

Fullness in Christ (Eph 1:15-23)

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Preacher: William HC

[0 : 00] Thank you, Pastor Albert. Can we all please open our Bibles to Ephesians 1? And I'm going to read from verses 15 to 23 in NIV.

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

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. I pray 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 his holy people and his incomparable great power for us who believe.

That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly realms, far beyond the rule and authority, power, or far above, all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

[1 : 25] I'll just invite Pastor William to come share on it. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome especially to English service. If this is your first time here this weekend, there's a few of us who have been here all weekend.

So thank you for hanging in there. Why don't we pray? Actually, yeah, before we start, I just want to tell you that we're going to try something quite different today.

Running a kind of like a Q&A; type thing. So I know you guys have lots of questions, but you're too scared to ask them. So feel free, as I'm preaching, if something comes up, okay, if you have a question, pop it.

That's my number. So just send a question through. Or if you prefer to be anonymous, just go onto that website, slider.com. And if we have time afterwards, I'll leave it to Dominique to pep with me with some questions.

You're more likely to get your questions answered if A, you ask a question. All right? Don't be shy. Don't feel like it's a silly question. Maybe someone else has that question too. B, you're not trolling me.

[2 : 29] Let's try and ask questions about the text or about something that we've heard already in Ephesians. And C, obviously, if you can make it a question and not a statement, you know, that sort of thing.

So we'll try it. We'll see how it goes. But before that, let's pray, and we'll get into God's Word. Father, open our eyes.

Open our eyes. We have been looking at all kinds of things this weekend, this past week. This world has so many different distractions. So help us focus now. Open the eyes of our hearts to know you better.

To know you better. To know the hope of your calling and our Savior Christ Jesus. To know how rich, how rich it is that he has inherited us to be his children.

And help us to see how great your power is. As great as raising Jesus from the dead. Would you be with us now as we hear from this part of your Word. In Jesus' name we pray.

[3 : 29] Amen. Amen. It's easy to feel small and overlooked. I wonder if any of you remember being in year nine. Sitting on the floor, you know, your first school assembly.

You were the little fish in a big pond of people. Right? How did you feel? It's easy to feel small and overlooked. Maybe by the time you finished high school or college, you felt like kind of pretty important that you were the top of the heap.

And then you got into uni, right? And then at uni, you were the first years. And there were like mature students. There were big people. There were people that just, you know, had beards and stuff. It's easy to feel small and overlooked, isn't it?

And then you thought, okay, now I've graduated from uni. I'm in the big world. Oh, wait. You start your first job and you're at the bottom of the heap again, right? You're the intern or you're the grad, you know, running coffee for other people.

It's easy to feel small and overlooked in our world. And perhaps the Ephesian church were feeling small and overlooked as well. Maybe they were feeling the same way.

[4 : 36] After all, who were they? Who were they? Just a small bunch of people trying to follow Jesus in the bigger, mega city of Ephesus. Ephesus, one of the, the fifth largest city in the ancient world.

I've just put, there's a little red dot there. So it's where modern day Turkey is right now. In the center of everything, really, right? So all trade, all traffic, all the cool stuff happened in Ephesus. It was home to the temple of Artemis, okay, one of the largest ancient wonders in the world.

It was cosmopolitan, it was modern. I know some of you follow, there's a Facebook page called Humans of New York, right? They interview people in this massive city of New York, right? If Brandon lived in 8062, he'd be interviewing people in Ephesus.

That's how happening this city was, right? And when you're a tiny drop in the ocean, okay, it's easy to feel small and overlooked. What about here, when there's like 50 odd of us gathered here in a city of one and a half million?

I get it, right? It's easy to feel small and overlooked. So how surprised were you when Domini read verse 23? How can Paul think about church like this, right? It says here, verse 23, the church, which is his body, the fullness of him, who fills all in all, right?

[5 : 55] These are big words. Is Paul just optimistic, looking at the bright side of life? Is he having a hallucination? No. Paul has been praying.

