Menno Mennonite Church | Ephesus and Menno | Emily Toews
November 22, 2026 | Ephesians 1:15-23

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Here this blessing from Paul for the Church in Ephesus:
Ephesians 1:15-23
15 Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, this is the reason that 16 I don't stop giving thanks to God for you when I remember you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call, what is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers, 19 and what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers. This power is conferred by the energy of God's powerful strength. 20 God's power was at work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and sat him at God's right side in the heavens, 21 far above every ruler and authority and power and angelic power, any power that might be named not only now but in the future. 22 God put everything under Christ's feet and made him head of everything in the church, 23 which is his body. His body, the church, is the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way.

After Paul explains that he continues to give thanks to God when he remembers the Ephesian Church – because of their faith in Jesus AS WELL AS their love for ALL God's people, he begins his blessing.

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The gift of a spirit of wisdom and revelation originates with God. We do not acquire the spirit of wisdom and revelation because of our status, intelligence, education or even accumulated knowledge. Nor is it only reserved for kings, prophets and the messiah – as it was in the times of the Old Testament. But Paul prays that **all** believers – ordinary church folks – seniors, middle aged, young adults and kids – all would receive it as a gift from God.

But what is the spirit of wisdom and revelation? Paul doesn't separate them in this blessing; they are closely connected. Wisdom helps us recognize and understand what God is revealing. It is not a passive gift; this spirit of wisdom helps us to discern and understand the way that God is being revealed.

However, we may think of it, this wisdom is NOT a private gift. It is a gift for the congregation and grows within the body through seeking the wisdom and revelation of God together. We <u>receive</u> the gift of the spirit of wisdom and revelation <u>through using</u> the gift.

What would it look like to practice the gift of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in our congregation?

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call, what is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers, 19a and what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers.

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Paul's prayer, then, is for the church to receive enough clarity and far-sight to make choices and decisions on greater and lesser things based on knowledge, conviction, faith, hope, and trust, not intellect or desire alone. This too is wisdom.
We can know facts about God without recognizing God's activity in our lives. We can see the situations around us without seeing them through the perspective of faithfulness. We can know the stories of Scripture without allowing them to reshape how we understand ourselves in this place and in this time.

Again, this is a prayer for a community – a body of Christ. Paul prays that together the community of believers would see beyond what is immediately visible and discern together to understand the deeper reality of God's work in the world and their place within that work.

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We are called to live as disciples of Christ in this world. Trusting and having hope in God's calling gives us tools to fully engage in the work God has placed before us now.

How do we persevere – remembering our calling – when things get tough? What IS our calling? Can we live into this even when we – collectively – doubt the work that God is doing in our midst and through us in the world? Can we trust God's dream of the future for Menno – and will this enable us to fully engage in the work that God has placed before us now?

Together with this hope, Paul prays that the church in Ephesus will see and know and understand God's glorious inheritance. Our glorious inheritance isn't money or wealth, although it is described as glorious wealth. This points to the extraordinary value of this inheritance that God has promised. The important point is not simply receiving information about the inheritance that awaits us. It is developing the confidence to live now in light of what God has promised.

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If this is the case, then how does it change the way that we, Menno, interact with the world. How will our thinking change if we believe together that Christ's power is greater than anything the world can throw at us?

Paul concludes this prayer of blessing with a reminder to the church that Christ is the head of the church. He says, *22 God put everything under Christ's feet and made him head of everything in the church, 23 which is his body. His body, the church (church with a capitol C and Menno), is the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way.*

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But this description of the church as Christ's fullness is both remarkable and challenging. The church receives Christ's fullness and is continually being filled by Christ. At the same time, the church participates in carrying this full presence of Christ into the world, thus being both the recipient and instrument of God's presence.

Knowing we are Christ's and Christ is ours. Knowing that OUR Menno is Christ's body, how does that affect what we think is Menno's calling, inheritance and power? God's Resurrection power is something to celebrate – yes, but it is also something that must empower Menno to live and act differently.

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God's power is Christ's victory over the world. This victory gives our body a new purpose – to engage the world and confront the powers that continue to resist God's purposes of healing, reconciliation and resurrection.

We CAN do more than just endure. Menno, as Christ's body is called to participate in God's work in the world. That means that our body must get some exercise and 'get out of the house' as it were and into the fresh air. Outside our walls is where we, as Menno, the body of Christ, work for peace, serve our neighbours, stand up to injustice and proclaim the power and love of the God of resurrection over all that makes for death.

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Menno Mennonite Church | Ephesus and Menno | Emily Toews
November 22, 2026 | Ephesians 1:15-23

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Menno Mennonite Church | Ephesus and Menno | Emily Toews
November 22, 2026 | Ephesians 1:15-23

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