

'You Have a King' (Christ the King)

Ephesians 1:15-23

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You have a King

Well folks today we've reached it. The pinnacle of Everyday saints, looking at the lives of everyday people who were made saints by the love of God. We've gotten to know Augustine of Hippo, Francis of Assisi, and last week we met Julian of Norwich.

Now all these saints changed the world but they were also ordinary people who show us how to live for our extraordinary God. Now as we've said throughout this series all followers of Jesus are God's holy people. In the Bible all Christians are saints because we've been made saints by Jesus himself. All saints have at least five things in common and Paul focusses on these five characteristics in his letter to the saints in Ephesus where he writes:

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁷I 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.

Paul is giving us a masterclass in what everyday saints are and how they live:

- a saint rejoices in their king
- a saint lives to know their king
- a saint has the inheritance of their king
- a saint relies on the power of their king
- a saint is satisfied in their king

1. A saint rejoices in their King (v.15-16)

Paul, a man who is probably in prison for being a Christian, writes to a bunch of very green Christians who aren't getting along. Nonetheless, Paul sings a song of praising God for this little dysfunctional church. There's nothing special about them but v.3-14 form a joyful song of praise to God. The Ephesians are God's Holy people, they are set apart for God because they believe in God.

So Paul tells the Ephesians that he hasn't stopped praying for them. He's absolutely stoked that despite all their shortcomings the Ephesians are still

meeting together. There was immense social pressure on them to abandon their faith, they but they have stuck it out because of the goodness of God.

Here we see that Paul rejoices in his king Jesus and is modelling for us what it looks like to be a saint because that's what saints do, we rejoice in our king. This is because not only has King Jesus made the world, but he's died to save us, and he's risen to bring us eternal life. Paul can't thank his king enough for all he's done and so he never stops giving thanks for what God has done among the Ephesians and for how they love one another because God loved them first.

Friends this has so much to say to you and me today. I don't know if you've ever met someone who totally loves their boss, but Paul loves his boss. He loves everything his boss has done, and everything his boss is doing, and all the people who his boss has called into the team as well. And while you may have never met someone who loves their boss that much, I can almost guarantee that you've met someone who hates their boss. Think about how this changes how they feel about the work they do and the other people in their organisation. Later in the letter, Paul helps them work through their dysfunction, but he starts by giving thanks to God for them.

As Christians we can join with Paul in rejoicing in Jesus as our boss and King. Serving him is a privilege and joining with his people is a joy. God has made us, he's come into our world to save us, called us into his family, and one day he will call us to our true home with him in heaven. Jesus is so good to us and so as saints it is our privilege to continuously delight and rejoice in him.

2. A saint lives to know their King

The second thing a saint does is that they live to know their King. This is what St Paul prays for all his fellow saints in vv.17-18:

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 also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you,

Again, Paul is saying in the present continuous tense: I keep asking God to enlighten you.

Here is a deeply trinitarian verse as Paul mentions all three people of the Godhead in rapid succession. The world of knowing God involves all three persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Sadly, in our world today there are groups of people who just want to focus on one person of the Trinity above the others. Some focus on the person of the Holy Spirit, or Jesus, or God the Father. But here we see that it's God the Father who gives us the Holy Spirit so we may know Jesus better. All three persons of the Godhead point to one another and want us to know them better.

Paul pray that the eyes of our hearts might be opened. This is a majestic way of praying that our understanding of God might go from our heads to our hearts.

In our culture we're head people. We can thank the Enlightenment for needing to prove and rationalise everything. If I can rationalise something in my brain, then that's all we need. The heart is the centre of emotions and feelings, but the brain is where true knowledge is at.

Conversely, in Hebrew culture the heart is the locus of thoughts and feelings and in order to truly know someone I need to have the eyes of my **heart** opened to them. It's not that people believed that hearts literally had eyes at the time but there was this understanding that for a true love relationship to flourish we needed to see one another not just with our eyes but with our hearts. St Paul doesn't want us to just know about God, he wants us to know God personally.

When I was studying for ministry I lived in Milton and often I would go down to the shops and there at the coffee shop was the King, Wally Lewis. Now I could know that Wally Lewis was born in Brisbane in 1959, went to Brisbane State High School, suffers from epilepsy, and played in 34 State of Origin games winning 21 games and gaining 8 man of the match performances. But do you think I could walk up to him and chat to him? No way. This is because even if the eyes of my heart were open to Wally Lewis the eyes of his heart were certainly not open to me.

Friends the eyes of God's heart are open to us and we need to pray that God would open the eyes of our hearts and those of our neighbours to him. Jesus isn't the king of Lang Park; he's the King of the world and he not only has the capacity to love and care for us, but he actually does so.

