

# Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 21, Prayer for a Faithful Church (Eph 1:15-2:3) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 21, Prayer for a Faithful Church (Eph 1:15-2:3), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Darko's lecture, Session 21 on Ephesians 1:15-23, focuses on Paul's prayer for the church. He examines Paul's reasons for praying, noting his hearing of their faith and love. The lecture explores Paul's specific petitions for illumination and knowledge, emphasizing the need for spiritual understanding of their calling, inheritance, and God's immense power. Darko highlights that this divine power, demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation, is also available to believers. The session concludes by previewing chapter two, where the application of this power to believers' spiritual state will be discussed.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 21 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).**



**Darko\_PrisonEp\_Session21.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 21, Prayer for a Faithful Church (Eph 1:15-2:3)

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Daniel K. Darko on Ephesians 1:15-23 - Prayer for a Faithful Church

**Overview:** This briefing document summarizes the key themes and ideas presented by Dr. Daniel K. Darko in Session 21 of his lecture series on the Prison Epistles, focusing on Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesians 1:15-23. Darko delves into the reasons behind Paul's prayer, the specific elements he prays for (illumination and knowledge), and the profound implications of God's power demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation for believers today.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

##### 1. The Occasion and Motivation for Paul's Prayer:

- Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23 is prompted by what he *heard* about the church, specifically their **"faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love towards all the saints"** (Ephesians 1:15, quoted by Darko).
- Darko emphasizes that Paul had not personally seen this church but trusted the reports he received, referring to the believers as **"the faithful ones in Christ Jesus, the trustworthy, the reliable ones in Christ Jesus."**
- He highlights the pattern in Paul's writings (Colossians, Philemon) where hearing about the faith and love of believers encourages him to pray for them.
- Darko underscores the significance of Paul's consistent prayer life for the churches he ministered to, emphasizing his role as a leader who **"takes it upon himself to pray for the church."**

##### 2. The Dual Focus of Paul's Petition: Illumination and Knowledge:

- Darko identifies two key areas Paul prays for: **illumination** and **knowledge**.
- **Illumination (Ephesians 1:17-18a):** Paul prays that God may give them **"the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened."** Darko explains that Paul desires for believers to have a deeper, experiential knowledge of Christ, not just intellectual understanding.
- He addresses the phrase "eyes of your heart," noting its unusual grammatical structure (plural "eyes," singular "heart"). He interprets this as a prayer for the

**"center, the seat of their emotion, and their moral life"** to be enlightened by the Spirit of God, enabling them to discern good and vanquish darkness.

- He uses a vivid, albeit intentionally "creepy," illustration of "eyes coming out of the heart" to emphasize the metaphorical nature of spiritual perception.
- **Knowledge (Ephesians 1:18b-19a):** Paul prays that they may **"know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe."** **Hope of their Calling:** Darko stresses that biblical hope is not uncertainty but something **"tangible, that is there for you to grasp."** He connects this to the inheritance mentioned earlier in Ephesians 1.
- **Riches of His Glorious Inheritance:** Darko highlights the Greek word "Plutus" (riches) and emphasizes that God's resources for believers are **"abounding"** and **"unlimited."** Knowing this should prevent believers from being envious of worldly things.
- **Greatness of His Power:** This is a "favorite" of Darko's. He emphasizes that Paul prays they may know the **"greatness of God's power"** that is at work in Christ Jesus and is also accessible to believers. This knowledge should alleviate fear of pagan deities and spiritual powers.

