

引言 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is power. What you know should affect how you act. A story was told about flight delays at an airport due to bad weather. We had lots of that the past few days. Counter agents were busy helping passengers rebook their trips. Suddenly a man stomped to the front. “I must get on this plane,” he said, “Or I’ll be late for my meeting!” The airline personnel tried to calm the man. “Sir, I’d be glad to help you as much as we can. However, I have to serve the people in line first.” The person then raised his voice to make sure that everyone hear him: “Don’t you know who I am?” The agent grabbed the microphone and announced: “May I have your attention please. There’s a gentleman at Gate 13 who forgets who he is. Please come forward if you can help identify him.” It is important to know who we are. In this passage, Paul tells us that it is even more important to know who God is. He saves us with abundant grace. Last week we mentioned that believers are selected by the Father, saved by the Son and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Paul encourages the Ephesian believers after he elaborates those truths. He says in 1:15-16 – **15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.** Their salvation is evident by two things. They had a vertical relationship with the Lord. They also showed their horizontal relationship with each other. Paul thanked God for them. Then he told them that he would continue to pray for them so that they would grow in three areas. The Chinese Union Bible accurately uses three “know” to describe them. Paul’s prayer is for us too. Salvation is about building an eternal relationship with God. We know certain truths about God when we received Jesus. We must keep growing in our knowledge of God until we see Him.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 親自地認識父神 Know the Father in-Person

First, Paul prays that the Ephesians believer will know the Father in-person. Verse 17 reads: **That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.** The “Spirit” here can be understood as our human spirit or the Holy Spirit. If Paul is talking about our spirit, he is praying that God will enable our mind to know God more. But if Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit, his focus is the source of wisdom and revelation. Both interpretations are not mutually-exclusive. After all, the Holy Spirit communicates with our spirit and conveys God’s truths to us. The Bible tells us that God is the ultimate origin of all wisdom. For example, Proverbs 2:6 reads: **For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.** Such wisdom may not help you score 100 in your next exam or earn big money. But it will help you know God in-person. Then you can discern His specific will for you. For example, what to study or what career to pursue. Besides wisdom, Paul also prays for God’s revelation. We can never know God if He does not reveal Himself to us. Believers can know

God through the Bible not because they are more intelligent. It is because the Holy Spirit is our best teacher. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:12 – **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** God will disclose the things He wants us to know. The Bible is similar to a user manual of a product. The designer writes down instructions to help customers use the item the ways it intends to be. Similarly, we can ask the Author of the Bible for help to understand its content. God sends us the Holy Spirit as a Helper to lead us into the truth. The Heavenly Father wants us to know Him. There are major differences between knowing about God and knowing Him in-person. Granted, we can gather some information about God from the Bible. For example, we know that God is full of love, grace and mercy. We also know that He is all knowing, all-powerful and all-present. Moreover, we can know His works such as creation and salvation. However, God does not train us to be Bible scholars but His children and disciples of Jesus. God is not a concept for us to study. He is a living Lord who wants to build a closer relationship with us. He wants us to experience Him in life. For instance, God will give us peace when we are in hardship and He will give us strength when we are weak. Do you witness that when a doctor tells you that you have a severe illness? Do you feel God's presence when you have fear or doubt? Sometimes we turn our Bible study meetings into a history lesson or an archeology lecture. It was as if God were an ancient figure or even a dinosaur covered in dirt. Other times we read the Bible like beholding a collection of baseball cards. We analyze what God can do and His past record. Brothers and sisters: the God in the Bible is the same God who lives in you today. He sits up high in heaven. But He also walks with you every day. Every time we finish reading a Bible text, we need to ask how God's truth can change our lives. In your small group, do not just share your understanding of certain passage. Be eager to share how you meet God in daily life.

