



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Ephesians 1: 15-23

Fall 2023

"Hope, Riches, and Power"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, good morning. I want to second what Seth just said about that lesson Mark taught. It was very good. Occasionally, (in fact more than occasionally), a Sunday School teacher's lesson will dovetail with the preacher's sermon. And that was certainly the case this morning. I thought, as he gave his introduction, 'That'd be a great introduction for my sermon', but I missed that. *[Laughter]* —But he made a statement that I think fits well with what we'll read this morning. He made the statement that, "Some people are very poor in this world, but they have lots of material riches; whereas other people are very, very rich in that they have no material possessions."

And that's what we are—we're rich. And that's what the passage is about, and Paul wants us to know that.

Sometimes I put, at the top of my sermon notes, a word that I think, sort of captures the main idea of the sermon—and I did that with this one...and it's the word, *knowledge*. Paul wants us to *know* what we have in Christ.

So we finish the chapter, beginning with verse 15 of Ephesians chapter 1,

<sup>15</sup> For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in

the knowledge of Him. <sup>18</sup> *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might <sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

*[I'm going to put a comment on that in the lesson. I'll mention that this is Christ's position today. He is seated having dominion over all of this world. And that means over the restive, rebellious parts of this world as well as those parts that have been subdued in us. If you go to 1 Corinthians 15, verses 20-27, Paul elaborates on that. It's parallel to this, quoting from Psalm 8, and the dominion that's been given to Christ. He's been given dominion, but at the same time, He's still subduing this world—and it will be completed someday.*

*But Paul's meaning here, as in 1 Corinthians is, He has been placed in a position of superiority; everything is under Him, (even though it may not know it, it is), and He will triumph. And we're "in Him".],*

<sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1: 15-23

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, what a privilege it is to be here and to read a text of Scripture like that. To be able to spend time with Your people, thinking about it, considering it. We pray that as we do that You'd teach us and strengthen us and build us up in the faith, and teach us further who we are and what we have, that we are rich beyond measure and what awaits us is beyond our comprehension. And the object of all of this, (of this prayer that

Paul prayed), is that we understand that and we start living according to it; or we continue in a greater degree living according to it in this very brief time we have in this world.

‘Time’ is Your creation, and time is Your gift to us. You’ve gifted us with time to do things that are profitable and will last for all eternity. So may we understand that, understand the riches we have that can be used in Your service, and to our pleasure and joy in fellowship with You—and take advantage of that. LORD, teach us this lesson and engrain it within our hearts and souls, and sanctify us through it.

LORD, we have issues, physically, materially. We’re rich spiritually, but we have struggles in the material things of life—and those are real struggles. And some of them are health problems, and we pray for everyone as we enter the season of colds and flu, and all of that. We pray that You’d keep us safe and healthy. And LORD, You know our needs, and we pray that You would bless us. We know that You have Your infinite knowledge and care directed toward each and every one of us, and we thank You for that.

So bless us now, LORD, as we continue our service, bless us as we sing our next hymn, prepare our hearts for this time of study and worship. In Christ’s name, Amen.

*(Message)* The apostle Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 8, verse 1, that, ‘Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.’ So Christians need to love one another—but should we avoid knowledge? Knowledge is power in all areas of life, and that is especially true in the Christian life. Knowledge is the path to understanding the riches that we have, but so often don’t realize.

So Paul wasn’t advising the saints to be stupid. There’s no virtue in ignorance. That’s clear from the fact that he wanted the Ephesians to ‘know God’ and the blessings that they presently possess. That’s what Paul prayed for in the rest of this chapter; that they will be given the knowledge of Him, and be enlightened about their hope and their riches, and God’s power toward them.

This first chapter of the Book of Ephesians can be divided into two main sections. The first, is one of praise; the second, one of prayer. The first is a doxology for the Trinity. The second is a prayer for understanding the fullness of the blessings that every believer has. Knowledge of these things is vital for the Christian life.

Paul began his prayer with praise to God for the good report that he had been given about the Ephesian saints. He had been in Ephesus for three years and he had many very close friends there. Now he was in jail in Rome. But fortunately he was allowed to have visitors who would come and who would bring him news of the church.

