

Ephesians 1vs15-16 Faith in the Lord and Love for the Saints

Paul begins praying for the Ephesian church by expressing his love for them, encouraging them their faith and thanksgiving to God for them.

For this reason I also-Since God had provided the Ephesians the faith unto salvation by hearing and believing the Word of God, and Rom 10:8-10 **The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.** What is the difference between hearing and believing vs. hearing and not believing? Faith! Believing in the person and work of Christ on the cross to save us from the Heart. These saved, sealed, inheritors with Christ is who Paul is speaking to.

having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus

Paul says that he has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus. He’s thanking them because of he has heard of their faith. Paul had not been in Ephesus for five or six years and there were probably many new believers that he didn’t know personally, and had only heard about them. How did Paul hear from so far away? The words here for “your faith” indicate an active faith in Christ.

Active faith in Christ-So, Just how did Paul hear of their faith? How would Paul have seen their faith had he been present in Ephesus during those five or six years that he had been away? Faith is brought about from within us, hearing God’s Word, and believing in Him, and therefore the truth of what He says. Faith is having a firm belief in God, which is unshakable, and a constant trust in God’s Word as the truth, and especially in trusting in Jesus and His finished work on the cross for salvation. We show the true status of this faith by our actions or attitudes (way of thought), and by the priorities we have in our lives. When it is real, faith results in actions that can be seen and heard. This is what Paul is commending them for; their active faith in Christ resulting in works of love toward other believers, and those outside the church. James 2:14,17-18 **14 What use is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ... 17 In the same way, faith also, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 18 But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”** So faith is made active, it is seen, when we have the courage to take action based on our faith. If it is real, it will always result in action taken by faith in God, because He has a Plan and a Purpose to accomplish in and through our lives. Make others know that you are a person of faith by what you do.

in the Lord Jesus.-We demonstrate that our faith is in the Lord Jesus by the way that we live our lives. We have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus, continually, not in one single act of faith, but by continuing to place our faith in the Lord Jesus. And Paul’s evidence of this was the continued reports that Paul had received, even though he hadn’t seen them for years, which evidenced their continuing love for Jesus and for each other. The active faith allows the power of the Holy Spirit to flow through our lives. Be righteous, but put your faith in God! He’s the one who directs us: Proverbs 3:5-6, **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.**

God took a weak Abram and put strength into him, making him Abraham. Abraham was made strong because of his faith, but it was God, not faith, that provided the strength. Faith allowed Abraham to appropriate God’s strength to do God’s will! Biblical faith is about understanding the impossible in the natural, as well as understanding that God is supernatural, above and beyond all of the circumstances. There are no Big Problems to God! Abraham was willing to sacrifice the child of Promise, Isaac in Genesis 22 as recounted in Hebrews 11 that **"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."** He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type. Abraham grew strong in

faith and gave glory to God. This teaches us that our faith should grow. Weak faith (or little faith) is still faith, but we should grow strong in faith. **How do we grow in faith?** The key is to grow in our knowledge of the object of our faith--God. Faith is only as good as its object. You can have strong faith in a faulty bridge and it will collapse under you in spite of your strong faith. Or, you can have weak faith in a strong bridge and it will hold you up, along with a semi-truck that rumbles over it next to you. But your weak faith does not glorify the strong bridge for what it is. And our weak faith, or little faith does not glorify God! It must grow, so that it can glorify God, as we stand on it, like Abraham did, and like David did!

and the love toward all the saints-It's the faith that drives the love. We have to believe God exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. We HAVE been saved by Grace, in appreciation and love of Jesus for that fact. And that means that we should love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength in OBEDIENCE. And that means that we should love our neighbor as ourself in OBEDIENCE to God. James speaks of the practical value of Christianity in building our character, but especially, it's value in serving others, so that God is glorified. And we can do that by pointing people to Christ. And we can only do that, by living as God has told us to live in His Word. James defines our Christian life very simply in 1:27 **27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.** Notice that he is not saying that we are saved by works, just that BECAUSE we are saved, we will have changed lives, and want to Serve God by serving people, and keep ourselves pure, righteous, unstained by the world.

Paul was able to hear of the Ephesians' love for one another, and know that they were following Jesus, who said in John 13:35 **By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.** They will know we are Christians by our love. And that's how Paul recognized these Christians, even though they weren't standing in front of him. He said in Rom 13:8 **Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law.,** and he recognized that they were fulfilling this law of love. has the idea of that which seeks to give rather than possess, always seeking highest good or the will of God in the one loved. Gal 5:13 **For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.** They were using their lives not to serve the flesh, but to serve one another in love. And, as our good friend, the Apostle John echoed in 1 John 3:11 **For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we are to love one another;** or 1 john 4:7 **Beloved, let's love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.** They were fulfilling this command to love one another, and the report of it was so impactful, that Paul heard it thousands of miles away. This agape love had an impact on the world. This self-sacrificial love, which seeks the highest good in the one who is loved was being directed toward all the saints. This love is not to the whole world but to the saints. The believers are to love one another in order to show the world that they are disciples of the Lord.

I never cease giving thanks for you-This made such an impression on Paul, that he continually prayed for this church who was standing on their faith by loving one another. And God made sure that their example would shine for eternity, by including it in scripture. As the people of God, we rejoice when someone is serving God well! We celebrate with them, and praise God for them, because they are bringing glory to God! As 3rd John 1:3-4 says **3 For I was overjoyed when brothers came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.** We are overjoyed seeing God at work in the lives of those around us, and we want to encourage you all in greater faith in Jesus, walking in the truth, and expressing your faith through love to one another.