

## The Heart of a Pastor

Good Morning His Place. Pastor Chris is on a much deserved vacation this week, so I got the tap to preach today, and I said “**Put me in Coach!**”. So now you’re stuck with me.

### <Announcements and Opening Prayer>

Alright, let’s start off with a brief recap of where we are so far in our study of Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians. First off, Paul is writing to the church - a body of believers, so this epistle is not evangelistic in nature, he’s writing to those who have already decided to follow Jesus. The epistle is held by tradition to be to the church in Ephesus, however since it contains no personal greetings, or specific situations, it was circulated widely to many churches. Some of these manuscripts contain the words “in Ephesus” in verse 1, but not all of them. So there are some who think it may have been intended to be a general letter to all the churches in Asia Minor, and some maintain that it was intended for Ephesus, but that Paul understood that it would circulate. In either case, it is just as applicable **to us**, as to the Ephesian church of his day. It shares many similarities, both in theme and language, with Paul’s other epistles and was likely written around the same time as Philippians, Colossians and Philemon when he was imprisoned in Rome under house arrest. Some of the main themes in Ephesians are how the church should **live and relate** with **other members of the church, the world at large, and to their God**. It discusses their **identity**, their **hope**, their **destiny**, and their **purpose**.

So far, Pastor Chris has walked us through the first half of chapter 1, and we’ve discussed our **Election, Blessings, and Redemption – in Christ**. That phrase “**in Christ**” is pivotal to the rest of the letter of Ephesians. Paul used that phrase “**in Christ**” about a dozen times so far, and he’s just getting started, he’ll use it about 20 more times in the remaining 5 chapters. That phrase is not only the **basis of our Election**, the **reason for our Redemption**, and the **source of our Blessing**, it should form the **very core of our identity**.

As we close out chapter 1 today, we’re going to look at the prayer of Paul for his church, and I believe this is the prayer that every Pastor should have for their church. I think it’s quite fitting to cover this today, when we as a church body get ready to cast our vote today regarding whether Pastor Chris will lead us in this next season. So let’s dive in and read our passage for today.

#### **Ephesians 1:15-23 (NIV)**

**For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 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 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, and 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, 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. 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.**

With that amazing setup, I want to take a moment, using this example from Paul, to talk about some of the essential duties of a Pastor. Aside from Jesus himself, and arguably maybe Moses, we have no better example in the Bible of **what a Pastor is** than the Apostle Paul. Paul may have had a roughneck start as a Wayist Hunter, working hard at what he thought God wanted of him, once he was confronted by the Lord Jesus with his true calling, he pulled a 180 and dove headlong into dedicating his time, energy, resources, and even his life in service to the very people he was previously trying to kill, and all fueled by his **devotion to**

**God.** In short, **Paul was all in.** He traveled much of the known world at the time spreading the good news about the Lord Jesus, from town to town, from riverside gatherings to grand theaters. He was welcomed, debated, questioned, accused, beaten, shipwrecked, poisoned, and imprisoned but nothing swayed him from **service to God in the Calling he was given.** That calling ultimately was **to be a Pastor.** You see that devotion to God was worked out most sincerely in his constant **care, concern, tears, prayers and sacrifice** for the people of God. It was the driving force behind all of his letters, even to churches that he didn't plant like Rome and Colossae. God placed a **passion** in him, and a **vision** for leading these churches, not out of selfish ambition, but **genuine love.** So, in studying this passage, I've put together a list of duties that I think apply to every Pastor. Today, as we (will be meeting/have just met) to cast our vote to determine if Chris Jones will be our Lead Pastor, I really feel like God has put this message on my heart to share with you.

### **Duties of a Pastor**

- 1. A pastor loves his church**
- 2. A pastor watches over his church**
- 3. A pastor is thankful for his Church**
- 4. A pastor praises God for his church**
- 5. A pastor intercedes for his church**
- 6. A pastor believes for his church**
- 7. A pastor teaches his church**
- 8. A pastor always points towards Jesus**

