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EPHESIANS

1:15-23 GOD'S POWER AT WORK IN US

I think we are probably more aware now than we have ever been before about how much power we need. Think of all the things you use that need power. If you don't believe me, think how many of those multiple extension leads you have got in your house.

Think of all the things you have that need charging.

You will know the frustration – even the despair – of one of them running out. But of course, even though we are convinced that they are, none of these things is essential. We have convinced ourselves that we really need them, but we don't.

There is power, though, which is the complete opposite. There is power which people throughout the ages have convinced themselves that they can do without. Power which could always be there, that we could always draw on but that we often ignore. Power that is written into this reading from Ephesians, written into this book, written into the fabric of time and space and the universe. It's the power of God.

We know stuff, don't we? I know a load of things that are completely useless. I know a load of things about people and places that I have absolutely no experience of. And I long for my knowledge of the power of God not to be something that I remember in my head, but something that finds a home in my heart. Paul talks about the eyes of our hearts being enlightened, of Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith. I long for it not to be theory, but to be experience. Do you?

Perhaps we might be convinced if we realise that God's power is *incomparable*. Perhaps we might be convinced if we realise that it is *for us*. For us who are leaders? No. For us who are the special Christians? No. For us who haven't already really messed up today? No. For us who believe.



Paul is thankful for the power of God, and he prays for the power of God.

And what a thing to believe, that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in us. Just this week, and since I originally gave this talk, I have listened to one of the country's most prominent Christian leaders talk about this verse. "Do you really believe you have the same power in you that raised Christ from the dead?" he felt God ask him. "Yes I do," he replied. "But do you really?" God asked again. "No I don't," he replied. At this point this lovely man turned to us and said, "Because we don't, do we? Really? Really? Reeeeaalllly?!"

What is working in us, or at least what Paul prays *would work in us*, is the resurrection power of God. Any takers? It's not an idle question. Because what sin lurks in us, what struggles do we face, what problems in our family, at our job, in our church, that cannot be overcome by the resurrection power of God? If God can raise Christ from the dead, from under the weight of all the judgment that he took in our place, why might he not overcome this problem or that one?

And staggeringly – *staggeringly* – it was for us. It was all for us. It was for the church. *God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything FOR THE CHURCH.*

Because we are his body. Yes, we thank God for his power, Yes, we pray for his power, but in the end, if anyone out there is going to see God's power at work it is going to be through us (v19), it is going to be within us (3:20). Astonishment on astonishment, we, the Church, are the fullness of Christ. We are the place people are supposed to look and say, "I see the Resurrection power of Christ." They can't see Jesus, but they can see his power at work in us. Yes, God fills everything in every way, but fundamentally they are to see Christ's power in us.

You may well be very conscious of the places, and the people, where you are called to take this amazing, incomparably great power of God. Because it is God's power – his incomparably great power – for us who believe. It is for all his church, for all of us who believe. So one of the other things this amazing passage does, is hold out an invitation to us. Because perhaps we are uncertain that we are the church because we have not believed in Jesus. Perhaps we are uncertain of why we might even do that.

If so, maybe the promise of this passage, that God is for us not against us, that God wants to give us all things, that God wants his power to work through us for the blessing of the whole world, perhaps that could almost be reason in itself. *Because it isn't power that we think we need, but we don't. It is the opposite. It is power which we can convince ourselves that we can do without. Power which is always there, that we could always draw on, but that we often ignore. It's the power of God.*

Where are you called to take the incomparably great power of Christ? Who are the people that you are to take it to?

Are you certain you believe in Jesus? Does the idea that God wants his power to work through you help encourage you to follow Jesus?

Do you believe that God's power can work through you?