### 3. The Demonstration of God's Power in Christ:

- Darko emphasizes that Paul illustrates the greatness of God's power by pointing to its work in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:20-23):
- **Resurrection:** God's power was evident **"when He raised Him from the dead."**
- **Exaltation:** God **"seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, 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."**
- Darko clarifies that the "right hand" symbolizes **"power and authority."** Christ's exaltation places him above all conceivable spiritual powers and even any name of earthly or heavenly authority.
- **Subjection:** God **"has put all things under His feet and has made Him the head over all things for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."**

#### 4. The Relevance for Believers Today:

- Darko connects Paul's prayer to the challenges faced by believers, both in the first century (fear of spiritual powers) and today.
- He suggests that understanding the greatness of God's power available through Christ should lead to a church that is **"not trapped in fear"** but **"full of knowledge of what God is able to do."**
- He anticipates the discussion in Chapter 2, where Paul will describe believers as being spiritually dead in their sins and how the same power that raised Christ will make them alive and seat them with him in the heavenly places through grace.
- Darko underscores that the knowledge Paul prays for is not merely intellectual but is empowered by the Holy Spirit and impacts all aspects of a believer's life, including their feelings, behavior within the Christian community, and conduct in wider society.

#### 5. Addressing the Nature of "Rulers and Authorities":

- Darko acknowledges the scholarly debate regarding whether the terms "rule and authority and power and dominion" refer to evil spiritual powers or political powers.
- While noting that the majority of scholars lean towards spiritual powers in the context of Ephesus, Darko proposes that the distinction might be too rigid in the Greco-Roman world.
- He argues that political leaders often relied on perceived spiritual backing and that the intertwining of religion and culture meant that spiritual forces were often linked to earthly power structures (e.g., patron deities of cities, imperial worship).
- Ultimately, Darko emphasizes that regardless of the specific referents, **"Christ has been exalted above them. They have no power to control or to thwart or interfere with where Christ rules."**

#### Key Quote:

- "For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love towards all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers that 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, having the eyes of your heart 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, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the workings of His great might, that He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at the right hand in the heavenly realms..." (Ephesians 1:15-20, quoted by Darko)

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Darko's lecture on Ephesians 1:15-23 highlights Paul's deep concern for the spiritual understanding and empowerment of the Ephesian church. Through his detailed examination of Paul's prayer for illumination and knowledge, Darko emphasizes the importance of knowing Christ intimately and grasping the immense power of God demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation. This understanding is crucial for believers to live faithfully, overcoming fear and embracing the hope and inheritance they have in Christ. Darko's anticipation of Chapter 2 further sets the stage for understanding how this divine power directly impacts the salvation and standing of believers with Christ.

## 4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 21, Prayer for a Faithful Church (Eph 1:15-2:3)

### Study Guide: Ephesians 1:15-23 - Prayer for a Faithful Church

#### Key Themes:

- Paul's prayer life and its motivation
- The nature of faith and love within the church
- Paul's petition for illumination (wisdom and revelation, enlightened hearts)
- Paul's petition for knowledge (hope of calling, riches of inheritance, greatness of God's power)
- The surpassing power of God demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation
- Christ's authority over all spiritual and potential earthly powers
- The availability of God's power to believers
- The connection between understanding God's power and living without fear
- The transition to the state of believers before Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10)

#### Quiz:

1. According to Paul in Ephesians 1:15, what two things had he heard about the Ephesian church that prompted his prayer and thanksgiving?
2. Explain the New Testament understanding of "faith" as described in the lecture. How does it go beyond mere intellectual agreement?
3. What are the two main areas of petition that Paul presents in his prayer for the church in Ephesians 1:16-19a? Briefly describe each.
4. What does Dr. Darko suggest is the metaphorical meaning behind the phrase "the eyes of your heart" in the context of Paul's prayer for illumination?
5. What three things does Paul pray that the Ephesians may "know" in relation to God's promises and power (Ephesians 1:18-19)?
6. According to the lecture, how was the "greatness of God's power" demonstrated most clearly? What implications does this have for believers?

7. What does it mean that Christ is seated "at the right hand" of God in the heavenly realms? What authorities is he positioned above?
8. Why does Dr. Darko suggest that the mention of "rulers and authorities and power and dominion" likely refers primarily to evil spiritual powers in the context of Ephesus?
9. How does the end of Ephesians chapter 1 connect to the beginning of Ephesians chapter 2, as highlighted in the lecture? What shift in focus occurs?
10. What is the significance of the statement "by grace you have been saved" in the context of the believers' previous state described in Ephesians 2, according to the lecture?

