

MESSAGE OUTLINE
TRUE COURAGE: PRESENCE

Ephesians 1:15–23 (NIV)

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ 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. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

God is present in....

1. The _____ of his _____.
...his incomparably 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 his right hand in the heavenly realms (v.19-20)

"The cross of Christ only triumphs in the breast of believers over the devil and the flesh, sin and sinners, when their eyes are directed to the power of His Resurrection." —**John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 Vols**

The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." **Psalm 110:1**

2. The _____ of his _____.
...the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people (v.18b)

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **1 John 3:2**

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face... **Revelation 22:3–4b**

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. **Philippians 3:20–21**

3. The _____ of his _____.
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... (v.18a)

And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. **Romans 8:30**

All this was in God's mind when he called us. He called us to Christ and holiness, to freedom and peace, to suffering and glory. More simply, it was a call to an altogether new life in which we know, love, obey and serve Christ, enjoy fellowship with him and with each other, and look beyond our present suffering to the glory which will one day be revealed. This is the hope to which he has called you. Paul prays that our eyes may be opened to know it. —**Stott, J. R. W., God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians**

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 22, 2020
TRUE COURAGE: PRESENCE

CONNECT

- What made you smile today?
- What are you most thankful for from the fall series on *True Joy* or *True Courage*?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Breath Prayer

Breath Prayer is a form of contemplative prayer linked to the rhythms of breathing. Breath prayer has been practiced by the church throughout Christian history. It is a form of contemplative prayer linked to the rhythms of breathing using the words of scripture. With the breath prayer you create a simple one-sentence prayer of your heartfelt desire or need for God, said as you breathe in and breathe out. The traditional breath prayer is from Luke 18, "Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner." You can base it on something you heard in this passage or another passage. Your own words could be, "*Glorious Father, open the eyes of my heart*" or "*Good Shepherd, fill me with the power to believe*" or "*Spirit of Wisdom, help me know you better.*"

Prepare: Be quiet for a moment to rest in God's presence as you ponder his nearness to you.

Listen: Ask someone to read Ephesians 1:15-23 aloud. Circle any words or phrases that you are drawn to.

Respond: Create your own *Breath Prayer* using the following:

- Slowly inhale and exhale the breath of life as a reminder of God's presence.
- Write down a name or image of God the Father, Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit that comes to mind.
- Write out a short phrase that expresses your desire and need for God.
- Silently say your breath prayer by breathing in the first phrase and breathing out the second. Remember God is close to you, closer than your breath.

Group Prayer: Taking turns, pray your breath prayers aloud without explanation or embellishments.

Group Sharing: What was this experience like for you? How might this help you cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving in difficult times?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

- Reflecting on Ephesians 1:15-23, what are you most grateful for in this week's scripture or message?
- Take a moment to individually complete the following sentences, then share with one another.

God's presence gives me the courage to _____

The Holy Spirit's power enables me to _____

Christ's authority leads me to _____

- In what way would we operate differently if we were confident that God's presence and power are at work in us and in the world?
- What do you need "to know" from this passage?
- What role does surrender play in gratitude?
- What difference does knowing that the presence of God is in us and with us make in deepening your sense of courage?

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

Prayer Requests: Where do you need to experience the presence of God in a specific way this week? Where do you need courage? How can we pray for you?

Prayer and Benediction: (from Ephesians 1:18-19)

May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened in order that we may know the hope to which God has called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

DAILY PRACTICE: Spend time with God daily in Solitude, Scripture, and Prayer (see Reading Plan & Playlist). Reflecting on all that God makes available to you, how might you take hold of the presence, power, and authority of God in your life today? Use your breath prayer as a reminder of God's presence with you.