2. 認識父神的心意 Know the Father's Purpose

Paul prays for the Ephesians that they may know the Father in-person. Secondly, he also prays that they will know the Father's purpose in saving them. Look at verse 18: **Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.** Paul hopes that the eyes of their hearts be lit up. Imagine it like flipping a light switch to help us see better in the dark. God transferred us from the dark domain to His Kingdom of Light when He saved us. We were made into children of light as a result. However, personal sins, fallenness of the world or a busy life can obscure us from the Father's purpose. We need God's constant reminder about why He saved us. Paul mentions two things we must be sure of. First is the hope to which God has called us. Hope is the expectation of something yet to appear. Economists hope that the stock market will have significant growth this year. Single people hope to meet the future spouse of their dream. We hope for the best outcomes, even though the future is an unknown. In comparison, the word "hope" in the Bible refers to something that will definitely take place. For example, the Old Testament people hoped for the arrival of the Messiah. Jesus Christ came into the world at the right time. There is no "perhaps" or "it depends" in God. All that He promises us will come true. Jesus will surely return. There will be an ultimate judgment for sin. He will usher all His believers into heaven. Eternity is the

hope that Jesus has called us for. The question is: Is that your hope too? Christians often want the best of both worlds. They want to be with God forever. But at the same time, they love what this world can offer. We need God's help to light up our spiritual eyes, so that we can see the present with an eternal perspective. We can enjoy God's blessings without being enslaved by them. We thank God for our success. We take it lightly when we have setbacks. We mourn at the brokenness of the world but we should not be surprised by it. Our hope is in God. Besides fixing our eyes on the future hope, Paul also wants us to know God's glorious inheritance in the saints. He is not talking our inheritance, namely future blessings in heaven. Rather, we as God's children will become God's glorious inheritance. We are saved not because of who we are and what we do. It is all because of who Jesus is and what He did for us. God restored our honorable title as His children. In plain language, God is proud of us. It is like some parents watching their kids play sports. A dad talks to the guy sitting beside: "Hey man, did you see that? He's my boy!" We are like trophies in God's hall of fame. We may never accomplish anything big for God's Kingdom like Moses and David did, or become a famous Christian like Hudson Taylor or Billy Graham. Regardless, God is asking us to be faithful to His calling. You may be doing a mundane job and working for a monthly paycheck. You may be a stay-home mom taking care of housework and serving your husband and kids. You may be a retiree with more free time to serve God. No matter what it is, do it for the glory of God. We want to make God proud.

3. 認識父神的能力 Know the Father's Power

We must know the Father in-person and know His purpose. Thirdly, we must also know His power. Paul says in verses 19-20: **19 And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.** The Father used His power to raise Jesus from the dead and to place Jesus on the right side of the His throne. God's power is way beyond our imagination. He used the same power to create and to sustain the universe. Not only that. God also exerts the same power in us. Look down to Ephesians 2:5-6 – **5 Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.** The Father raises us from a dead soul together with Christ. He gives us a new life as a result. God then elevates us together with Christ into heaven. We still live in the physical world when God saves us. However, He gives us a new status as citizens of His Kingdom. Besides, God's power goes with His authority. Power has to do with one's ability, but authority is an expression of superiority. Any employee can talk on the phone and sign a document. But when a CEO makes a call, his subordinates have to carry out the commands. When he signs a contract, a million-dollar business deal becomes valid. Likewise, God causes all things to happen and He subdues the whole universe. Paul describes two places where God manifests His authority. Verse 21 reads: **Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** God's power transcends space and time. His authority exceeds all political and military power, both now and forever. Every king, president or judge derives power from God. Today, we submit to an earthly

government because we surrender to God. Then Paul narrows down the scope of God's authority to one place in verse 22: **And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.** The Father assigns Jesus to be the head of the church. The "head" of a company is its director. He manages resources and manpower to achieve certain goals. He oversees various departments to ensure a smooth coordination. Jesus performs similar functions in the church. He equips people with spiritual gifts and assigns them various roles. God gives them authority to rule in the church. The word "authority" often carries a negative overtone. It causes us to think of corrupted officials who abuse power for their own gain. Jesus shows us a very different picture of authority. He was a servant-leader. Jesus would not hesitate to correct the disciples when they were ignorant. But He also guided them with love and gentleness. He humbled Himself and died for us all. That is the kind of leadership we should model after. God gives church coworkers the authority to rule. We listen to them when their instructions are consistent with the Bible. We trust them because we trust God. The Father is our ultimate power source. As a believer, do you feel God's power at work in you? Do you rely on God's power or your own strength to live as a Christian? Can you overcome temptations or are you beaten up every time Satan entices you? Do you walk with God or do you just go with the flow? Our life should be different when we submit to God's power. Paul gives us many examples in the second half of the book. God's power will improve our speech, attitudes, conducts, and relationship with our spouse, children and employer. We can live the way God intends us to be when we obey Him.

