



THE WORLD GOD IS MAKING | WHAT DO WE NEED TO SEE? (3)

September 27, 2026

Ephesians 1:15-23

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

WORSHIP

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Psalms 2, 8, 110

Why do the nations rage

And the peoples plot in vain?

He who sits in the heavens laughs;

The LORD holds them in derision.

The LORD says,

“As for me, I have set my King

on Zion, my holy hill.”

The LORD says to my LORD:

“Sit at my right hand,

until I make your enemies your footstool.”

O LORD, our LORD,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;

you have put all things under his feet.

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:15-23

READING

¹⁵For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, 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, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far 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. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

We are continuing our sermon series through Ephesians called *The World God Is Making*, and this week our Community Groups are reflecting in particular on what it means to cultivate mutually encouraging relationships, which is the second aim of Central's vision for CGs. Paul begins this section with the phrase "for this reason," pointing back to everything he has said so far about God's blessings in Christ, and especially to verses 13-14 where he reminded his readers that they too had heard the gospel, believed, and been sealed with the Spirit. And he has heard evidence of the Spirit's work in reports of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love toward all the saints. His response is twofold. He gives thanks for them, and he prays for them. In other words, God's work in them is the ground, their faith and love are the evidence, and thanksgiving and prayer are the response. Notice that Paul does not commend them for their affection toward the people they find agreeable or who are similar to them. As one commentator puts it plainly, to love the saints is to love all of them, however weak in grace or lowly in the world.

Paul prays that God would give his readers the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to know three things: the hope to which they have been called, the riches of God's glorious inheritance in the saints, and the immeasurable greatness of his power toward those who believe. The second of these is easy to misread. In the phrase "his glorious inheritance in the saints," the "his" is God's. Last week, the inheritance we discussed was what we receive from him, but here it is what he receives, and what he inherits is his people. As the New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce observes, it would seem incredible that God should prize a community of sinners so highly — a community still bearing too many traces of what it once was — if we did not see that he looks at them in Christ. God's estimate of Christ's people, Bruce writes, "is inevitably consistent with his estimate of Christ." Paul prays that his readers would grasp how highly God regards them, so that their lives might be in keeping with such a high calling.

The power that Paul asks them to know is the very same power God exercised when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand, far above every rule and authority, in this age and the age to come (verses 19-21). If the cross was the height of the demonstration of God's love, the resurrection of Christ was the height of the demonstration of his strength. But that power is not confined to the heavenly places. God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him as head over all things to the Church, which is his body (verses 22-23). The risen and reigning Christ has been given, and more than that, he has been given to us.

All of this bears directly on our Community Groups. If Paul's response to hearing of a church's faith and love is regular, specific intercession for them, then the prayer we offer for one another should not be understood as a passing formality we do to close our evenings together. Paul treats the mutual intercession of a church and its ministers as a matter of first importance, because he knows Christian growth depends entirely on the God who delights to give generously when his children ask (Ephesians 6:18-19; Westminster Larger Catechism 159). If we disputed less and prayed more with and for one another, we would see more of the hope of our calling and the riches of the glory of his inheritance. So as your CG prays together over the ministry year, let Paul's prayer shape your requests for one another.

1. Looking at the Bible

- What had Paul heard about the Ephesians that prompted his prayers?
- What are the three things Paul hoped his readers would be enlightened to know?

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Not only does every passage point to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Verses 20-22 remind us that Jesus is risen and reigning “far above” all things. How can the assurance of Jesus’ eternal rule provide you with encouragement in your current circumstances?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- Which of the three things Paul prays for is the hardest for you to believe?
- How might knowing these things, and meditating on them, change the way you live? How could it change the way you interact with the people in your church?
- Paul thanks God for what he’s heard about these believers. Pick someone else in the room. What would you thank God for about them?

4. Looking at our World

- The passage ends on the image of God being all in all, and filling the whole earth with the knowledge of him. What role does the Church have to play in this vision? What role do you have to play?
- What would you need to know about the people in your CG in order to pray for them as specifically as Paul prays here?

PRAYER

- Split into groups of three or four. In those groups: each person share one thing you are dealing with right now.
- For the “Praying for Faith” names: This week, the person to your right will pray for your three names. Throughout the week, continue praying for the three names you pray for today. Ask the person whose list you have about the people for whom you’re praying.

CLOSING

Before leaving, each person should make plans to spend time with one other person outside of the regular meeting this week, whether that’s coffee, a meal, a walk, or some other activity of your choosing. Fellowship will always be stunted if it only occurs once a week.