He has been praying boldly. All right, look at verse 15 and 16 again. For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the holy people, the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

It's the power of prayer. You can change your view of the world and who you are. Last week, we heard, as we started off our series through the book of Ephesians, we heard how in Christ we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

How so? Because the Father adopts us, the Son has redeemed us with His blood, and the Spirit has guaranteed us, sealed us as part of His family. These were the acts of sovereign grace that pushed Paul and pushes us to just praise God, just to praise God breathlessly.

And it seems like as Paul keeps thinking about all this stuff, reasons to praise God, it sets his mind to pray, right? We're actually going to see two different places in this letter where Paul just stops and prays, right?

[7 : 12] And here's the first time. Here at the end of chapter 1, and later on at the end of chapter 3, you'll see that says, I pray as well. Because just as praising God in song, as we've just done, right, or hearing from a sermon, or serving one another, all this helps us to see God more clearly, more brightly, praying, talking to God, can help us see him and his plans for us more clearly.

I mean, here's Paul, right? He's got a lot on his mind. He's in prison. He's got limited ink, I guess, you know, as he gets this letter written. He could be doing all kinds of things, right?

He could be giving all kinds of instructions and advice. And yet he starts by praying for the saints in Ephesus. It's a lesson for us, isn't it?

How often do we just go, and there's a problem. Let's do something about it. Let's fix something about it. Paul prays. And he is moved to pray because he's so blown away by how God is gracious in these people's lives.

All he has to do is remember they're a church with faith in the Lord Jesus, right? And with love for all the saints. And that just moves Paul to pray for you. Isn't that marvelous? So it's about prayer today.

[8 : 29] Let's think about prayer today. Now, if I asked you, see if you can think back to the last three prayer points that you prayed through. Maybe it was this morning or maybe in a prayer group or maybe you can't remember.

Let's try and think of the last three things you prayed about. What category would they fall under? What did you pray about? Did you pray about good health?

Did you pray about your work or, you know, your job? Did you pray about maybe just your relationship with someone else or your family? These are all good things to pray about, aren't they? God calls us to bring our requests to God. Our Father loves to hear everything we're thinking. But notice how Paul prays.

Look at his focus, right? Let's look at verse 17. I keep asking, Paul says, 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.

[9 : 36] So what's on top of Paul's prayer list compared to our prayer list, right? Top of Paul's prayer list is not safety from people who are opposing him.

It's not getting out of prison. It's not freedom to worship. They're all good things that maybe Paul might want to pray about. Top on Paul's prayer list was that he wanted the Ephesians to know God better.

And notice it's not just I ask, right? What does it say here? I keep asking. This is a repeated, persistent prayer. Some of us might think that knowing God better is something that's saved for, I don't know, smart people, Sunday school stuff.

It's for people that want to go to Bible college, right? No, not Paul, right? He's so passionate about God and who he is. We heard that last week that it just connects into his prayer.

He wants the Ephesians to have that same passion and knowledge for God as well. And he wants us to deepen our knowledge of God so that we would love him more, right?

[10 : 40] Verse 17, so that you may know him better. I think that's a great prayer, right? If you're struggling to pray for someone, why don't you just pray that they will know God better? It's fairly simple, right? So if you've grown up in church all your life, my prayer is this, that you will know God better.

Maybe you've just started coming to PCBC your first or second or third time. I pray you will know God better. Maybe you're listening on the live stream. I pray you will know God better. Maybe you're thinking about the children growing up in this church.

I pray that they will know God better. Because that's Paul's prayer here too. And notice too, right? Verse 17, if we look at it again, how this knowledge comes about.

How will we get to know God better? Well, he says, I keep asking, right, that the glorious Father may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Some people get curious about what it means exactly to have a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Is it some kind of supernatural power? Is it a special word from the Lord, a special message?

[11 : 49] I mean, it says revelation, right? Possibly. And yet I think, actually, if we keep reading, right, Paul answers his own kind of issue.

