goddess of fertility, and her very prosperous temple cult dominated the economic and the social life of the city of Ephesus.

And it thrived on these magic sorcerers, soothsayers, those who could cast spells and incantations.

And we read in Acts 19 that when the gospel began to spread in that city and many of these people were converted, there was that huge bonfire of all their magic scrolls and spells and charms.

50,000 pieces of silver worth went up in smoke that day. That is what the gospel has achieved in Ephesus. But put yourself in the shoes of a young convert.

Imagine you're a young person who you've grown up in Ephesus, you know all about the supernatural powers, you know that everything is covered by sacrifices to Diana and by magic of one sort and another.

[ 12 : 35 ] But you go and listen to Paul preaching in the lecture hall of Tyrannus and he talks about the Lord Jesus, the one true God who has sent his son to be the savior of the world.

Diana isn't the savior of the world, she isn't the queen of the cosmos, there is a king of the world, there is a savior and his name is Jesus Christ. And as the Holy Spirit takes what Paul is saying and brings it into your mind and your heart and makes it live and makes it real to you, you begin to think, I can't go on worshipping this false goddess.

You give your life to Christ and you go home and you tell your parents, I'm not going to the worship at the temple of Diana any longer. We've been worshipping a false god, there is only one true God and he has revealed himself in Jesus and he's the one that I'm going to follow.

Now, what would that mean in your family? Probably mean that they would send off to the magic man for a curse or they would try to put you under some sort of incantation to take this nonsense out of your mind.

Certainly, there would be opposition because you are attacking the very foundation of our city and our culture and our family life. And if you're a young convert in that situation, you need to know whether the power of Jesus is really great enough to protect you and to keep you.

[ 14 : 02 ] Does that have power over your well-being, over your future destiny? And if this is the great power of Jesus at work, how do you access that power?

How do you make it real in your life? You're used to going paying money, getting special words, offerings at temples. It's not going to be like that anymore. It's going to be by the grace of God and it's going to be accessed through prayer.

Now, if you were a young Christian in that context, it would be very easy to feel overwhelmed and threatened as everything in the culture seemed to be stacked against the message of Christ and the cross.

Well, welcome to Ephesus. Welcome to Glasgow. Welcome to London. Welcome to the 21st century. Because exactly the same forces are at work in our world.

They may not be exemplified in the same way. We may not have 50,000 pieces of silver worth of spells and incantations to burn, but we certainly have the hostile powers attacking on every side the name of Christ and the church.

[ 15 : 15 ] And in that context and in our context, we need Paul's prayer. I want to say to you simply this morning that there are two big things he's asking for and they become a model for our prayers as we seek to serve the Lord in our generation.

Firstly, in verses 17 to 19, Paul is praying for spiritual insight. He's praying for spiritual insight. He calls it eyesight. He talks about the eyes of your heart, verse 18, being enlightened.

And this prayer involves the Holy Trinity, the God and Father of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 17, and the Spirit who brings wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

So he's saying as he begins his prayer that the Father of glory has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world and the Holy Spirit who has been given, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, is the author of revelation and he is the one who makes known God's wisdom in Christ so that through our faith in the Lord Jesus as the one who died for our sins and rose again in great victory, we come into a personal relationship with this great and glorious God.

Now that is what the New Testament means by knowing God. We're here today in order to deepen our knowledge of God, not our knowledge about God, but our personal relationship with God.

[ 16 : 50 ] The knowledge is at the heart of our very being. It's brought about through the Scripture, we heard the word of truth, we believed in Jesus, we were sealed with the Spirit and the word of Scripture is brought to us through the power of the Holy Spirit so that it comes alive to us and reveals the wisdom of God in the Gospel.

So as we've often said in the Cornhill course, the Spirit of God takes the word of God to do the work of God and there is no plan B. The Spirit of God takes the word of God to do the work of God.

So that if I'm going to know God in this deep increasingly personal way, it will be through the work of the Holy Spirit as he opens up the word of God to me to teach me God's truth and to apply it and work it out in my life.

No wonder then that Paul describes their growing spiritual knowledge and experience as eye-popping, the eyes of your heart being enlightened. Now, by heart, of course, he means the seat of the personality, the control center of your being.

That's what your heart is. We tend to think of the heart as the center of the emotions. So on Valentine's Day, we have fluttering hearts on Valentine's cards and we think about the heart in terms of love and emotion and so on.

[ 18 : 17 ] The Bible doesn't think of it in that way. The Bible says the heart is the control center of your personality. If there is a seat of the emotions, it's the gut or the kidneys but they don't look too good on Valentine's cards so we don't follow that but the heart is the seat of the personality, the control center.