**Answer Key:**

1. Paul had heard about their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and their love towards all the saints. These reports of their trust in Christ and their outward love for fellow believers prompted his continuous thanksgiving and prayer for them.
2. New Testament faith involves both intellectual ascent (believing something to be true) and trust (entrusting one's life and committing without reservation to what is believed). It's not just knowing something is true, but acting upon that belief with one's whole being.
3. The two main areas are illumination and knowledge. Illumination refers to Paul's prayer that God would grant them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowing Him and that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened. Knowledge refers to his prayer that they would know the hope of their calling, the riches of His glorious inheritance, and the immeasurable greatness of His power.
4. Dr. Darko suggests that "the eyes of your heart" metaphorically refers to the center of their emotion, moral reasoning, and intellectual life. He proposes Paul is praying that this inner being of believers would be enlightened by God's Spirit, enabling them to discern spiritual truths and live in the light.
5. Paul prays that they may know the hope to which He has called them, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward those who believe.
6. The greatness of God's power was demonstrated most clearly when God raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far

above all powers. This implies that the same surpassing power is available to believers.

7. Christ being seated "at the right hand" of God signifies his position of ultimate power, authority, and honor, second only to God. He is exalted above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is named, both in the present age and the age to come.
8. Given the context of Ephesus and the surrounding Greco-Roman world, which was steeped in belief in various spiritual entities and powers, the majority of scholars believe Paul's references are primarily to these evil spiritual forces. Political leaders also often sought spiritual backing, but the immediate context suggests a concern with unseen powers.
9. Ephesians chapter 1 ends with the description of God's immense power demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation. Chapter 2 begins by describing the believers' former state as being spiritually dead in their sins and trespasses, highlighting the need for that same divine power to bring them to life in Christ.
10. The statement "by grace you have been saved" is significant because it underscores that the transformation from spiritual death to new life in Christ, and being seated with Him in heavenly places, is not due to any merit or works of the believers themselves. It is solely a gift from God, made possible by His grace and the power demonstrated in Christ.

## Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the structure and content of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23. What does this prayer reveal about Paul's priorities for the Ephesian church and his understanding of their needs?
2. Discuss the interconnectedness of faith, love, and knowledge as presented in Ephesians 1:15-23 and the accompanying lecture. How do these three elements contribute to the spiritual health and faithfulness of a church?
3. Explore the significance of the concept of God's power in Ephesians 1:19-23. How is this power described and where is it most clearly manifested? What implications does understanding this power have for the lives of believers facing spiritual challenges?
4. Compare and contrast Paul's focus on the spiritual powers in Ephesians 1:21 with potential interpretations related to earthly political powers in the Greco-Roman world. To what extent might these two realms have been intertwined, and why is understanding this context important for interpreting Paul's message?
5. Trace the theological progression from the blessings described in the beginning of Ephesians chapter 1 (as mentioned by Dr. Darko) to Paul's prayer in verses 15-23, and then to the state of humanity described at the beginning of chapter 2. How does this progression emphasize God's initiative and the transformative power of Christ?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Faith (in this context):** Not merely intellectual belief, but a deep-seated trust and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, involving the entrusting of one's whole life to Him.
- **Love (towards all the saints):** A selfless, unconditional affection and care for fellow believers, transcending social or personal barriers, seen as a vital ingredient for church unity.
- **Illumination:** Spiritual enlightenment or the opening of the "eyes of the heart" by God's Spirit, granting wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ and enabling discernment of spiritual truths.
- **Knowledge (in this context):** Not just intellectual information, but a deep, experiential understanding of God, the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance, and the greatness of His power.
- **Riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints:** The abundant blessings and privileges that God has reserved for those who are holy and in Christ.
- **Immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe:** The infinite and surpassing power of God that is at work in believers, the same power that raised Christ from the dead.
- **Resurrection (of Christ):** The act by which God raised Jesus Christ from death to life, demonstrating His power over sin and death and serving as the foundation of Christian hope.
- **Exaltation (of Christ):** The act by which God raised Jesus Christ to the highest place of honor and authority, seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms.
- **Heavenly realms:** The spiritual or unseen dimension where God dwells and where Christ is now exalted above all powers.
- **Principalities and Powers (Rulers, Authorities, Power, Dominion):** Terms often used in the New Testament to refer to spiritual beings, both good and evil, that have some level of authority or influence in the cosmos. In this context, likely referring primarily to evil spiritual forces.
- **Greco-Roman world:** The cultural and historical context of the first century, heavily influenced by Greek and Roman thought, religion, and social structures.