The rest of Paul's prayer, verse 18, helps to clarify what he's talking about here when he says the spirit of wisdom and revelation. In the NIV that I've got, you can see the words at the start of 18, I pray also that, right?

Actually, in the original text, those words aren't there. They're just there to help us to kind of take a breath a bit. Remember? Like, everything is all connected together. So really, it literally reads, right, I ask that the glorious Father may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in your knowledge of Him, enlightening, opening the eyes of your heart so that you may know Him better, for example. Okay, so, you see what I mean? To have the spirit of wisdom and revelation is to have the eyes of your hearts opened to see three things, right? Because he goes on and says three specific things. That's what it means, to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation. And so, really, the time that we have, I want us to see that God wants to open our spiritual eyes to know three things.

[13 : 05] Three things. And we see that from verses 18 to 21, right? First, he wants us to see the hope of God's calling in Christ. Second, he wants us to see the riches of God's glorious inheritance.

And thirdly, he wants us to see the greatness of God's resurrection. Now, these are Paul's kind of three big prayer points for the Ephesians and for us. And these are the things that should shape our priorities when we pray as well.

Pray for us, for PCBC English, for the wider church, right? Let's get into these three priorities so that our hearts can be clarified, so that we can know what we should be praying for.

Firstly, Paul prays, right, that we know the hope of God's calling in Christ. We see that in verse 18. Let me read that again. I pray also that the eyes of your hearts may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.

This friend I know from high school, his name is A, I'll just call him A, he came along to our Christian group for a time. He seemed passionate, he was really on fire for Jesus, and then gradually we started seeing A less and less at church.

[14:21] And then a few years later I bumped into A at the shops and we just got talking and caught up and then he said, oh yeah, I'm not that interested in that stuff anymore. Maybe you know someone like that.

Most people don't walk away from the Christian faith suddenly, right? Often it's a gradual process like the A, right? Many of our friends who stop trusting Jesus, right? It's a bit by bit thing.

And only God knows their hearts. Sometimes it's because they never placed their hope in the gospel in the first place. Maybe they came for different reasons. Maybe they haven't heard the gospel. More commonly, I think, they did hope, I think.

And yet over time, something in their life became what Paul says, the hope of their calling. Maybe it was something that just pulled them away, became their ultimate hope, a job, a family, a relationship, someone else.

Now Paul has already talked about hope. Remember last week? Last week, Paul reminded us in verse 12 how he and the Jews were one of the first to hope in Christ. He used that word hope for the praise of God's glory.

[15:28] So you see, Paul knows this. The Ephesians, to stand firm, to stand firm and keep being a church, they need to remember the hope of their calling. Sure, Jesus has saved them, right?

It's easy enough to say, right, Jesus, you saved me, I accept your gift. Thank you. But then what's next? Paul says you need to keep remembering that hope. Paul prays for them to know the hope of what's still to come in Jesus Christ.

Elsewhere in the Bible, Paul calls this the hope of the glory of God, Romans 5.2. Or he talks about that blessed hope in Titus 2.13.

This hope of the calling, right, he'll describe later in Ephesians 5, it's kind of like as if a bride. As being presented to her husband without stain or wrinkle, holy and blameless on their wedding day. Paul wants us to think beautifully and bigger when we consider what our hope in Christ looks like now and in the future as well. Right? And often I think sadly this future hope is what A needed, some of our friends needed, and have never been reminded of.

[16:39] And I think we need that reminder too. It gets better. Our future is brighter in Christ. We have a hope of our calling that will keep us following Jesus till we see him again.

And of course, you know, thinking about the future, it's a bit risky these days, right? You never know what alert level you'll be in. Dental appointment two months time, I don't know, let's work that out in the week of, right?

Assignment due next month, no worries, I'll work better with all-nighters. Sure, seriously. But when we as brothers and sisters we start living like the world does in this way, just fixated only on the here and now what's before us, then we need a mind shift, right?

We need this prayer to affect our lives. That's all the more reason we need to know the future hope that God has called his children to. I think much of the reason that we feel small and overlooked as a church is because we forget what eternity will look like.

