



Social media and news outlets really have been buzzing since Tuesday night. How many of you watched all or part of the presidential debate? How many of you have at least seen some clips or seen some news coverage of the debate since Tuesday night?

How did the debate and its outcome make you feel personally? Take a moment right now. Consider your emotions about this upcoming election.

Our family gathered around the television on Tuesday night to watch the debate. As a father, I try to be intentional with my children to talk to them about what is going on in our world around us. I have a goal to help them see the world from a biblical perspective. I want them to learn to evaluate what is going on around them through faith in Jesus Christ and through the lens of the Bible.

We watched about thirty minutes of the debate. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to address a whole lot of politics or important issues going on in our nation based on the content in the debate. The candidates really didn't address a lot of content. They really didn't focus on outlining their plans. Most of the debate was filled with arguments, name calling, expressing why the other person was so ill-suited for the job, laughing at each other, and interrupting one another. For me, it was very difficult to watch.

There are a lot of things I want my kids to know about living in America and about their civil responsibilities as Christians and as citizens of this nation:

1. I want them to know all authority comes from God.
2. I want them to learn to respect God-given authority and to pray for their leaders.
3. I want them to discover what it looks like to vote based on biblical values.
4. Most of all, I want them to learn to place their allegiance in King Jesus and in His eternal Kingdom.
  - a. The kingdom of America will not last forever.
  - b. There is no name in heaven or on earth worthy to be praised except the name of JESUS.

I've had opportunities to speak these truths into the lives of my kids on several occasions, and I am sure there will be many more.

Before I turned off the TV on Tuesday night, I was praying and asking God what He wanted me to discuss with my children that particular night. I knew from their comments as we watched that they were nearly as frustrated by the way the debate was going as I was. As I prayed, I felt the Lord give me an important character lesson for them to consider.

I urged my kids not to participate in the "selfie-generation."

The selfie-generation is a generation of self-promoters who are willing to put others down in order to lift themselves up. Their agenda is king. Their opinion matters most. Their image should be celebrated by others. Their name should be known and applauded.

I told them that there is no name in heaven or on earth worth praising and lifting up except the name of JESUS. I told them that, as Jesus is lifted up, He draw people to Himself. I encouraged them to be humble. To not promote themselves or their agenda, but to lift up Jesus to the praise of His glory.

This is something we all need to consider this morning. Whose name have you been exalting? I can tell you that, for some of you, if we scrolled your social media pages, we would see there is some other name you are lifting up rather than the name of Jesus. Perhaps it is your own name and what we would find are tons of selfie pictures and self-promoting posts on your feed. For others, perhaps you are known online as someone who lifts up the name of a candidate or some other figure. Church, Jesus is the only name worthy to be praised and exalted.

If you have your Bibles this morning, and I hope you do, would you open with me to Ephesians 1:15-23. I want to welcome back our journeyers who have been traveling through this book with us for the past few weeks. Today, we are planning to complete this leg of the trip through Ephesians 1 and preparing to round the corner into Ephesians 2. If you are new with us today, you picked a great week to join us! We are going to capture the full scope of this chapter.

Ephesians 1 provides the right answer to Christians living in the “selfie-generation.” It reminds us that Jesus’s name is the only name worthy of being promoted and praised in heaven and on earth. His name alone reigns supreme.

I want to start this morning by reading this passage together from Ephesians 1:15-23. In the original Greek, this entire passage is one long sentence without any punctuation. It is really intended to be taken in as a whole, so we are going to do our best to honor the text and receive it that way. This long sentence is a prayer that Paul is offering up to God on behalf of the church. It is a very complete prayer with prayers of thanksgiving, intercession, and declaration all being offered up to the Lord.

Let’s prepare our hearts to read this passage and let the Lord speak to us...

### **Ephesians 1:15-23**

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

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

Show us Christ. What a beautiful prayer.

The first word of this prayer is the word "THEREFORE." As many pastors and preachers have said, when the Bible uses the word "THEREFORE" you need to pause and make sure you understand what it is THERE FOR.

This one word tells us that this entire prayer is built on top of the previous 12 verses that we have been studying together for the past three weeks.