Before Paul shares his prayer, we should take a moment and acknowledge how much **he loves this church,** and even though he has left the church in the hands of other capable pastors, his love and concern for them has never wavered, and he continues to **watch over them.** Paul planted this church in Ephesus during his 2nd missionary journey, and left Priscilla and Aquila to lead it. While under their leadership, a gifted preacher named Apollos came to town, and these leaders instructed him in **sound doctrine,** and then **sent him out** on his way where he eventually went on to **teach at Corinth.** Paul returned to Ephesus again on his 3rd missionary journey and ended up spending more than 2 years **teaching** there in a lecture hall, through which it was said that **"the whole province of Asia"** heard the word of the Lord. Then, after completing his 3rd Missionary Journey, as he headed back to Jerusalem, where he would be falsely accused, imprisoned and eventually taken to Rome, he **met with the leaders of the Ephesian church** in Miletus. **In tears** because he thought he would never see them again, he **encouraged and warned the leaders to take good care of** this church **he loved so much.**

### **Acts 20:28-38 (NIV)**

**Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.**

**"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "**

**When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.**

You can see Paul's heart for his church in this passage, but he also acknowledges that it is the Holy Spirit alone that determines the church's leaders, and who He calls to lead them. So, when Paul hears about the **Faith and Love** in the Ephesian church, a church that he has been separated from for about 4-6 years, he is understandably grateful to God for caring for them so much in his absence! So Paul opens his prayer now by **giving thanks for his church**. He is grateful to God, **praises God**, and **intercedes with God on behalf of his church**.

As Pastor Chris pointed out last week, the Greek word that we translate as "**Faith**" carries far more meaning than **just belief**, it also refers to **actions that are based on that belief**. We discussed Faith extensively in our previous study in James, from which we learned that Faith, **when separated from the works** that prove that belief is genuine, **is Dead**.

In one of his letters to the Corinthian church, Paul states that he **daily faces pressure** from his **deep concern for all of the churches he plants**. In his letter to the church at Colossae, he describes as a **great agony his concern** for their **deep love, unity, and grounding in the truth** of the gospel. Whereas to the Corinthian church his concern was a fear of **quarrels, jealousy, anger, factions, gossip, arrogance and disorder**. These are not petty concerns, but show **the heart of a Pastor** whose concern isn't **solely in the growth of knowledge in the church**, but in how **that knowledge is applied in behavior to others: in Love and Unity**.

Paul goes on then to make his intercessory petitions to God on behalf of the church, and in a very Jewish maneuver, each one expands on the previous one so it's not just a list of multiple things he is praying for, but rather further detail, building on each of them. He prays first for a **Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation**, so *that* they **may know God better**. This is important because knowledge of God does not come from learning or experience alone. To know him better, God **must Reveal himself to us**, and this **Special Revelation** can only be understood through **Wisdom**.

Why is that? The Bible talks about revelation in two specific ways, which the Church throughout time has referred to as General Revelation and Special Revelation. General Revelation refers to the information about God that He has made known to all people. Romans chapter one describes it this way.

#### **Romans 1:20 (NIV)**

**For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.**

Here in this passage, Paul prays that God would grant them Wisdom and Revelation. He's still talking about ways in which they can know Him better, by expanding on the request for Wisdom and Revelation.

#### **Ephesians 1:18-19a (NIV)**

**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, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.**

He then asks that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened, that's *Special Revelation*, revealing to them:

1. They hope to which they have been called
2. Riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people
3. His incomparably great power for us who believe

Paul then **teaches them**, lovingly explaining to them what this power is, and what it means for them, all the while **pointing them towards Christ**. For those of us playing along at home, this same power and mighty strength is available to us, but just like Jesus, this power is not intended to be wielded in dominion, but in self sacrifice and service. Christ was Paul's model, and as he wrote to the Philippian church

### **Philippians 2:3-11 (NIV)**

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:**

**Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!**

**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

For all the things that make up the **Heart of a Pastor**, there is one thing that does not, and that is **Selfish Ambition**. The role of a pastor is not one of **Power, or Prestige, or Privilege**. It's a position of **Service and Sacrifice**. Paul always pointed back to Christ. **His power was given to us, but so was his example**. An example that a pastor then models back to the church. Which is why he wrote this to the Corinthian church:

### **1 Corinthians 11:1 (MEV)**

**Follow me as I follow Christ.**

So, as one of your Deacons at His Place, and since October is Pastor Appreciation Month, I wanted to bring to you this beautiful picture of the **Heart of a Pastor**, let us all endeavor to pray for our pastors. Pray that as they give selflessly of themselves for us, that our **Faithful God** will **supply for their needs, strengthen their resolve, give them wisdom, bless the hearts that break inside of them** for the calling He has given them to **serve His people**.

<closing prayer>