We think this is it. We think, wow, is this church? Is this the best that's going to happen? I don't know, I don't feel very hopeful about that. And then that plays on you and then it drags you away and then you start losing hope.

[17:52] Remember, God's future for his church is way more than us. It includes people from every tribe and tongue and planet. It's going to be a mass gathering no one can count, right?

We've got to remember the hope of God's calling. And I think much of why we worry and we fret, even as Christians because our earthly treasures, they worry us more than a final day, our future hope when one day we will stand before the king of kings and see him.

When we remember the hope of our calling, God's kingdom, our future glory in our sights, that will reshape, I think, our priorities, how we live now. That will push us to pursue a holy life.

That will pursue us to maturity. It will help us to fight temptation and sin. That is what Paul means by holding on to the hope of his calling. Does that help?

Does that help? Paul says this, his first prayer point, he prays that we would know the hope of our calling. That what we have now is not all there is. It gets better in Christ.

[18:58] That's the first thing that he prays about for the Ephesians. For us. Second thing he prays about, he prays that the Ephesians would know the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. Last week in verse 14, we heard this already.

God will redeem those who are his possession. Those he's already called and chosen, his children, he's going to redeem them one day. He's going to fully redeem us. He's going to fully gather us into his arms.

And in Christ, that is who we are. We are God's glorious inheritance. And so Paul's second prayer, right, it's kind of similar to the first, but it's slightly different too. He wants us to remember, you and I, to know who we are as God sees us, not as we see us.

It's a prayer for us to know and live in light of our true identity. Right? Identity is a big word these days. Right? We live in a time when there is so much conflict, so much controversy about who I am. Okay? We are children of the enlightenment, and so we value individualism. Right? We breathe that air here in New Zealand. Right? We breathe it so much that it's just natural to demand the right to be our true self.

[20:10] Okay? That's why we have five different Instagram accounts, because each one is a different part of our identity. Right? Or maybe we demand the right to choose our sexual orientation. In some circles, we want to declare, right, please refer to me as him or her.

Right? Yet, our identity, it's a double-edged sword, isn't it? Because even as we are free today, seemingly, to choose who we are, how to express ourselves, I think we live in an age where we are more paralyzed about our identity.

We're more paralyzed about our identity. And we're actually less secure about who we are. I mean, it used to be that, you know, there's this old saying, sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.

I don't know. Maybe that was bygone era. Because these days, right, people get really hurt by words, right? Words don't just break us. If someone calls you something that you shouldn't be called, they can oppress us, they can cancel us.

We're really insecure about identity. And I think there's an extra layer of challenge, right? If you live, if you've lived in between two cultures, maybe at a family dinner, you have one identity, you act one way, right?

[21:19] And then you hang out with friends from uni, it's another identity, and then you act another way. Maybe you have Kiwi habits that you bring out, and then you have Asian habits that you bring out, depending on who you're hanging out with. It's hard, isn't it? Who am I?

Should I feel good or bad about my Chinese language ability? Am I welcome here, even if my English isn't perfect? And can I say, we live in a complex world, but if these things are what we rest our identity, who we are on, who we hang out with, which group we belong to, how I express myself, it is so fragile, isn't it, in this world?

It is so fragile. Because, here's an example, if I'm only part of this church because of my friends or my family, then what happens when they're not a good reason to be here? Who am I?

Why am I here? We need a far bigger view of our identity and our belonging, and that's what Paul prays about here in Ephesians 1.18, right? He wants the church to remember the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

This is an identity prayer, okay? So know this. Know this, friends. In Christ, you are God's inheritance, first and foremost.

[22:30] We don't, you know, we're not blank slates. We can be Kiwi, Asian, we can be a mix or whatever. You can be a baller, you can be an introvert, extrovert, whatever. In Christ, you are God's inheritance. That is your primary identity.

Because Jesus was so worthy, in him, God sees us as worthy. That is a far more secure identity, isn't it? Isn't it? Try it out.