結論 CONCLUSION

Paul encourages us to grow in our knowledge of God. We must know the Father in-person, know His purpose in saving us and come to know His power. The more we know Him, the more we will be surprised by His grace. A story was told about a man who tried very hard to save enough money for a cruise trip. Finally, he was able to go on his dream vacation. It was very relaxing to sit on the deck to enjoy the ocean view, the sunshine and fresh air. However, he envied other passengers whenever it came to meal time. Many people dressed up in nice clothes and dined on delicacies from around the world. The money he had left was only sufficient to buy some peanut butter and crackers to carry on board. He ate the same food three times every day. A custodian came in to clean his cabin on the last day of his trip. He was surprised to notice what the man had been eating. He then said: "Sir, I'm sorry that you are not feeling well and you have to restrict your diet. Too bad that you cannot enjoy all those fancy food for free!" He did not know what he had missed all along! I hope that is not a description of your relationship with God. He does not want us to barely get on the boat. He wants us to fully enjoy His abundant grace every day. We must grow in our knowledge of Him until the day we see Him in glory.

引言 INTRODUCTION

知識就是力量。你所知道的事應該影響你的行為。話說有一個飛機場因為天氣的緣故導致航班延誤。過去幾天肯定有很多那樣的情況。櫃檯工作人員忙碌地為乘客重新安排行程。忽然，一個人氣沖沖地來到前面。他說：「我必須登上這班飛機，否則我會錯過重要的會議！」航空公司的工作人員試圖安撫那位男士。「先生，我們很樂意盡力幫助你。不過，我們要先服務排在你前面的人。」那人提高了聲音，讓所有人都聽到他講話：「你不知道我是誰嗎？」服務員拿起麥克風廣播：「請注意。13號門有一位男士忘記自己是誰。如果你有辦法辨別他的身份，請你到前面來。」了解我們是誰很重要。在這段經文中，保羅告訴我們，認識神更加重要。祂以豐盛的恩典拯救我們。上週我們提到信徒是蒙聖父揀選、被聖子拯救、受聖靈確認。保羅講完這些真理後鼓勵以弗所信徒。他在 1:15-16 說：**15 因此，我既聽見你們信從主耶穌，親愛眾聖徒，16 就為你們不住地感謝神。禱告的時候，常提到你們。**他們的救恩可以透過兩件事來證明。他們與主有垂直的關係。他們彼此之間也有橫向的關係。保羅為他們感謝神。然後他說他會繼續為他們禱告，使他們在三方面成長。和合本聖經準確地用了三個「知道」來形容。保羅的禱告也應該是我們的禱告。救恩是與神建立永恆的關係。當我們接受耶穌時，我們就知道有關神的某些真理。我們必須不斷增長對神的認識，直到見祂面的時候。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 親自地認識父神 Know the Father in-Person

首先，保羅祈求以弗所的信徒能親自地認識父神。第 17 節說：**求我們主耶穌基督的神，榮耀的父，將那賜人智慧和啟示的靈賞給你們，使你們真知道他。**這裡的「靈」可以指人的靈或聖靈。如果保羅說的是我們的靈，他是在祈求神使加添我們能力更認識神。但如果保羅談到的是聖靈，他的焦點就是智慧和啟示的源頭。兩種解釋並不互相衝突。畢竟，聖靈與我們的靈溝通，向我們傳達神的真理。聖經告訴我們，神是一切智慧的最終來源。例如，箴言 2:6 說：**因為，耶和華賜人智慧；知識和聰明都由他口而出。**這種智慧可能不會幫助你下次考試拿 100 分或賺大錢。但它會幫助你認識神。然後你就能分辨出祂對你的獨特旨意。例如，神要你學習什麼科目或從事什麼職業。除了智慧之外，保羅也祈求神的啟示。如果神不向我們啟示祂自己，我們就永遠無法認識祂。信徒