The reports he heard about the church at Ephesus, and the churches of the surrounding region, were encouraging about their faith in Christ and love for all the saints. Because of that Paul said he gave thanks. In fact he said he, 'never ceased giving thanks for them.' Now he didn't thank them for their love of others, he thanked God for them, because God was the reason for them. He was the cause of their faith and the source of their love.

And this is clear, I think, from Paul's prayer but also from the record of Ephesus given in Acts chapter 19, and the great revival that occurred there. It was, as all revivals are, supernatural; this one especially so. It was accompanied, Luke wrote, by "extraordinary miracles". (vs11). That explains it all; that explains that church. God called His people in that very, very pagan city, called them out of that darkness, called them out of black magic into the light of the Gospel. And the transformation continued as they grew in their faith and their new life—and that was demonstrated to the apostle in their love for the saints; for the brethren.

The two go together, *faith* and *love*. They're inextricable. Christ has been compared with a great magnet who not only draws people to Himself, but also draws people together. A magnet is an interesting thing. When you have iron filings that are exposed to the magnet, they're not only drawn to the magnet, but in being drawn to the magnet they become magnetized, and they draw each of the pieces of iron to

themselves—so that they are united. And that's really what Christ does. His power is transferred into us, and His love is transferred into us—and that was true of the Ephesian saints. They were drawn together, not only drawn to Christ, but drawn to one another in love; in Christ's love for one another.

Love is not only the evidence of faith, it is the *mark* of the Christian. Jesus said that, told His disciples that very thing in John 13, in verse 35. He said, 'All men will know that you are my disciples by this, that you love one another.'

And the Ephesians were doing that. They were showing that for all the saints. Not just the attractive saints, not just the wealthy saints, (there were probably a few of those in the congregation). Not just the pleasant saints, but for all of the saints—just as Christ does. He loves all of us, all believers equally and infinitely. And they were showing that.

There's no substitute for love. We can have knowledge, but without love, Paul told the Corinthians, knowledge "profits me nothing", 1 Corinthians 13, verse 3. The Ephesians did not lack love. So Paul wrote, in verse 16, that, 'he did not cease giving thanks for them and praying for them.' They were a blessing.

Still, while love is indispensable, so is knowledge. And that is what the Ephesian saints lacked. It's what we all lack, really. It's what Paul prayed for; prayed this for them. He wrote, in verse 17, "...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him."

Love and knowledge are not mutually exclusive; they enhance each other. Without knowledge we can't understand love. In fact, love becomes weak and it devolves into mere sentimentality. And so Paul prayed that they, (and by application 'we'), would have "a spirit of wisdom", (which may mean that their *human* spirit would be wise—or that the Holy Spirit would give them wisdom. It's not clear what that word "*spirit*" refers to.) But either way, the Holy Spirit's involved because He's the One that gives wisdom—and He gives that wisdom to the human spirit. So what Paul is praying for here is that, 'they be wise'.

Wisdom gives insight into reality so that a person knows the true nature of things; of the world and of life, and gives insight into who we are as God's children. Ultimately this involves understanding Scripture.

So, that must lead Paul to the second prayer—that they would have, “the *knowledge* of Him”, (vs17b), that is the knowledge of “the Father of glory.” (vs17a). This word *knowledge* is an intensive form of the word. Greeks would do this; they would take a word and put a preposition to it. So you may have the word ‘*knowledge*’, but then you have this word *knowledge*, (which is very prominent in the New Testament), with a preposition attached to it, intensifying the meaning of it. So it means something like ‘*complete knowledge*’, or, ‘*exact knowledge*’.

It was important to Paul that we know God in both our mind and in our experience. That we know all about Him: That we know who He is; what He does—that we know His attributes and His greatness. But also, that we know Him *personally* and that we grow in that personal relationship in that knowledge.

There is richness in the knowledge of God. In knowing who He is, what He has done, and what He is presently doing for us—this is where we learn what love and grace is. Really, by knowing Him, we also know ourselves.

For all of the knowledge that modern man has gained over, well, just the past century, [I think if you had a chart from the late 19th century, but certainly early 20th century, the increase in knowledge has just sky rocketed.], life wasn't all that different for centuries, for millennia—and now we are living in ‘an age of knowledge’. But for all of that great knowledge that we have accumulated, we have lost a lot as well. There is a lot of confusion in our society as a whole because, having gained certain knowledge, we've lost certain knowledge—the knowledge of the Word of God. Men have turned away from the revelation of Scripture, and so there's a lot of confusion in the world, and not as much wisdom as we would think there would be.