If you've never accepted Jesus as your true identity, to be in Christ, try it out and see how secure it is for you. See how it does not shift depending on what people think of you.

I don't have to rest in my Kiwiness or my Asian-ness or my job title or my exam results or what people think of me on social media. I can just rest and live in Christ. I can just live for him.

The audience I please is just one person and he loves me already. This flesh is out in how we live our lives, right? I might be tempted to be lazy at school or work, but hang on.

[23 : 28] If my identity is in Jesus, I'm not just a worker. I'm not just a student. I'm working for Jesus. I'm a child of God. Wow, God. Open my eyes to live like this.

to live according to this glorious inheritance in the saints. Maybe you're here and you've been trying to fit into a group of friends for years and years and you've never seemed to be included.

It just kind of knocks your confidence a bit. But hang on. In Christ, you're already in the in group. You're already accepted. In Christ, you don't have to worry whether others treasure you because God already does.

You are his glorious inheritance. We've got to think like this. Everyone needs the gospel and to think through the gospel like this. Even if you've grown up in church all your life. When we pray, friends, with Paul here, it becomes less of who I am but whose I am.

Yeah? So two things I think we're praying for, okay, that Paul asks us to pray for. These are big prayers, I know, but they matter so much. They matter so much. First, he prays that we would know the hope of our calling, right?

[24 : 32] That in Christ, the best is yet to come. And secondly, he prays that we would know the riches of God's glorious inheritance. That in Christ, we are God's treasured position.

That is our true identity. Whatever else anyone says. What does he pray? What is this third on his prayer list? Let's have a look, right? Third on Paul's prayer list is this, that the church would, verse 19, 21, know the unsurpassed greatness of God's resurrection power, right?

Translation, know how good it is that Jesus is alive. He's risen. I mean, think about it. If you are the church in Ephesus, you feel pretty powerless, right?

You're just a tiny minority. There's all these different religious groups, massive temple, all these different cults of worship going on. You feel pretty powerless.

Imagine our brothers and sisters in Christ, right? They live in countries like Pakistan and Indonesia. They meet secretly while the Muslim minarets are calling out the call to prayer, right? All around them to worship Allah instead.

[25 : 35] How powerless do you feel? How powerless do you feel? Or maybe you're the only Christian in your family and you sit there and Chinese news dinner and it's hard. They ask you to do stuff that you don't believe in.

What do you do? You feel powerless. In verse 19, Paul prays for you and me. He prays that every believer who feels powerless might know God's incomparably great power.

Paul has no interest in a faith that is just head knowledge, okay? He wants us to see life transforming power in the church. And he's so enthusiastic about his readers knowing this power. He tells us where it comes from. Let me read verse 19 again, right? This power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted, he showed in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

How often do we pray like that? How often do we pray like that? It's amazing, isn't it? How often in our prayers do we ask and pray and praise God's power to raise Jesus from the dead to work in our lives?

[26 : 49] That's one of the key things that a Christian should believe and hope in, right? The gospel is this. Jesus Christ, he lived on this earth, he died a cruel death on a wooden cross as an offering to sinners.

His body was buried, but three days later, his payment went through. The check cleared. He rose again and he appeared to his followers, all 500 of them at least. This sets Jesus apart from every leader, doesn't it?

All right? He is raised from the dead. The tomb is empty. That is real power. Okay, very major religion, okay? Maybe religions that our friends believe in, our family believe in.

They've got a tomb of some kind, okay? So where their founder's bones remain, right? Abraham's tomb is in Palestine somewhere, okay? Maybe you're Jewish. Muhammad's tomb, our bones are in Mecca. That's why they go there, right?

To worship. But Jesus' tomb is empty. He's alive. That's power. God raised him from the dead because death could not hold down an innocent savior.

[27 : 48] Paul is praying that we would get this. We would remember this. We would live like this, knowing that God's resurrection power is in every believer, okay? He wants us to think much bigger

in our prayers than just, you know, what food to eat today and, oh, my toe is broken.

