

PRAYER FOR GOD TO BE MOST GLORIFIED

For Spiritual Strength

Ephesians 3:14-21

There's a story about a rich eccentric named Julian Morris...a man who liked to dress like a beggar and sell small items on the streets. After a day's work, he would return to his beautiful mansion, put on formal attire, and have his chauffeur drive him to an exclusive restaurant in his limousine. Sometimes he would even catch a flight to spend the evening in places like New York City and Paris.

Unfortunately, today to many Christians live *spiritually* like Mr. Morris. They spend their day-to-day lives living in *spiritual poverty*...and only occasionally do they enjoy the *vast riches* of God's *glory*. This due to their *prayerlessness*.

In the first half of his letter to the **Ephesians**, Paul gives the basic truths about the *victorious Christian life*...who we are in Christ...and the *great, unlimited resources* we have in Him. He stated that *positionally*, believers...those who make up the body of Christ, the Church...are "*a new man*."

*"Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into **one new man**, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in **one***

body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."

~Ephesians 2:11-16

(It's like someone who is *destitute* winning the **Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes** and becoming *wealthy*).

Throughout the last half of the letter, we are exhorted to *live by those truths*...that we would put into *practice* who we are in Christ.

In this passage, Paul merges the *two sections* (our *position* in Christ and our *practice*) and *prays* on behalf of the **Ephesian** believers. He urges them to *live* in the *full power* and *effectiveness* of "*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*" (**Ephesians 1:3**).

Two things as a pastor I desire to do...

- **To teach you the word of God that you may know who you are in Christ...and then...**
- **Exhort you (urge you...motivate you) to live like it.**

In other words, as your pastor, I desire to help you understand your *spiritual position* and *spiritual power*...and then *encourage* you to put it into *practice*. To use it to live the *victorious Christian life*...the *abundant Christian life*. To *use it*...to *live it*. Two things I emphasize...the **Word and Prayer**.

I. APPROACH GOD THROUGH PRAYER: (vs. 14-15)

I bow my knees before the Father (vs. 14)...

Paul is not prescribing a required *posture for prayer*. He didn't always pray while *kneeling*, and Scripture tells of God's faithful people praying in *many different positions*:

- "*Abraham was still standing before the Lord*" (**Genesis 18:22**) as he interceded for **Sodom and Gomorrah**.

- When **David** prayed about *building of the Temple*, he “*went in and sat before the Lord.*” (**I Chronicles 17:16**)
- As **Jesus** prayed in the **Garden of Gethsemane** on the night of His betrayal, He “*fell on His face and prayed.*” (**Matthew 26:39**)

Here, **Paul** is *bowing on his knees* before the Father displaying *respect...honor...and reverence* to almighty God. The same *respect...honor...and reverence* that would be shown an *earthly king*...he’s showing to the **King of all kings**.

From whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name (vs. 15)...Acknowledging the *sovereignty of God*.

II. APPEAL TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER: (vs. 16-19)

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory (vs. 16a)...

According to...God doesn’t give the *power* of the Holy Spirit “*out of His riches*”...but “*according to*”...which is far greater. For God to give **according to the riches of His glory** is absolutely staggering because His riches are *limitless*.

An illustration of **according to** is that of a wealthy person who gives *based on a standard* rather than simply *out of* what is left over. If a billionaire gives \$100 in the offering plate...he has given *out of* his riches. But if he gives a tithe of 10 %...he’s giving *according to* his riches.

To be strengthened with the power through His Spirit in the inner man (vs. 16b)...

Strengthened...Gk. *krataiothenai*, doesn’t mean *to just gain strength*...but means *to be strong in order to over-*

come resistance. It’s not a picture of lifting weights to gain strength...but to be *equipped, encouraged, and exhorted* to stand firm in the midst of being resisted.

“*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*”

~I Corinthians 15:58

Power...Gk. *dynamis*, literally means *supremacy*. **To be strengthened with His supremacy (power)** that comes through the indwelling of **His Spirit in the inner man**.

So that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith (vs. 17)...

Dwell...Gk. *katoikeo*, a compound word, that doesn’t simply mean to *inhabit* a house...but to *be at home there* ...to *settle down as a family member*. Denotes the desire that Christ has *to be at home in our heart*...to be the *very center of*...or to be *deeply rooted in the believer’s life*.

“*Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*”

~I Corinthians 3:16

The reason that **dwelling** is so important is...

“*If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*”

~Romans 8:11

That you, being rooted and grounded in love (vs. 17)...

Paul uses a mixed metaphor of *biological* and *architectural* terminology...

Being rooted...like a plant...*deep roots* in order to *withstand any storm*.

And grounded...like a building...on *a solid foundation*.

They are both in the **perfect tense**, indicating *a past action with continuing results*.

May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth (vs. 18)...

Comprehend...Gk. *katalambano*, literally means *to seize with the mind...to lay hold of with eagerness*. It's one thing to *learn truth*...it's much richer when you **comprehend** that *truth...understanding* that *truth...grasping* that *truth*. It's the difference between *knowledge* and *wisdom*.

And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge (vs. 19a)...

The content of this *comprehension* is to **know experientially** God's love...or to *personally experience* the love of Christ.

- Gk. *oida*, *to know absolutely, factually*. Revealed knowledge. (**I John 5:13**).
- Gk. *gnosomai*, *to know experientially*. Personal experience. An *acquired knowledge...to learn...to come to know*. Implies a *completed action*.

That you may be filled up to all the fullness of God (vs. 19b)...

Filled up...a picture of *continuous filling...always full*.

Fullness of God...When Jesus *dwells* in our life, everything that's *available* to Christ *dwells* within us.

III. BE AWARE OF GOD'S POWER THROUGH PRAYER: (vs. 20)

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us (vs. 20)...

What **Paul** is emphasizing is that the **Ephesians** could have never *comprehended* the fact that God would take His Gospel to the **Gentiles**...and that both **Jews** and **Gentiles** would be offered *forgiveness of sin* and His gift of *eternal life* without the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit.

Exceeding abundantly...a **double compound word** meaning *super-super abundantly...going beyond and surpassing bountifully*.

According to the power that works within us (vs. 20) ...the Holy Spirit.

Works within us...Gk. *energoumenen*, literally *in and through us*.

IV. ASCRIBE PRAISE TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER: (vs. 21)

To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (vs. 21)...

The *purpose of prayer* is to bring *honor* and *glory* and *praise* to Jesus Christ.

- As it relates to the world...*evangelism*.
- As it relates to the church...*edification*.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

1. Don't underestimate **THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL**.
2. Don't underestimate **THE POWER OF PRAYER**.
Prayer is the fuse that lights the dynamite...unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Don't miss the **INTIMATE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** ... communion...with the Father through prayer.
4. Come to know...personally and experientially...**THE WORKS OF THE FATHER**.

Ephesians 3:14-21

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.