

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

Paul’s Prayer for the Inner Man

Ephesians 3:14-21

***Ephesians 3:14-21** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **15** Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **16** That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; **17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; **19** And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. **20** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, **21** Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

Introduction

Prayer is the most powerful weapon for the believer. Prayer is a right of the believer promised from God. Prayer elevates you from the earth and presents you to the throne room of the Creator.

There are about 650 prayers in the bible, not counting the Book of Psalms which is a prayer-book itself. (Lockyer, 1959)

The Purpose (v. 14-15)

***Ephesians 3:14-15** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **15** Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

The bible clearly teaches that we should approach God in fear, awe and reverence. Apparently Paul’s reverence is dropping to his knees when approaching the Father. I pray sitting, standing, bowed on my knees and prostrate. When I feel the presence of God mightily when praying, I drop to my knees or fall prostrate. That is just me, but in that position, I have less of tendency for my mind to wander and I am more centered on God.

“*Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*” – the word family is “*patria*” which should be translated “*fatherhood*.” John Phillips renders these two verses:

“I bow knees to the Father from whom all fatherhood takes its name.” (Phillips, 1993)

The Prayer (v. 16-19)

Ephesians 3:16-19 *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

There are five main parts to Paul’s prayer

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” – To give strength in the heart, mind and soul, in order to overcome in times of trials, for His glory. Just like any athlete, the believer needs to be strengthened each day in worship, prayer, meditation, singing and study of the Word.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” – This explains the meaning of “inner man” in the previous verse. Our bodies are the holy temple of the living God and Jesus is dwelling there because of our faith.

“That you be rooted and grounded in love” –The Christian is to be firmly established and set on the foundation of God in the love of and to the Saviour, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

“May be able to comprehend with all saints” – The key to understanding salvation is found in love: Love of the Father, Love of the Son and the love of the Christian for his brethren.

“...what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” – There are times when mere words cannot express the feelings of the heart. Words simply become letters on a page that fall short of explanation. Words sometimes cannot communicate the overflowing emotions of desire or passion that so permeates the soul. That is the point that Paul is trying to communicate to the church at Ephesus. Words are used to describe the grandeur of Jesus and in order to do so we must understand Jesus from every angle. A builder when viewing architectural drawings will gain an idea of the immensity of the project by looking at the overall measurements of the building. The size declares the work that will be needed to see the vision unto completion.

What would be the dimensions of your love of Jesus right now? How do you comprehend the greatness of your love for Christ today and could you describe it in words?

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” – The love of Christ surpasses knowledge, but that is the plea of Paul to the church. I want you to understand that the love of Christ allows the fullness of God in a believers heart.

My daughter Michelle and I sing together and our favorite song is “The Love of God” written by Frederick M. Lehman. We cannot sing this song together without seeing how awesome God is. The second verse is always the most difficult for us to sing.

*Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And everyman a scribe by trade, To
write the love of God above, Would drain the ocean dry, Nor could the
scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky¹*

The Closing (v. 20-21)

***Ephesians 3:20-21** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, **21** Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

The ending of the Paul’s prayer is a tribute to the power of the Living God; exceeding abundantly. These two words together are like saying “super abundance” or “there is no one who can do more.” The key to answered prayer is to pray as the Holy Spirit within us wants us to pray.

Conclusion

The Apostle Paul prays that the Ephesian brethren will be strengthened with power in the inward man by the presence of the indwelling Christ (Ephesians 3:16)

Paul states:

Believers should be strengthened internally through the Holy Spirit

Believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ

Believers are to be rooted and grounded in love

Believers should strive to comprehend the immensity of God

Believers should know the love that surpasses knowledge

Believers be filled with the fullness of God

Robert C. Crowder

¹ The Love of God, Frederick Martin Lehman (1868-1953) Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188