And so what do people do? They seek help.—And they seek it in therapy. In fact, we live in what has been called, ‘a psychological society’, or ‘the therapeutic society’, in

which men look inward for their solutions rather than looking outward—rather than looking to the LORD. And of course, confusion only increases.

I'm not suggesting there's no help to be found in the medical world, (I'm not denying that), but real wisdom is not found there. Whole wisdom is found here; (here in the Scriptures). And Paul is telling us that we are blessed greatly, and if we want to be blessed further we need to have the knowledge of Him, where wisdom is. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." (Pro 1:7). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." (Pro 9:10). That's where we begin. It gives life, it gives wisdom, it gives order to the soul. It was Paul's desire that we know Him; and as we do, we learn how rich we really are in this life—every believer, how rich we are.

Warren Wiersbe told a story about the newspaper publisher and mogul, William Randolph Hearst, who had invested a fortune in collecting art treasures from all over the world. What do you do when you've got all the money in the world and you can build a great castle, like Hearst Castle, there in California, (which some of you have probably visited)? He not only had that, he brought castles over from Europe and had them rebuilt in America. He had everything. Well, you start collecting art I guess—and that's what he did. And yet you know what?...the appetite for that is never satisfied.

And so it was with him. One day he found a description of some valuable items that he felt that he just *must* own them. He *needed* them! So, he sent his agent abroad to find them. After months of searching, he located them, and he gave Mr. Hearst his report: 'They were in Mr. Hearst's warehouse.' [*Laughter.*] Hearst had searched frantically for treasures that he already owned, (and he would have known that had he just read the catalog of his own art treasures)!

Well the point is, and the point that Mr. Wiersbe made is, we're guilty of that. Like looking for things like 'the second blessing' that isn't promised to us, and isn't real—we already *possess* the great blessing. We already *possess* everything we need. We just need *the knowledge of it* and to act upon it.

And that's what Paul prayed for the Ephesians. He stated his request in verse 18, "*I pray*," he wrote, "*that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened..." What a nice turn

of phrase that is, "the eyes of your heart". He wanted them to see things clearly, meaning, understanding things correctly and completely, and believe the revelation of God.

And that's what Paul goes on to request, "...that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," (vs18b), and in verse 19, God's "power toward us." So three blessings Paul wanted them to realize: Our *hope*, our *riches*, and our *power*, God's power. We possess God's power, and His power is directed "toward us." (vs19b).

The *hope* of His calling goes back to the beginning of our Christian experience with God's effectual call. This isn't *our* call to God, as though we seek God out of the darkness and call for Him. —It's *His* call to us. And every one of us who come to Him, have come to Him because we've been "called." The Spirit of God has called us out of darkness; and we, by His grace, His sovereign grace, have responded to that call in faith.

And He called us to *hope*. Not hope in the sense of, 'the wish for something better', or hope in the sense of, 'Gee, I sure hope it turns out well.' No, the Christian's hope is a certainty. It is grounded in our eternal election. It isn't tied to the ever changing circumstances of life, but to the eternal decree of God. So our hope is certain. Paul's prayer is that they, (and that we), take hold of our hope: That we understand it, that we believe it, that we live it, and do so in the confidence that it gives us. Hope gives us confidence. Hope looks to the future. So it's about our eternal inheritance—and there is nothing more practical than that. Hope prevents, or it ends despair. It galvanizes action. It galvanizes obedience. It produces courage. It even gives joy in the most difficult of circumstances.

The reformer, John Bradford, is famous for seeing a group of convicts going to the gallows and saying, "There but for the grace of God goes John Bradford." Later, he was burned at the stake in Smithfield but encouraged the young man chained next to him saying, "Be of good comfort, brother, for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night."



Now that's real hope, genuine hope, and hope that produces calm and courage in the fires of life. Paul wanted the Ephesians saints to know their hope of eternal life, and to know it deeply. We can get concerned over the immediate future—the economy, our work, politics. And these, by the way, aren't trivial matters; they're serious issues—but our eternal future is secure. And so is the immediate future—we're not to be anxious.

