

Ephesians 3:14-21 PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH!

1/6/17 Sat Morn Prayer – Phil Twente

SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me, Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

Context/Biblical Background – At the end of chapter two, Paul is sharing a glorious truth. That is that Jesus Christ has broken down the walls that once divided men into Jews and Gentiles. And that He has made us all one in Christ. We as Gentiles can share in the wonders of God's grace through Jesus Christ. We are brought in and made partakers of the covenant and of the promises. This passage is the second of two prayers recorded in Ephesians, the first one being Eph_1:15-23. In the first prayer, **the emphasis is on enlightenment**; but in this prayer, the **emphasis is on enablement**. It is not so much a matter of knowing as being — laying our hands on what God has for us and by faith making it a vital part of our lives. Paul is saying, “I want you to get your hands on your wealth, realize how vast it is, and start to use it.”

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH – Eph. 3:14-21

Introduction to the prayer. [14-15] *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

- **For this reason:** The basis of Paul's prayer was his knowledge of God's purpose. This means he confidently prayed according to God's will. We cannot pray effectively if we do not have insight into God's purpose and will.
- **I bow my knees:** Paul prayed in the posture of bowing his knees. This position of utmost humility was in contrast to the more normal posture of prayer in that culture, to pray standing with hands raised up.
- **To the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:** Paul directed his prayer to the **Father**, who is presented as the “planner” among the members of the Trinity. Prayer is usually directed to **the Father**, through the Son, by the empowering and direction of the Holy Spirit.
- **From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named:** In remembering that all God's family is called after His name, Paul showed that his mind was rather taken with this idea of the essential unity of the Body of Christ. God is Father of both Jew and Gentile.

Paul prays again for the Ephesians. [16-19] *That He would grant you, according to (and out of) the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

- **To be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man:** Paul asked that they would **be strengthened with might**, and that the strength would be **according to the riches of His glory** (a most generous measure). He also prayed that the strength would come **through the Holy Spirit** and that it would be put into their **inner man**.
- There is an **inner man** just as real as our physical body. We all understand the importance of strength in our physical body, but many are exceedingly weak in the **inner man**.
- **According to the riches of His glory:** God acts up to the dignity of His infinite perfections; He gives *according* to the *riches* of His *glory*.”
- **That Christ may dwell (to live in) in your hearts through (your) faith:** Paul asked that Jesus would live in these believers, even as Jesus promised in Joh 14:23 : *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.*
- **Being rooted and grounded in love:** Paul asked that all this would take place as they were **rooted and grounded in love**. The meaning seems to be that they should be rooted (like a living tree) and grounded (like a building, fully settled) in their love for one another, more than being rooted and grounded in their love for God and the knowledge of that love.
- **May be able to comprehend with all the saints:** Paul asked that they might be able to understand together, in community every dimension of the love of Jesus. Paul wanted them to know it by experience and not just in words.
- **What is the width and length and depth and height:** This means that the love of Jesus has *dimensions* and that it can be *measured*.
- The love of Jesus has **width**. You can see how wide a river is by how much it covers over; It has **length**. When considering the length of God's love, ask yourself “When did the love of God start towards me? How long will it continue?” (Jer 31:3); It has **depth**. Php 2:7-8 tell us how deep the love of Jesus goes; It has **height**. To see the height of God's love, ask yourself, “How high does it lift me?” - to heavenly places where I am seated with Christ.
- Can we really **comprehend** the **width and length and depth and height** of God's love? To come to any understanding of the dimensions of God's love, **we must come to the cross**. The cross pointed in four ways, essentially in every direction, because . . .
- God's love is wide enough to include every person; long enough to last through all eternity; deep enough to reach the

worst sinner; high enough to take us to heaven.

- **To know the love of Christ:** Paul wrote of something we can *know*. This isn't speculation, guesswork, emotions, or feelings. This is something to **know**.
- **That you may be filled with all the fullness of God:** Paul wanted Christians to experience life in Jesus Christ, the fullness of God (Col 2:9), and to be filled to their capacity with Jesus, even as God is filled to His own capacity with His own character and attributes.
- "Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this may be the greatest. To be FILLED with God is a great thing; to be filled with the FULLNESS of God is still greater; but to be filled with ALL the fullness of God utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding." (Clarke)

A glorious doxology. [20-21] Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- **Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think:** As Paul came to this great height (what can there be higher than the *fullness of God*?), it is logical to ask how this can ever be. How can something so far above us ever become reality? It can only happen because God is able to do far beyond what **we ask or think**.
- Who **is able to** bring such things to pass? Only God can do this. He can do far beyond our ability to think or ask.
- God is able to do above all that we ask or think. The *we* includes Paul and the other apostles - and they certainly knew that Jesus could do great things.
- You can ask for every good thing you have ever experienced - God can do **above** that.
- You can think of or imagine things beyond your experience - God can do **above** that.
- You can imagine good things that are beyond your ability to name - God can do **above** that.
- **According to the power that works in us:** God is able to do this in our life now, not beginning with heaven. This power . . . works in us now.
- **To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus:** The only fitting response to this great God is to give Him glory - especially in the church, the company of His redeemed, and that He receive that glory **throughout all ages, world without end** - Amen!

SUMMARY:

- ❖ Both of these prayers, as well as the other prison prayers (Phi 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12), deal with the spiritual condition of the inner man, and not the material needs of the body.
- ❖ That He would grant you, according to and out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,
- ❖ That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;
- ❖ That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height;
- ❖ To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

Our Church, Nationally and locally; Our Nation: Our leaders; Police officers/military. Supreme Ct. Justices: John Roberts, Jr., Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, Ruth Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and the one VACANCY Our President Elect & V.P.: Donald & Melania Trump; Mike & Karen Pence. Proposed Cabinet Members: Sec. of State – Rex Tillerson; Energy – Rick Perry; Interior Sec. – Ryan Zinke; Sec of Defense – James Mattis; Treasury Sec. – Steven Mnuchin; Attorney General – Jeff Sessions; HUD Sec. – Ben Carson; Commerce Sec. – Wilbur Ross; Health & Human Services Sec. – Tom Price; Education Sec. – Betsy DeVos; Trans. Sec. – Elaine Chou; U.N Ambassador – Nikki Haley; Labor – Andrew Puzder; Homeland Security – Gen. John Kelly; EPA – Scott Pruitt; Budget – Mick Mulvaney; SBA – Linda McMahon; Cabinet Level Officials: – Reince Priebus; Nat'l Security Advisor – Michael Flynn; Chief Strategist – Stephen Bannon; White House Council – Donald McGahn; Counselor to President – Kellyanne Conway; Press Sec. Sean Spicer; Agriculture – still open; Vet. Affairs – still open; Trade – still open; Economy – still open; C.I.A. Director – Mike Pompeo ; Ambassador to Israel – David Friedman; Supreme Ct candidate: Raymond Gruender

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Eph 3:15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Eph 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

Eph 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—

Eph 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Eph 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

Eph 3:21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.