

Strength for Today

Ephesians 3:14-21

“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.”

Paul the Apostle is not a person we would ever consider timid, shy, or uncertain. Through the accounts of his life in the book of Acts and in his own epistles, he always presented as someone who was self-assured- albeit, in his life as a Christian that “self-assurance” was from and through Jesus. It seems that the only exception to this norm was when he came face-to-face with Jesus on the road to Damascus. His life before that encounter was marked by such confidence in the Jewish Law, that he was willing to kill those who refuted that tradition. After his conversion, he was even more confident in the saving grace and power of God through Jesus Christ, willing to risk his own life so that others may come to share in that salvation.

It’s often impossible to imagine being so confident in something you believe in, that you would be willing to suffer and sacrifice to the point of dying. We see in this prayer that Paul writes for the Ephesians (and, essentially, to all Christians), that it is possible to have the power, strength, and knowledge to be precisely that confident in God’s promises.

In the previous verses, Paul discusses his confidence in God’s grace to him, especially considering how he persecuted Christians prior to his conversion. He also expresses his assurance in his faith in the knowledge God has already given to him, which he considers “the mystery of Christ (Eph 3: 4)” that only fellow believers are privy to. In verse 14 (“For this reason...”) he picked up that theme and prayed that the Ephesians would have the spiritual depth, confidence, and power that he had.

He prayed that they would possess the knowledge of their identity in God (vv. 14-15); for strength from the Holy Spirit and God (v. 16); for Jesus dwelling in their hearts (v. 17); for power that is derived from the love and unity that only knowing Jesus truly and fully can bring (vv. 17-18); and for the special knowledge of God that only those who place their faith in Jesus can access (vv. 19). He rounded out this prayer in verses 20 and 21 with the guarantee that all of this is possible because God is in charge of making it happen.

We in the Church today can pray this same prayer with the same confidence that God will give us all of this strength, power, and knowledge to live our lives in a way that is glorifying to Him and good for us. We can be assured that the same God who gave Paul all of his evangelical prowess, is the same God who makes available to us the exact same power through the Holy Spirit. The same power to overcome sin, to endure suffering, and to share the same good news that we put our hope in. All we have to do is ask for the same faith in the confidence He freely gives to us all. I hope you will take this prayer and pray it for yourself and for the Christians in your life, and see what amazing things God will use you to accomplish for His glory.

-Anna Elkins