

Title: The Transforming Power of Christ

Passage: Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction:

Paul's great prayers in Ephesians

- Ephesians 1:18-23 (prayer of enlightenment)
- Ephesians 3:14-21 (prayer of empowerment)

Prayer of Enlightenment

Ephesians 1:16-21

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 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, 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, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 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.

- Preceding passage, reviewed God's blessings (Ch 1:3-14)
 - chosen to be holy, blameless, loved, adopted as his children, redemption of our sins, riches of his grace, inheritance to come, Holy Spirit
- Why? To the praise of His glory!

Passage: Ephesians 3:14-21 (Prayer of Empowerment)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Question: How would you measure God's love for you?

Answer: Through the cross

Ephesians 3:18-19

may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Breadth: covers all the nations
- Length: lasts from eternity to eternity
- Height: raised us to the heavens
- Depth: covers any charge by hell

A right understanding of who God is our motivation to love God

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us.

Hymn: “When I survey the wondrous cross”

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Context:

- Chapters 4-6 outline the life that God has called us to live

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

- But before proceeding with such important topics, key to have one's theology correct (Chapters 1-3a) and involve prayer (Chapter 3b).

Overview:

- I. Why Paul prays
- II. To whom Paul prays
- III. What Paul prays

I. WHY PAUL PRAYS

Ephesians 3:14

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

Ephesians 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles

- What's the reason? See Chapter 2

Ephesians 2:4-10

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- God's purpose for the whole body (church)

Ephesians 2:21-22

in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

II. TO WHOM PAUL PRAYS

Ephesians 3:14

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father

- “Father” = *abba* (Daddy)

Matthew 6:9

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Galatians 4:6

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Romans 8:15

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

God redeems the term “father” out of his unconditional love for us

Luke 15:11-31 (Parable of Prodigal Son)

Luke 15:21-24 (picture of God’s unconditional love)

And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

- God loves us perfectly.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 John 4:8

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Ephesians 3:15

from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

- Key Point: God is not the father of all (God is the creator of all)
 - Father to only those who have trusted and placed their faith in Christ, a gift from God to those He has sovereignly chosen to be His.

John 1:12-13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 8:39-44 (many have the devil as their father)

They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did.”

They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

III. WHAT PAUL PRAYS

“The riches of His glory”

Ephesians 3:16

that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

- Praying for the divine expression of the power of God in His people

Romans 1:20

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

A. “Grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being”

- Strengthened with power = to be made mighty with power

Question: What kind of power?

Ephesians 1:19-21 (Paul previously explained)

and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 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.

“through His Spirit”

Ephesians 1:13-14

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

“In your inner being”

- where this power exists: within you

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Why?

Ephesians 3:17 (purpose)

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- “dwell” = permanent residence

John 14:23

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

How?

“Through faith”

- faith comes from God

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- necessary to continuously study God's Word to have faith

Matthew 4:4

But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Hymns (beloved by Billy Graham)

To God Be the Glory

All Hail the Power Jesus Name.

I'd Rather Have Jesus

Because He Lives