I get anxious, (I'm not preaching down to you), but we are to *know*, and we are to *believe*, and we are to *rest* in our *hope*, which is ultimately to be with the Lord. In fact, we look forward to His coming soon. In Titus chapter 2, verse 13, Paul speaks of the Lord's return as the "blessed hope". But while that is future, we *presently* have Him with us *now* through the Holy Spirit—and we have the promise that He will never desert us. That's a foretaste of our *hope* that gives stability.

And secondly, Paul wanted them to realize their *riches*. It's the riches of an inheritance. But not our inheritance—it's God's inheritance in the saints. Which corresponds with what we covered a few weeks ago in verse 11, that we are 'God's inheritance'. It's also indicated in verse 14 where he speaks of us as 'God's possession.'

God can't lose His inheritance. God values with unlimited, infinite value, 'His inheritance', which is His people. The blessing here is that we are *certain* to come into His presence when He removes us from this world. It reassures us of the glory to come; His inheritance cannot be lost; we're secure and we have a glorious future coming.

Well, the third blessing Paul wanted us to realize is in verse 19; it's our *power*: "...what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." The power of God is working in us right now, at this very moment; always working in us. So God chose us in the past and called us out of darkness into life; He has made us His inheritance, and He's made us the crown of creation with future glory.

But in the meantime, He's not left us to ourselves—to our own skills and effort. He has supplied us with power; "...the surpassing greatness of His power." In fact, to

convey the greatness of this power, Paul has added three words to it, the words *working*, *strength*, and *might*. All of that is presently directed to us for our benefit.

We might think of the power of God in various ways; and I think of it very obviously in the creation, of Him 'speaking everything into existence out of nothing,' *ex nihilo!*; and His present work of sustaining it all, keeping it all in existence. Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3, describes Christ as presently, "...upholding all things by the word of His power.": The entire universe and the movement of everything! It's the idea here of Christ carrying everything along to its appointed end—to its glorious future. That's unlimited power.

But the standard Paul used here to measure the power presently working for us is the *resurrection* and the *glorification* of Christ described in the remaining verses of the chapter. It's the power he wrote of in verse 20, "...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead..." That is power over death itself, the king of terrors. There's no greater power than that. No power on earth could have done that and exalted Christ to the highest position in the universe—at the right hand of the Father.

That's the power that saved us. What Paul called in Romans chapter 1, verse 16, "...the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." It made us alive when we were spiritually dead. No one is beyond saving—that's the great power of God. It can save the thief on the cross, and it could save even Saul of Tarsus, 'the chief of sinners', and make him, 'the great apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.'

But the power of God not only saves us, it sanctifies us too. It changes us. It equips us to effectively deal with the challenges that we face in life. And there are great forces set against us: They are material forces, they are spiritual forces. They are *the world, the flesh, and the devil*. And not one of us is sufficient in our own strength to overcome any one of those.

Peter learned that the night that the Lord was betrayed and arrested in the garden when he fled for his life and denied Him three times—despite having earlier vowed that he would lay down his life for Him. We're no match for the deception of the

devil, for the allure of the world, and the desires of the flesh—but God is. And Paul tells us here that He is working in us to thwart all of that and to enable us to live well—to live an orderly, fruitful life.

He explains more precisely that very thing in Philippians chapter 2, in verse 13, where he wrote that God is at work in you, "...both to will and to work for His good pleasure." That's what He's doing now. That's what He's doing all day long, every day in your life; He is working within you to bring a great change about in you—a constant change in you. He's constantly working.

That's the idea here. It is a work in the soul that energizes us according to His will, and enables us both to desire the right thing, (to desire His will), and to follow it. His will and good pleasure are always according to His revelation, His Word, the Scriptures. And so this requires that we be students of His Word.

Paul wants us to *know* these things, *know* about this power that's working in us. And we're going to know it by reading the Bible, by studying the Word of God. There's no growth in the Christian life without that. We'll never advance in the Christian life if we don't spend our time reading the Scriptures—which takes discipline. It's all of the Lord God. It's all of grace.

But, when grace is at work within us, we respond—and we're responsible to do that. He enlightens our minds by illuminating the Scriptures, giving us a desire for His will and stimulating us to act on it, enabling us to act on it; and He constantly does that. He's always doing that, as I said.