## 5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 21, Prayer for a Faithful Church (Eph 1:15-2:3), [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on Ephesians 1:15-23

**1. What prompted Paul to offer this specific prayer for the church in Ephesus?** Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23 was prompted by the positive reports he had received about the believers in Ephesus. Specifically, he heard of their strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and their evident love for all the saints. This news moved him to continually give thanks and to pray for their further spiritual growth and understanding.

**2. What are the two main areas that Paul focuses on in his petition for the Ephesian church?** In his prayer, Paul primarily focuses on two key areas: illumination and knowledge. He prays that God would grant them the "spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" and that "the eyes of their heart [would be] enlightened." This illumination would then lead to a deeper knowledge and understanding of God's calling, inheritance, and power.

**3. What does Paul mean by "faith" in this context, and why was the Ephesians' faith significant to him?** For Paul, faith in the New Testament sense goes beyond intellectual agreement. It involves both ascent – believing something to be true – and trust – a deep reliance and commitment to what is believed. The Ephesians' faith was significant because it demonstrated their intellectual belief in Jesus Christ coupled with a wholehearted entrustment of their lives to Him. This genuine faith, along with their love for fellow believers, formed the basis of Paul's thanksgiving and his subsequent prayers for their continued spiritual development.

**4. Why does Paul emphasize the importance of "love for all the saints" in connection with their faith?** Paul highlights the Ephesians' love for all the saints because it is a crucial characteristic of a faithful Christian community and a vital ingredient for unity within the church. Christian love, as Paul understood it, transcends social barriers, conditions, and personal affiliations, extending to all fellow believers without reservation. This love mirrors God's own love and fosters internal cohesion within the body of Christ.

**5. What does Paul pray for regarding "illumination," and what does he mean by "the eyes of your heart"?** In his prayer for illumination, Paul asks that God would grant the Ephesians the "spirit of knowledge and wisdom to know Him" and that "the eyes of their heart" would be enlightened. The phrase "eyes of your heart" is a metaphorical expression referring to the inner spiritual perception and understanding. Paul is praying that the very center of their being – their moral reasoning, intellectual life, feelings, and emotions – would be illuminated by God's Spirit, enabling them to discern and comprehend spiritual truths and the good things in Christ.

**6. What specific aspects of "knowledge" does Paul pray for the Ephesians to understand?** Paul prays that the Ephesians would come to know three key aspects: \* **The hope to which He has called them:** A certain and tangible hope inherent in their divine calling. \* **The riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints:** The abundant and magnificent inheritance that God has for them as believers. \* **The immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe:** The surpassing and extraordinary power of God that is at work in those who have faith.

**7. Why does Paul connect the "greatness of God's power" to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ?** Paul emphasizes the connection between God's power and the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ to provide a concrete demonstration of the magnitude of this power. He highlights that the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in authority far above all spiritual and earthly powers is the power that is available to believers. This understanding was meant to reassure the Ephesians of God's ultimate authority and their security in Christ, especially in a world where evil spiritual powers were perceived as a real threat.

**8. How does Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23 lay the groundwork for the themes he will address in the subsequent chapters of the letter?** Paul's prayer in this section serves as a foundational prayer that addresses the core needs of the church. By praying for their illumination and knowledge regarding their calling, inheritance, and God's power, he is equipping them to understand their identity and security in Christ. This groundwork prepares them for the subsequent discussions on unity (fueled by love), salvation by grace (underscored by the demonstration of God's power over death), and their moral responsibility as believers in light of these truths, which he will delve into in the following chapters of Ephesians.