Saints live to know their God, so let's pray and commit to knowing God more.

3. A saint has the inheritance of their King

It's here that St Paul pivots mid-sentence to show us that we have a royal inheritance. Vv. 18-19:

I pray also 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 the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

On Thursday night Zoë and I watched an episode of the Crown which is a TV show about the life of Queen Elizabeth. The current season looks at Princess Diana and her relationship with Prince Charles. When he meets her Diana works for her sister as a cleaner for 4 pounds an hour. She's comes from a well to do family, but she doesn't have a title or much of an inheritance. Suddenly Charles proposes and all of sudden she becomes a potential heir of the United Kingdom.

St Paul tells us the moment we put our faith in Jesus Christ we became heirs to the kingdom of God. All God's blessings are granted to us in an instant. Now sadly as Diana got to understand her inheritance, she came to realise that it was more of a curse than a blessing. But this is the opposite of with the Kingdom of God. As we truly grow in faith and understand what it means to follow Jesus and be heirs of the glorious inheritance of the saints, the free gift God lavishes on us, our hearts deepen in awe and joy.

Today Sophie Postle is being baptised and her parents are giving her the greatest gift anyone could receive, a place in God's Kingdom. They didn't buy this gift: it was won for Sophie upon the cross, she can't earn it God gives it freely, and this gift will never run out, fail her, or get postponed because of Coronavirus because it's a gift from the God of the universe.

4. A saint relies on the power of their King

As we've gone through our everyday saints series, we've seen how powerful the life of a saint can be. St Augustine's book and ideas are still in circulation today changing lives and hearts. St Francis of Assisi's example has powerfully changed the lives of millions of people particularly those who are sick, disabled, or poor. St Julian powerfully brought hope to people in lockdown as they looked for direction and hope this year, 400+ years after her death.

This is because all these saints relied on the power of their king Jesus.

Paul prays that we would not only know our inheritance in the future but also the power we have available to us in the present. He writes about the:

'incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

(vv.19-21)

Do you see how good this is? The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is working us. The same Spirit that empowered Jesus to change the world for good in three short years lives in us. The same power that allowed Jesus to fight sin, heal sick people, drive out demons, feed the hungry, and teach the world about the love of God lives in us. Saints of all ages have carried on doing Jesus' work humbly and graciously one life at a time and God is calling us to take our place and draw on his mighty power to further Jesus' mission to bring heaven to earth.

Paul uses four different words for power in v.19 to describe the power that Jesus gives to his saints:

- There's *megethes* which means power or greatness
- dunameos* from which we get the word dynamite
- energien* where we get the word energy
- and *ischuous* which mean strength but also power

Friend if you're looking for power in life then look no further than King Jesus. His power is without rival. That's why verse 21 tells us that the name of King Jesus is above all rulers, authority, power and dominion, in this world to and in the world to come. The name of Jesus is more powerful than Vezos, Morrison, Bradman, Gates, Kardashian, and Trump put together.

If you want true power, look no further than Jesus, ask him for power and he will give you the direction and power to change the world one life at a time.

5. A saint is satisfied in their King

The final characteristic of a saint that I want to hone in on today is that a saint is satisfied in their King.

So many of us go through life unfulfilled, hungry for more, but when we get what we want we find we're still hungry for more. And when we get to end of our lives we so often find that the things we spent all our energy chasing weren't worth the effort after all.

This is why Paul points us to the fulfillment found in Jesus:

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.

(vv.22-23)

In his life death and resurrection Jesus lived an exemplary life, fully pleasing to God, and when he rose from the dead God place everything under his feet. Jesus passed from our world and into God's world, heaven and God appointed him to be the boss over everything. While not everyone lives like Jesus is King and not everyone worships him, one day they will.

One day King Jesus will return to our world which is rightfully his because he made it, he loves it, he died to save it, and when he returns, he will redeem it fully. All the pain and suffering in our world is a cry of longing for the return of the King but for saints, God's church, God's community, Jesus fills us with everything in every way.

Like a shoe without a foot, a bride without a groom, or a pizza without pineapple we are incomplete until we find our rest in God.

St Augustine famously said:

Our hearts are restless o God until they find their rest in you.

Friend if you're looking for fullness in life then look no further than King Jesus. All the saints we've looked at were restless and unfulfilled until they dedicated their lives to the Lord and to his service.

Paul rejoices in the fact that his shoddy little church in Ephesus, and this humble little Church in Dalby, can rejoice in its king for all he's done, can live to know him, can bask in his inherence, rely on his power, and find fullness and satisfaction in Jesus.

God is calling us to be everyday saints in Dalby: rejoicing, living, basking, relying, and enjoying the satisfaction that comes from knowing Jesus. May you know King Jesus today and may we make him know as King every day. Amen.