But again, we're responsible to act, responsible to use our minds. We're responsible to think, to reason, and exercise our wills to discipline ourselves. But again, ultimately it's dependent upon the LORD—it's dependent upon the Holy Spirit to enable that. And that is the reason Paul prayed for this. We're dependent on the LORD for everything, and we need His enablement, because again, the forces against us, interior and exterior, within us and without us, those forces are great.

J. I. Packer wrote that, "The battle for Christ likeness is as grueling as it is unending." That's the reality, 'as grueling as it is unending.' But the advantage is clearly

in our favor. The advantage is overwhelmingly in our favor from 'the greatness of the power at work in us', as Paul explained—but also from the position of the Lord who is working for us constantly, and praying for us constantly.

The Father has, "raised Him from the dead", (vs 20), Paul wrote—raised Him in glorified form, no longer like a 'root out of dry ground', (Is 53:2), but glorious. And He is seated, "at His right hand in the heavenly *places*." (vs20). The ascension is the completion of the resurrection. He was not raised from the dead to resume an earthly existence. He was resurrected, not resuscitated, resurrected to glory and raised to life in heaven, a heavenly life. He was raised victorious over the grave, (the great leveler of mankind). And He's now seated, enthroned in power, "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion", Paul says. (vs21).

He is above everything, everywhere: Every earthly power, every heavenly power, every king and congressman, every angel and devil. He is above every name that is named: Caesar, Satan—every human or spiritual force in the universe, good or bad. He is above it all: Triumphantly!

All of that has great significance for the church, for each of us individually—for the present and for the future. Paul indicates that in the last two verses. When Christ was 'exalted over all things', God gave Him complete dominion over all creation; "He put all things in subjection under His feet", Paul wrote. (vs22).

As I mentioned at the beginning, 1 Corinthians 15:20-27, He's still subduing these things; the restive, rebellious parts of this world. And He will subdue it completely when He comes back with the sword. —And He will.

But in the meantime, He's subjecting it; in the meantime He's over it all; He rules it all. He has authority over everything; He sits on a throne.

Well those words, here, "...put all things in subjection under His feet" ..., (vs22), are from Psalm 8, verses 4-6, which is a Psalm about the dominion that was given to man over the creation. But Adam lost that dominion when he fell. We now have it only partially—we only have it in a flawed way.

But what was lost by Adam has been regained by Christ. All things are now, "under His feet." And since He has dominion, we, (who are joined to Him by faith), share in that vast dominion. That's our future, that's our hope, 'the hope of God's calling' for us in verse 18. And it is certain to happen, certain to be our full possession because every believer is united to Him. We are, as Paul repeatedly says throughout all of his letters, (but he says it so often here), "in Him."

So, His destiny is our destiny. The power that raised and exalted Him will raise us. And we will reign with Him, and we will fulfill Psalm 8 with Christ in His kingdom, and rule the earth with Him—as co-heirs.

Not as equals, of course; He's the Lord. He is God the Son. Paul calls Him, 'our head'. And that's what he stated next, that God, "...gave Him as head over all things to the church", (vs22b), meaning, 'He gave Him to us as our head'. As "head", He is the beginning of the church. He is the source of all of our life, the source of the life of the church. He is our ruler, He's our guide, He's our defender—all of that is suggested in this statement: 'We have a great Savior!' Paul wanted the church to understand that.

One of the greatest needs that we have, that the church has always had, (and why it is so often attacked), is to know this very thing: To *know* that He is *The Almighty*. That's how He's described in the vision that John has of Him in Revelation 1, verse 8, "the Almighty". One whose hands are on everything, and rules everything. We need to know that. He is the living Savior; and as our "head", we are "His body". (vs23).

That's one of Paul's favorite descriptions of the church, and one that's really rich in meaning. It reminds us that we are a *unity*. Christians are joined together in a vital union with one another. (We're not a group of people who have common interests, who gather over coffee and talk politics.) We are a "body"; we are linked together in such a way that we are one with each other and dependent on each other spiritually, to encourage one another and to help one another in our Christian walk.

John Wesley said, "The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." And so we're to make it our goal to be together Sunday morning, the LORD's day, the day clearly set aside

for worship and fellowship in God's Word. That's when we are challenged, or should be challenged, and when we're built up in the faith. And it's here that we build relationships, which is essential for the church to function smoothly. It's necessary if we're to "Bear one another's burdens", as Paul instructs us to do in Galatians 6:2. We are something unique and supernatural. Not just a collection of people, but all kinds of people drawn by the Holy Spirit into this body, and joined to Christ as the head.