可以透過聖經認識神，不是因為他們比較聰明，乃是因為聖靈是我們最好的老師。保羅在哥林多前書 2:12 說：**我們所領受的，並不是世上的靈，乃是從神來的靈，叫我們能知道神開恩賜給我們的事。**神會顯明祂要我們知道的事情。聖經好像產品的使用手冊。設計師寫下說明來幫助用戶正確地使用產品。同樣，我們可以尋求神的幫助來理解聖經的內容。神差遣聖靈作為老師引導我們進入真理。天父希望我們認識祂。知道關於神的事和親自認識神之間有很大的差異。我們可以從聖經中收集到一些關於神的信息。例如，我們知道神充滿了慈愛、恩典和憐憫。我們也知道祂是全知、全能、無所不在的。而且，我們還可以認識祂的創造、拯救等工作。然而，神不是要訓練我們成為聖經學者，而是要培養我們成為祂的孩子和耶穌的門徒。神不是一個讓我們研究的課題。祂是一位永活的主，渴望與我們建立更緊密的關係。祂希望我們在生活中經歷祂。例如，當我們遇到困難時，神會賜給我們平安；當我們軟弱時，神會加添我們力量。當醫生告訴你得了重病時，你是否能體會到祂的平安？當你感到恐懼或疑惑時，你是否能感受到神的同在？有時候我們把聖經學習變成歷史課或考古學的講座，彷彿神是個古代的人物，甚至是剛出土的恐龍。有時我們讀聖經就像觀賞球員的明星卡，我們分析神能做什麼以及祂過去的成績。弟兄姐妹們：聖經裡的神就是今天活在你生命中的神。祂高坐在天上，但是祂也每天與你同行。每次看完聖經，我們都需要問神的真理如何改變我們的生活。在你的小組聚會中，不要只是分享你對某些經文的看法，希望你也踴躍地分享你如何在日常生活中經歷神。

2. 認識父神的心意 Know the Father's Purpose

保羅為以弗所信徒禱告，使他們能親自地認識父神。其次，他也祈求他們認識父神拯救他們的心意。請看第 18 節：**並且照明你們心中的眼睛，使你們知道祂的恩召有何等指望，祂在聖徒中得的基業有何等豐盛的榮耀。**保羅希望他們心靈的眼睛被照亮。這就像打開電燈開關，使我們在黑暗中看得更清楚。當神拯救我們時，祂把我們從黑暗的權勢帶進祂光明的國度。結果我們成為了光明的子女。然而，個人的罪、世界的墮落或忙碌的生活都會使我們看不清父神的旨意。我們需要神不斷提醒我們祂為何拯救我們。保羅提到兩件事我們必須確定。首先是神呼召我們的盼望。盼望是期待尚未發生的事情。經濟學家盼望今年股市將大幅增長。單身人士盼望能遇到夢中情人。我們預期美好的結果，雖然未來充滿未知。相比之下，聖經中「盼望」這個字是指肯定會發生的事情。例如，舊約時代的人盼望彌賽亞的來臨。耶穌基督就在準確的時間來到世界。神的心中沒有「也許」或「看情況而定」。祂向我們所應許的一切都會實現。耶穌一定會再來，祂要審判世界。主要帶領所有信徒進入天堂。永恆是耶穌呼召我們的盼望。問題是：這也是你的盼望嗎？基督徒常常想要腳踏兩條船。他

們希望永遠與神同在。但同時，他們戀慕這個世界所能提供的一切。我們需要神來照亮我們屬靈的眼睛，使我們能以永恆的眼光來看今生。我們可以享受神的祝福而不被它們束縛。我們為自己的成就感謝神。當我們遇到挫折時，我們可以冷靜地面對。我們為世界的破碎而難過，但我們不應該為此感到驚訝。我們的盼望是在於神。除了盼望未來之外，保羅也希望我們認識神在聖徒身上所擁有的榮耀基業。他指的不是我們將來的基業，也就是天堂的祝福。保羅的意思是，我們是神的兒女，我們將會成為神榮耀的基業。我們得救不是因為我們是誰或是我們做了什麼。一切都是因為耶穌的身份以及祂為我們所做的一切。神恢復了我們作為祂兒女的榮耀頭銜。用簡單的話來說，神為我們感到驕傲。這就像有些父母看他們的孩子打球一樣。一個父親對坐在旁邊的人說：「老兄，你看到嗎？他是我的兒子！」我們就像神的名人堂裡面的獎座。我們不一定像摩西和大衛那樣為神成就什麼偉大的事情，我們也可能不會像戴德生或葛培理那樣成為有名的基督徒。無論如何，神要求我們忠於祂的呼召。你可能做一份平凡的工作，為了賺取每月的薪水。妳可能是全職的媽媽，負責做家務並服事丈夫和孩子。你可能是一位退休人仕，有很多的閒時間來事奉神。不管你在做什麼，重點是要為神的榮耀而做。讓我們使神感到驕傲。