Now, he says your heart needs to be enlightened. In the control center, you need spiritual eyesight because then the whole of your life will be different. So what will that look like?

How do we know we're growing in knowledge of him? Not, he says, by any subjective feelings. It's not that I assess that by feeling warm about God or about life.

It's that my heart is being governed by two great realities. This is what it means to have an enlightened heart. The first is God's promise for the future.

Look at verse 18. That you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

[ 19 : 20 ] Now, clearly the hope and the riches go together and they are both fixing our eyes on what is not yet ours.

We will only be aware and sure of these realities as God himself, through his spirit, by his word, opens our eyes to understand them more and more.

And that's why he can say that the call of Christ is a call to hope. See that in verse 18? the hope to which he has called you. It's a hope that is sure and certain.

It's a hope that is guaranteed by God's promises. But of course we live in a world where the word hope is devalued. Most of the great Christian words are. Think of the way grace is devalued, or love, or even faith.

And hope is another of those words that has been sort of used in contemporary terms without any spiritual reference. The term born again is another example.

[ 20 : 25 ] I saw an advertisement in the press the other day for born again furniture. That's not what the Bible means, sort of patched up and renovated. It means a new life. But of course the world always devalues the Christian vocabulary, and it's so with hope.

So just let's use an illustration to make the point. Next Saturday, I notice from the service sheet today, there is a wedding taking place in Calvin Grove.

Supposing there's a rehearsal on Friday night, and at the end of the rehearsal, the minister says to the couple, well, that's fine, it's all set up, it's going to be a great day, we trust tomorrow, I hope the sun shines, and it's a lovely day.

Well, on a day like today, that might be a very positive hope, but knowing what UK weather is like, I won't make any comments about Glasgow weather, but knowing what UK weather is like, you know, it's a be nice, but it may not happen, but 50-50, it would be nice if it worked out that way.

And then he turns to the bridegroom-to-be and he says, oh, and I hope she turns up tomorrow for the service. And he says, well, I certainly hope so, by which he means, well, 50-50, it would be nice if she did, but you can't really be sure about it.

[ 21 : 41 ] No, no, he means something much more sure and certain than that, doesn't he? He means that on the basis of what has happened up till now, I am confident that what has not yet happened, it's going to happen in the next 24 hours, but what has not yet happened, will happen, and that we'll be joined together in Christian marriage.

See, real biblical hope is that sort of hope. It's not wishful thinking, it is the sure and certain hope that is based on all that God has thus far done for us in terms of the gospel of his grace, and it's sure and certain because it's God's call, and it's a call to an unimaginably glorious inheritance.

But the force of verse 18 is very interesting, do you notice it says at the end of the verse, the glorious inheritance, his glorious inheritance in the saints, it doesn't say for the saints, it says in the saints.

And that's interesting because in the Old Testament, God talks about his people as his treasure chest. When he brings Israel out of Egypt in the book of Exodus, he gathers them at Mount Sinai, and he says, you are my treasured possession.

And the same word is used later in David's life, when David sets aside money for the building of the temple, he hasn't to build it, but in the next generation, he sets aside the money from his treasured chest, from his personal possessions as the king.

[ 23 : 11 ] And that word is the idea here of this glorious inheritance in the saints. You see, God's people are his treasured chest. Put it another way, you are his investment portfolio.

He's invested everything in his people, the church, and the immeasurable multitudes, the innumerable companies around God's throne, from every kindred and tribe and nation and language, bought by the blood of Christ, of which you are a part if you are a Christian.

That is our destiny, to be in his presence, seeing him face to face, around his throne, living in his new creation, secure in the call of God and the work of Christ.

God will manage his investment portfolio. It isn't susceptible to all the vagaries of human investments. The exchange rate doesn't go up and down.

There aren't economic crises in his investments. He has put everything into his people and they are eternally secure. But to hold on to the unseen future realities, we also need, secondly, increasingly to know God's power in the present.

[ 24 : 28 ] So what does it mean to have your eyes open, the eyes of your heart? It means that you understand the future that God has for you, the glorious oneness in Christ and with Christ that awaits us.

But in the present, you know verse 19. Let's have a look at verse 19. What is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his great might?

God's power. He's saying there's a guarantee that the hope will be fulfilled. And you get a taste of it in experiencing the power of God now.

Now there are four words in that verse that talk about power. It's the whole New Testament vocabulary of power, the ability to get the job done, the energy, overcoming all the obstacles, the active force of his great strength and might.