He wants us to know the greatness of God's resurrection power. Because Jesus, look, he died for sinners once and for all. But because of God's amazing power, right?

Verse 20 says, where is he now? Where is he now? He's not here in a grave. He is at the Father's right hand, seated in the position of authority over everything, over every ruler, every power, every dominion, every whatever spirit that may or may not exist.

He is better than that. He is more powerful than that. Right? Far above all rule and authority, verse 21 says, power and dominion, every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the ones that come.

Jesus is better than all of them. Okay? So what if Buddhism, atheism, meanism is being worshipped all around us? So what if pressure comes from your friends or family to put your Christian faith into sleep mode and just hide it a bit?

[29 : 01] Don't worry. Paul wants us to know and remember what is real. God's resurrection power. Jesus is not dead. He's alive. Let's live like that. That's his prayer for us.

That's his prayer for us. Next week we're going to see how this resurrection power is actually strong enough to raise dead people to life. I preached about it this morning in the other services because they're a week ahead, but you'll hear it next week.

This resurrection power is strong enough to turn us away from our selfish thoughts and our actions and to become men and women who live differently, who love differently. This resurrection power is fierce enough to help us stand against all the spiritual forces of evil, to stand together as a family in Christ.

Do you want to know what happens when you pray through Paul's prayer list instead of our own? To use Paul's priorities to shape our prayers? Have a look. He ends this passage with an amazing thought.

And in God, verse 22, placed all things under Jesus' feet. Appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him, who fills everything in every way.

[30 : 13] That's the result, isn't it, when you pray like Paul. When you pray like Paul, you think like Paul this way. You just think of God's glory filling God's church. Just as God's glory once filled the tabernacle, Isaac talked about this two weeks ago, right?

And Solomon's temple once filled with God's glory. Paul has that vision of the church today. We're not just a rabble of outcasts, not just a minority group.

We're not just a small and overlooked people. We are the body of Christ, verse 23 says. God is fullness, is in us, filling us in every way.

That's an amazing view of the church, and that is what we are. Sometimes we hear worship songs, right? They talk about us entering God's presence. When Christ in me meets Christ in you as we worship together, God's presence is here.

God's presence is here. That's what God's word says here. Where the body of Christ is, God is fully present. So be encouraged, right? Anytime, anywhere, God's people gather together.

[31 : 19] God is with them. God is with us. Whether it's face-to-face, as we're privileged to do, whether it's over live stream, over Zoom, when Christ in me meets Christ in you, God is with us.

He is present. This is the kind of thinking that happens when you pray like Paul does. When you pray big, get a fuller view of God's church, right?

As we hope in Christ, as we remember how valued we are as God's inheritance, and how powerful God is, right? His resurrection power. Raising His Son, raising us, changing our lives.

This is what the Spirit reveals to us in the wisdom. And so if this is all true, then can I suggest three little points?

Three things worth upsizing, as it were, right? In light of Paul's big prayers, okay? If Paul prays big like this, how should we make big? What should we make big in our lives, right?

[32 : 16] What should we upsize in our lives? I think, in light of this passage, I think we need to upsize our prayers, don't we? We talked about this earlier. It's good to pray for our daily bread.

We're just saying about it.

It's good to pray for health. It's good to pray against temptation. All the other day-to-day concerns. We need to pray about it. Our Father loves to hear it. But how often do we pray, this big pray, for God to help us know Him better?

For us, for our groups, for our friends and family. I know if I wasn't challenged by this passage, this whole week I'd be tempted to just pray about my family, about this and that, about how sick I feel or tired I feel.

All the important stuff, but not as important as Paul's big prayer, right? Maybe, like me, your prayers need a bit of an upsize, right? You've been praying too small. Let Paul's words here guide you. Okay? Have a think through this passage and then think, how can I pray for our church to know God better? Right? And to know our future hope. And to hold close to identity as God's treasured possession.