In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul is clear on who should be lifted up, promoted, and praised. Journeyers, do you remember the incredible views of God we have been taking in for the past three weeks in the opening lines of the book of Ephesians?

Paul praises the FATHER (vv.3-6):

- Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places
- Who has chosen us in Him before the foundations of the world
- Who has made us holy and blameless
- Who has predestined us in love for adoption into His family

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORIOUS GRACE (verse 6).

Can you pause for a moment this morning and take in the goodness of the Father in a fresh way? Which of these feel most personal to you? What are you most grateful to the Father for this morning?

Paul praises the SON (vv.7-12):

- Who has redeemed us (bought us back from sin) with His blood
- Who has forgiven all our sins
- Who lavishes the riches of His grace on us
- Who, with all wisdom and insight, according to His purpose, works in perfect timing
- Who is working out His plan to unite all things in heaven and earth
- Who is the source through which we have gained an inheritance from God

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY (verse 12).

Consider the picture of the image of Jesus Christ, God the Son. God made visible to us. He is incredible! Look at this carefully. What feels most personal to you right now? What are you grateful for in Jesus?

Paul praises the SPIRIT (vv.13-14):

- Who has sealed us, secured us, and our future inheritance
- Who is our guarantee, our deposit, our earnest, for the future inheritance, assuring us that we will acquire possession of it

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY (verse 14).

The first word, **THEREFORE**, or FOR THIS REASON, is the key word to starting to unlock this passage. This entire prayer is rooted in the first poem and its theme – the praise of God’s glory. As Paul begins to pray for the church, he recognizes that anything good, anything glorious, in the church is because of the work of God and what He has done for us in Christ. Not to us, but to His name be the glory! It is not about us! It is all about Him. We get that backwards. We often think it is all about us. We slip into a “selfie-generation” mindset. It has never been about us and will never be about us. It is about God and His glory. What is amazing is that, because of who God is, when God acts gloriously, we are the divine benefactors. He acts gloriously, and we who believe receive the blessing!

Paul then begins to celebrate. He gives thanks to God for the church in Ephesians. Why? First, because of who God is and the glorious works He has done to make us one in Jesus Christ, uniting us in Him. That is primary and present in the word THEREFORE. But Paul also gives thanks to God for the Ephesians

because he has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for all the saints. Let's not glaze over the significance of this acknowledgement.

Of all the things Paul could praise in the Ephesians, of all the outflows of the inner workings of God through His glorious grace given to them, Paul expresses his excitement and thanksgiving for the church because they are growing in **faith and love**.

Growing in faith and love is the very foundation of what it means to grow spiritually. SPIRITUAL GROWTH WHEEL.

FAITH – learning to see things the way God sees it, pledging my allegiance to God and God alone

LOVE – leaving self-centeredness and becoming God and others-centered

Paul gives thanks to God for the glorious work of God in their lives, and that God's work is producing in them FAITH AND LOVE.

Paul gives thanks for the church, then he begins to intercede for the church: that is, making request to God for the church. In this prayer, Paul reveals his vision for how the church will move forward.

#### **Ephesians 1:17-18a**

17 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, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,

It is a prayer for knowledge. But what kind of knowledge?

The world places great value on a kind of knowledge that is associated with growing in learning. Acquiring more information. Knowledge is power, we like to say. In today's America, one of the most celebrated ideas is having an open mind. By open-mindedness, we mean a willingness to consider all angles. To take all viewpoints into account. To know all the arguments and to decide for ourselves where we want to stand.

The word "knowledge" in this passage has a specific meaning in the Bible. The root word that we translate "knowledge" literally means to grow in intimacy. This is not a knowledge as in head knowledge. Paul is expressing a kind of knowledge that flows from our hearts. That is why he prays that the "eyes of our hearts would be enlightened!" He is praying that we would grow in a knowledge of God that leads to greater intimacy, more abiding, in Him!