And he says it's immeasurably great so that nothing can stand against the supreme power of Jesus Christ as king. But the cynic says, oh you Christians, you're always living in the future, you're always into heaven, it's so heavenly minded, you're no earthly use.

[ 25 : 45 ] Is there any more evidence that this is not just pie in the sky, by and by? How do we know that this is a reality? And Paul says, yes there is evidence.

Verse 20, the demonstration of this power is in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

Isn't that marvelous? See, in time and space history, this is not theory, this is not philosophy, this is not some sort of mystical theology, this is real fact.

In time and space history, God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, he ascended to the right hand of the father, he is seated at his right hand in power and glory, and he reigns as sovereign Lord of the universe.

And there is the evidence in time and space history of the future fulfillment in the eternal kingdom. that's the proof of the power.

[ 26 : 51 ] And that power which raised Christ from the dead is the power then that is at work in us, his people, here and now in this world. That's a tremendous assurance, isn't it?

That power will never be exhausted, will never be diminished. It's the same now as it was the day he raised him from the dead and will be forever. And we need to pray that our hearts and eyes will be enlightened to see these realities, to know the hope of our calling, the glorious future, but also the power that's at work in the present which confirms to us the reality of the hope.

Now, secondly, the big point is that he prays not just for these experiences of eye-popping understanding, but for a visionary realism which translates into everyday life.

He wants us to be realistic, but he wants us to be realistic people with vision and to be able to build our understanding of the real world and our future on the realities of what God has already done.

Biblical realism, as we've just seen, flows from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If he is raised from the dead, as indeed he is, eternally alive, then look at the implications of verse 21.

[ 28 : 15 ] He is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion. If you've got all the New Testament vocabulary of power in verse 19, you've got all the New Testament vocabulary of authority in verse 21.

Rule, authority, power, dominion. All of those forces in the universe, Jesus is far above them all. And so he is now saying that the second thing that he's praying for is that they will have this visionary realism about Christ's sovereignty and about Christ's fullness.

Look with me at the sovereignty. We've just seen it really. In verse 21, he's at the right hand of the father in the position of total supremacy over all those hostile powers of evil.

So when the young convert's father in Ephesus calls in the magician to curse his son, does that magician have any power? No, because Jesus is sovereign.

Jesus will protect his child. Jesus will defend him from the hostile powers of evil. And as we struggle and fight against those hostile powers, Jesus is far above them.

[ 29 : 26 ] He rules and reigns over them all. There is no other rescuer. There are no other resources. There is no other authority or dominion.

And if we know the working of his mighty power, then no hostile forces can daunt us. Now the church needs to grasp this.

I need to grasp it. You need to grasp it. We see so many things in the world today as we were thinking in our prayer earlier that we can't explain. Well, we can explain it in terms of the fallenness of human nature, but we can't change it.

It looks sometimes such a mess. What is the world coming to, people say? But look, over it all, there is one who is working out his sovereign purposes.

We may not see at the moment exactly how that is happening. He's working on a much bigger scale and a much longer time span than our limited human understanding. His ways are not our ways.

[ 30 : 21 ] His thoughts are not our thoughts. But we do know that no hostile forces can overcome the authority of the Lord Jesus and that the plans of God will work out in time and for eternity.

Nothing can stop those promises from being translated into reality. So he's saying, I'm praying that you'll be visionary and realistic about your vision.

And every point from now on into the eternal not yet is covered by that promise in verse 21 that he's above every name that's named.

So you can't bring in the name of any sort of demonic power that is stronger than Jesus. He's sovereign over it all. And look, not only in this age, that's wonderful, but also in the one to come.

So that now and on into all eternity, there is never a moment in which the Lord Jesus is not sovereignly ruling and reigning in power and glory.

[ 31 : 27 ] That's a great thing to know, isn't it? God does it. And if you want to know it, pray for it. God will give you that spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Pray that he will write into your mind and heart these realities. But that you'll believe it deep in your heart and that it'll shape the way you live your life this week because this is what God is saying.

God does it if we ask him. And so as we conclude, let's look at the other thing that he's praying that they will see as their visionary realism. That is the fullness of Christ, the sufficiency of Christ.

Look at verse 22. And he put all things, that is God the Father, put all things under the feet of the Lord Jesus and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him, who fills all in all.

See, this last two verses pick up that phrase in verse 19, his power toward us. What is his power toward us? It is that Christ's victory in the cross, triumphing over the hostile powers, in the resurrection, vindicated as Lord of Lords, and over all his and our enemies.