[33 : 19] And to experience resurrection power. These are big prayers and they're worth praying through as a church family, right? So perhaps even in group time, if you don't feel like answering questions, just pray through these three points.

They're good and worthwhile things to do. So upsize your prayers. I think secondly, I think this passage reminds us to upsize our view of Jesus, right? It was so good that Gary led us to remember that Jesus is the one who died for our sins.

A man of sorrows, lamb of God, broken, beaten up for us, crucified on the cross. Sometimes I think we still live as if Jesus is still dead, right?

Our confidence is not there because we kind of live as if, you know, the disciples who were scared, right? Between when Jesus died and he rose again, they're just hiding in their rooms. And we panic as believers.

We start to think we need to do something else than Jesus' changing work in our lives. But remember, this passage tells us where he is right now. Where is he? He's not in the grave.

[34 : 20] He's risen. He is at the Father's side. He is that powerful, right? He is seated above every other spiritual path. And this is the same power he invites us to tap into as his children.

That is too good a truth to keep to ourselves. So we need to upsize our view of Jesus. And then maybe that will shape us, how confident we feel about being a Christian, how bold we will be in our evangelism and sharing the gospel.

So upsize your view of Jesus. And finally, I think we should upsize our view of God's church.

Remember how sincerely Paul thanks God for his readers, right?

All he had to do was just think about their faith, right? Verse 15, in the Lord Jesus. Think about how they loved each other. And he was so moved to pray for them. But to do that, Paul had to think beyond his situation, beyond his, oh, I'm in prison.

There's no one around me. Life is lame. He had to think bigger, all right? He had to find out about the Ephesian church. I heard about you. How did he hear about them, right?

[35 : 23] He actually had to care about them. If we want to imitate Paul's prayers, we need to care about how the gospel is growing and bearing fruit, not just here in this service, but maybe in Saturday service too.

How God is moving in Sunday morning. How God is moving not just in our church family, but in the other ones in East Auckland, the rest of the city, the rest of the country.

How many of us know a missionary, someone who is working overseas, trying to tell people about Jesus, and pray for them and support them, right?

We need to be interested in looking beyond this group here. So maybe we need to upsize our view of God's church. If you're starting uni this year, one of the great privileges we have, actually, when you start uni is to join a campus group, okay?

Don't just go to uni and then pretend that Jesus doesn't exist. Go sign up. You know, O-Week is a great place to get free stuff and to join a Christian group, okay? So do that, all right?

[36 : 25] There's so many good ones. Student Life, OCF, Athletes in Action. There's lots, right? Obviously, don't join the cults, but join these ones, yeah. Or another way to upsize your view of the church is to sign up to something like Open Doors, praying for the persecuted church, right?

Voice of the martyrs. Hear how they are doing. Upsize your view of this church. Or you'll come, maybe you'll come with Dominic to the Rice Vision Night tomorrow night, okay?

Connect and get a bigger vision beyond this church, what God is doing. Maybe you'll research what God's doing in countries on, you know, maybe you have a bucket list of where you'd like to travel.

Why don't you just go to that list and pray for God's church in those countries and find out about it?

There are so many ways we can upsize our view of God's church like Paul does. And I think the more we take steps to look at what God is doing beyond PCBC, we will be moved to pray more and

to give thanks more.

And that will shape our priorities, right, as prayer people. And I think when we do that, we will feel less small and less overlooked. So friends, let me encourage you.

[37 : 30] Upsize your view of God through prayer, right? That's what Paul wants us to do. Have a bigger view of Jesus and have a bigger view of his church here and around the world. So let me pray in light of that.

Let's pray right now that we would do just that. Father, we feel small and overlooked sometimes. And yet, often we are selfish and we only want to think about ourselves and no one else. Some of us don't even know and care about what God is doing in other churches. Father, forgive us. Help us to repent. And through this amazing prayer of Paul's, help us to have a bigger view of you, your son, your spirit, a bigger view of what you are doing around the world. Help us to pray in line with your priorities for our good and your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.