Does this mean God does not want us to have knowledge or have an open mind? Of course not! But His idea of having an open mind is different than what many of us might think. Many times, I have heard people talk about trying to research all the angles and come up with **their own conclusions** about God and the church. This is not wisdom, it is folly! God's idea of us growing in faith and having an open mind is being open to the work of His Spirit through His Word to reveal Himself to us. For our minds to be changed, transformed, in every way so that we might know Him more. In every way we see God incorrectly, He wants to correct it. In every way we see ourselves or the world through a lens of lies or deceit, He wants to transform our vision. God wants to renew our minds to redeem us from the brokenness sin has caused us in our thinking and lead us back to a right understanding of Him!

Don't get me wrong – apologetics are important! We need Christians who will study all the angles and help us understand the arguments that raise themselves up against Christ. However, this should always be

done from a position of faith. We start with a right understanding of God, embracing His revelation of Himself to us, then we examine all other arguments so that we can contrast the lies with the truth and help others see who God really is.

So here, Paul begins his prayer with a prayer of knowledge. Not of knowledge that puffs up, but a knowledge of greater intimacy and love and abiding in the Father that builds up.

We are going to take the rest of Paul's prayer as a whole unit, because this prayer develops very nicely and really answers the important questions as it moves along.

After thanking God for the growth of faith and love, and after praying for knowledge that leads to intimacy and abiding in God, Paul prays this prayer:

### **Ephesians 1:18b-19**

that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

Paul wants us to KNOW (intimately) what is the HOPE (future idea) that God is calling us to: WHAT ARE THE RICHES OF HIS GLORIOUS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS.

Up to this point, the inheritance Paul has referred to has been our inheritance from God. For the first time, Paul now makes mention of God's inheritance in the saints... that we are His possession!

I think it is a lot easier for us to imagine God as our inheritance than to imagine us as His inheritance:  
DAVID PLATT EXAMPLE OF MARRIAGE

We get that God is our inheritance, that all He has now belongs to us in Christ. But what does it mean that we are His? Well, in the first poem, Paul explained that the Spirit is the down payment of God's purchase of us, and that there will be a future redeeming of the full purchase. In that hope, we are the inheritance of God! When every tribe, tongue, and nation is represented around the throne and giving God praise for His glorious grace. For all His glory, and for all His glorious works, that is His inheritance. The praises of the saints for His glorious grace! As our inheritance, we get Him – and as His inheritance, He gets us! A people He has perfected and made holy, who know Him for who He really is, and who are enamored by His goodness and want to give Him praise because He is glorious!

Like our inheritance, much of God's inheritance is still yet to come. When Jesus returns and every knee bows down and every tongue confesses that He is Lord, He will receive His full inheritance. So, in many ways, this is a future idea. But it is not only a future idea. Just as the Holy Spirit is a deposit of our inheritance, our praise to God is our deposit of His inheritance! As we glorify God on the earth, we are returning back to God the glory that He has shown in us. Don't miss this...

We have been given the power of God in Christ to be the representatives of God to the world. The fullness of His glory is present in us, His body! Why? TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY!!

How great is that power in us, and how has it been made ours in Christ?

### **Ephesians 1:19-23**

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 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. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

- IMMEASURABLE GREATNESS of HIS POWER TOWARDS US! (stacking words, can't over emphasize it)
- His power has been displayed in Christ (resurrection, ascension, seating at the right hand of God)
- Over all rule, authority, power, dominion, and name (in this age and in the future age)
- Made Him HEAD OVER ALL THINGS (not just the church, that is coming in Ephesians 4)
- GIVEN HIM TO THE CHURCH!!
  - If God gave Jesus all authority and placed all things under His feet
  - And then if Jesus was given to the church
  - What does it stand to reason that the church has received in Christ?
  - ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES!
    - THE GATES OF HELL WILL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST US!
- We are His body, the fullness of His presence on the earth
- He fills ALL IN ALL (every one of us completely filled with Christ, united as one in Him)

In light of what God has done, to the praise of His glory, we ought to be boasting in Jesus!

The leaders in the debate were a reflection of the culture and the people they are leading.

As Jesus's Church, we are to be a reflection of Kingdom Culture and to reflect the image of our leader.

That the world may know Him through us, the fullness of His presence on the earth.  
TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.