[ 32 : 51 ] His great triumph means that he is head over everything, but his headship is supremely seen and exercised for the church.

Everything is under his feet. And God has given his son Jesus as head over all things, not just head over the church, but head over everything. He's governing the world according to his gospel purposes.

head over all things to the church. And who is the church? You and I, who by grace, through faith, have put our trust in Jesus.

We are his body, verse 23. And look at how he describes the body. The fullness of him, that is the sufficient Christ, who fills all in all.

That is to say, his headship is seen in every Christian's life that demonstrates faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. Spiritual hearts and eyes enlightened, and spiritual lives empowered by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.



[ 34 : 05 ] So the body is active because of its head. The church lives because of the Lordship of Christ. And all that he is in himself is available to us as his body.

Bishop Lightfoot in his commentary puts it this way, all the divine graces which reside in Jesus are imparted to the church. His fullness is communicated to her.

And thus she may be said to be his fullness. Now that is the potential which we have to actualize by faith, it's an eye-popping discovery, isn't it?

That's who we are. This is our inheritance. And we access it through the word and by prayer as the Holy Spirit enables and guides us.

So we do not need to fear any hostile powers. The victory that Jesus has won is total. nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord and nothing can cut the power supply to our lives except our own foolishness and sinfulness and refusal to believe and trust him.

[ 35 : 25 ] Everything is available to those who are called to this glorious hope. So as I finish, what does that mean practically for us as we go out to live for Christ this coming week?

Well, supremely it means that we shall be men and women of prayer. It means that we will not just pray in odd moments. It means that we will make prayer the heartbeat of our life, that we will constantly be turning to God.

Yes, of course those telegram prayers that we send up to God as it were in every situation through the day, that we're talking to God about the day. But much of our prayer will be answering speech to the conversation which God has already started with us through his word.

And we need to learn day by day to build our lives through our prayers as a relationship with this God who's revealed himself to us in the scriptures. Some of you will know the name of Dr. W.E.

Sangster who was a great Methodist preacher during the war years. And he wrote some very encouraging and stimulating little books. And in one of them he says that he trained himself when he woke up every morning to say, good morning Lord and what are we going to do together today?

[ 36 : 42 ] In other words, he's turning to God at the start of the day. He's opening up his life to the Lord. Not what am I going to do for you today. Not what are you going to do for me.

But what are we going to do together today, Lord? We shall pray for clear sight about our future. The hope and the glorious inheritance ahead.

But we won't be storing up our treasure in this world. We won't be over-investing in our work or even in our families or in our bank balances or our property or our possessions.

They are all good things. Many of them are gifts of God. But we won't over-invest in them because they're all transient and passing. We're citizens of another country. Our roots aren't in this world's soil.

Our citizenship is in heaven. And we won't be daunted by political and economic and social events because we will know that human beings come and go.

[ 37 : 42 ] But we have a visionary realism about what Christ has accomplished, about where he is now and what is the future of this whole created order.

God is working his purposes out and that the world, the world, the whole earth, will be full of the glory of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

So the message this morning for us to take and apply this week is that Jesus is enthroned far above. It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, said Isaiah, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.

One of the commentators says grasshoppers are squeaky little creatures who jump up and down and make a lot of noise for a short space of time. Human life is rather like that, isn't it? All flesh is grass.

But the word of our God will stand forever. So don't be surprised when you face hostility. Don't be knocked off course when things don't seem to work out.

[ 39 : 08 ] The Lord Jesus is in control far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named now and in the future and all things are under his feet and he is head over all things to the church and the church is the body of Christ into whom his life flows.

The fullness of God who fills all in all. Now if our eyes can be open to that reality and if our hearts are burning with that conviction then there is no limit to what God may choose to do in us and by his grace through us.

I pray that the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of him. Let's pray.

Lord that is our prayer as we bow before you this morning we pray that you will grant to us that spirit of wisdom and understanding.

We open our minds to your truth. We pray that your Holy Spirit will open our hearts to your grace and your mercy and your power and we pray that you will strengthen our lives that we may live them to your praise and glory this week.

[ 40 : 38 ] So Lord would you enlighten the eyes of our hearts and will you give us this realistic vision of the future and indeed of the present so that we may know the fullness of Christ in our lives as we draw upon your resources day by day.

Keep us Lord prayerful. Keep us trusting. Make us faithful in all that we seek to do. May your great glory shine through us your church in our little bit of your world as we seek to live for your praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.