And He makes it work. In John 15, (we studied it not that long ago; you're familiar with this), He spoke of Himself as "the vine", and of us as "the branches". We're joined to Him and we have life from Him, just as a branch has life from the vine and produces fruit. Break it off...there's no life. We're "in Him", so we have life. And apart from Him, as He tells us, 'We can't do anything'. (Jn 15:5).

But here's something that's amazing. Paul wrote that we are also His "fullness"; "...His body, the fullness of Him, who fills all in all." (vs23). Christ *fills* the universe. He's the God-man, having forever joined Himself to a human nature and human body. In His humanity, He is located in heaven, seated in the heavenlies at the Father's right hand.

But in His deity, He's everywhere; He's *omnipresent*. In Colossians chapter 1, verse 17 Paul wrote that, "...in Him all things hold together." He not only sustains the church, He sustains the entire universe—He *fills* it. And yet Paul wrote that 'the church fills Christ', "the fullness of Him". That's a remarkable thing.

How are we to understand that? It's not an easy question to answer, but the word 'fill' is always used in an active sense. For example, in Matthew 9, verse 16, it's used of the broken pieces of bread, the remainder that remained after the Lord had fed the multitude, and they "filled 12 baskets." So it's an *active* sense of this word.

And so here, 'the church fills Christ', meaning in some sense, 'we complete Christ.' Now the suggestion here is not that something is lacking in Christ. Paul's meaning is simply that we complement Christ as a body, just as a body complements its head. The head doesn't function apart from a body. So in that sense, we complement

Christ. He functions through the church. It's through us that Christ, who is in heaven, lives and works on earth. What a great privilege!

Paul learned the significance of that on the Damascus road. He was on his way to arrest the church there in Damascus, (when he was known as Saul of Tarsus), and that's when the Lord appeared to him in a great light and said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4). How was he persecuting Christ? By persecuting the church he was persecuting Christ. When the world touches the church, it touches Christ. Not physically of course, but in some way it touches 'the apple of His eye'. He is aware of it; He is sensitive to it, (and never, in any way, indifferent)—fully, completely sensitive to it.

When William Bradford was martyred at the stake in Smithfield, as so many were in the 16th century, the fire that consumed him was somehow felt by Christ. And so are all of our trials. He's completely sensitive to them all. Now the knowledge of that, (and so much of this passage is about the necessity of *knowledge*, of *knowing our riches*), the knowledge of that should encourage us greatly.

We are never alone in this life. We may not sense His presence and His power in us, but then we don't live by 'sensing things,' or 'feeling things'. We live by faith—which means we live by faith in the revelation that God has given us, live by faith in His Word. And Paul is here assuring us in God's Word, of the Lord's presence and power with us and in us, and His fellow 'feeling with us', (if I could put it that way). Knowing that and believing it—we're to start living it; we're to start walking by faith.

Knowledge, as I said at the beginning, and as is often said, (it's not original with me of course), 'Knowledge is power.' The more we know the Bible and its doctrines, the more we will know God and His great, unconditional love for us; and the more we will love Him, and the more we will love His people. We love Him; we love one another—and what greater testimony is that to the power of God and the greatness of what we have in Him and our eternal life.

The love of God for us was displayed most clearly in the cross of Calvary, where Christ, the Son of God, laid down His life for His people. Who are His people? —Those who believe in Him. It's they, who have forgiveness, they, who have eternal life—which is our hope. And we have real hope in this world that is passing away before us at this very moment.

It's for all of us who believe, who know that we were guilty, we are guilty in and of ourselves, but we trust in Him. And having trusted in Him, He makes us clean—justified before the Father.

May God help you to do that, to trust in Him if you have not done that. If you've not believed in Him, look to Him, trust in Him. He's the Savior of the world, the only Savior who receives all who come to Him.

*(Closing prayer)* Father, what a privilege it is to sing Your praise, and know that we'll be able to sing it forevermore, because while our debt was great, the price has now been paid, fully. That's what You accomplished through Your Son on the cross. All the praise, all the glory goes to you. We thank You for all that You've given us in Christ and for the present blessings that we enjoy. May we understand it more fully, and live according to it.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

*(End of Audio)*