3. 認識父神的能力 Know the Father's Power

我們必須親自認識父神並認識祂的心意。第三，我們還必須認識父神的能力。保羅在 19-20 節說：19 並知道他向我們這信的人所顯的能力是何等浩大，20 就是照他在基督身上所運行的大能大力，使他從死裏復活，叫他在天上坐在自己的右邊。父神以祂的能力使耶穌從死裡復活，並將耶穌放在祂寶座的右邊。神的能力遠超過我們的想像。祂運用同樣的能力來創造和維持宇宙。神也在我們身上發揮同樣的能力。請看以弗所書 2:5-6 – 5 當我們死在過犯中的時候，便叫我們與基督一同活過來。你們得救是本乎恩。6 他又叫我們與基督耶穌一同復活，一同坐在天上。父神使我們在靈魂的死亡中與基督一同復活。結果，祂賜給我們新的生命。然後父神也把我們與基督一起提升到天堂。當神拯救我們時，我們仍然生活在物質世界。然而，祂賜給我們新的身份，成為天國的公民。此外，神的權柄伴隨著祂的能力。能力是關乎一個人的本領，但權柄是牽涉他的地位。任何員工都可以打電話並簽署文件。但當一個總裁打一通電話時，他的下屬就必須執行命令。當他簽訂合約時，一宗商業交易就生效了。同樣，神讓一切事情發生，祂也統管整個宇宙。保羅描述神在兩個地方彰顯祂的權柄。第 21 節說：遠超過一切執政的、掌權的、有能的、主治的，和一切有名的；不但是今世的，連來世的也都超過了。神的能力超越空間和時間。祂的權柄也高過一切政治和軍事力量，無論是現在或永遠。任何君王、總統或法官都是從神那裡獲得權力。今天，我們服從地上的政府，因為我們順服於神。然後

保羅在第 22 節將神的權柄範圍縮小到一個地方：又將萬有服在他的腳下，使祂為教會作萬有之首。天父委派耶穌成為教會的元首。一家公司的「元首」就是董事長。他調動資源和人力來達成某些目標。他負責監督各部門以確保協調順利。耶穌在教會中履行類似的職責。祂賜給人屬靈恩賜，並分配他們不同的角色。神賦予他們在教會中管理的權柄。「權柄」這個字常常帶有負面色彩。它讓我們想到濫用權力謀取個人利益的腐敗官員。耶穌向我們展示出一幅截然不同權柄的畫面。祂是一位僕人般的領袖。當門徒無知時，耶穌會毫不猶豫地糾正他們。但祂也以愛和溫柔引導他們。祂謙卑自己，為我們眾人而死。這才是我們該效法的領導榜樣。神賦予教會同工管理的權柄。當他們的指示與聖經一致時，我們就必須聽從他們。我們信任他們，因為我們相信神。天父是我們最終能力的泉源。作為信徒，你感受到神的大能在你身上運行嗎？你是依靠神的能力還是依靠自己做基督徒？你能勝過試探嗎？還是每次撒但的試探來臨時你就被打倒？你是與神同行還是隨波逐流？當我們順服神的能力時，我們的生活應該有所不同。保羅在以弗所書的後半部份給了我們很多例子。神的能力會改善我們的言語、態度、行為以及與配偶、孩子和雇主的關係。當我們服從神之時，我們就能按照神的心意過生活。

結論 CONCLUSION

保羅鼓勵我們增加對神的認識。我們必須親自地認識父神，認識祂拯救我們的心意，並認識祂的大能。我們越認識祂，就越會對祂的恩典感到驚訝。話說有一個人努力存錢想要坐遊輪旅行。好不容易他終於可以去他的夢想假期了。他坐在甲板上享受海景、陽光和海風覺得非常愉快。但每當到了吃飯時候，他就很羨慕其他乘客。許多人盛裝打扮，品嚐來自世界各地的美食。他剩下的錢只夠買一些花生醬和餅乾帶到船上。他每天三餐吃同樣的食物。在旅途的最後一天，一名服務員來打掃他的房間。他很驚訝地注意到那位乘客吃的食物。然後他說：「先生，很抱歉你身體不舒服，必須限制飲食。可惜你不能免費享用那麼多美食！」他才明白自己錯過了多少好東西！我希望這不是你與神的關係的描述。祂不希望我們只是僅僅上了船，祂希望我們每天都能充分享受祂豐盛的恩典。我們必須增加對神的認識，直到我們在榮耀裡見祂面的那一天。