

## I. QUICK REVIEW

- A. In our last study , we saw that through Christ's work on the cross, God reconciled us both vertically to Himself and horizontally to one another, creating one new humanity—the Church.
- B. We also learned that God entrusted Paul with the revelation of this mystery, that Jews and Gentiles are now fellow heirs in Christ, and that His grace not only saves us but empowers us to fulfill our calling.
- C. Finally, we were reminded that God's grace flows most powerfully through humble hearts, positioning us to receive His strength and faithfully steward His purposes.
- D. In today's study, Paul transitions into his second powerful apostolic prayer in this letter, asking that the Ephesian believers would move beyond merely knowing intellectually the truths of God and what He has done for them to experiencing them personally through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## II. EPHESIANS 3:14-21

- 1. ***<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup>that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— <sup>19</sup>to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.<sup>20</sup> 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, <sup>21</sup>to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

## III. VRS 14

- 1. ***<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ***
- B. The phrase "**For this reason**" points back to what Paul has just explained—the glorious mystery that God has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles into one new humanity through Christ.

- C. This life changing revelation moved Paul to fall on his knees in humble gratitude, worship, and intercession.
  - 1. While standing was the customary posture for Jewish prayer, kneeling expressed a deeper sense of reverence, humility, and wholehearted dependence on God.
- D. Like Paul, we have every reason to bow our knees before the Father. His goodness, faithfulness, mercy, and grace have rescued us from sin, death, and eternal separation and then adopted us into His family, and blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

#### IV. VRS 15

- 1. <sup>15</sup> ***from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named***
- B. Paul describes the identity of this new humanity of Jew and gentile as a family consisting of those on the earth and heaven who share the same Father.
- C. The Church is not merely an organization, but the family of God, made up of redeemed people who bear their Father's name. In the Jewish world, carrying a father's name signified identity, inheritance, authority, and covenant belonging.
- D. I believe the church is the manifestation of an ancient priestly prayer that had been prayed for thousands of years.
  - 1. ***"The LORD bless you and keep you;<sup>25</sup> The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;<sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."<sup>27</sup> "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."*-Numbers 6:14-27**
- E. The Aaronic blessing concludes with God placing His name upon His covenant people as a sign of His ownership, favor, and presence. Paul echoes this covenant language in Ephesians 3:15 by reminding believers that they derive their identity from the Father Himself.

## V. VRS 16-19 PAUL'S PRAYER

1. ***<sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height<sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

B. The mystery of the new humanity of Jew and Gentile moved Paul to deep worship in verse 14, and now into intercession in verse 16-19.

C. This is the second apostolic prayer Paul offers for the church in the same letter. We see the first prayer in Ephesians 1:17-21 where the emphasis is on enlightenment of what has been given the church, but in this prayer the emphasis is on enablement to actually walk it out.

1. I believe Paul's first apostolic prayer leads naturally to the second: as we grow in the knowledge of God, we experience His love more deeply, and as we encounter His love, our weak love is transformed to love God and others more.

## VI. PAUL PRAYED FOR FIVE THINGS IN THIS PRAYER

### A. ***"TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT IN OUR INNER MAN"***

1. Paul first prays that we would be strengthened in our inner being—the true center of our thoughts, desires, and emotions—so Christ may dwell freely in our hearts, leading us into deeper intimacy and unhindered fellowship with Him.

a) The effective power of the Holy Spirit works in our hearts to clean up the house so that *Christ may not just live in us but be at home and comfortable in us without any hindrances.*

2. Although Christ dwells in every believer (John 14:23), He is not always fully at home in our hearts. Pride, compromise, spiritual passivity, careless speech, and unrepentant sin can grieve the Spirit and hinder our intimacy with Him.

3. As we pray this prayer, the Holy Spirit strengthens our inner being, enabling us to cooperate with God's grace so Christ feels increasingly at home in us, leading to deeper intimacy and fellowship with Him.

#### B. **"CHRIST WOULD DWELL IN OUR HEARTS"**

1. Christ "dwelling in our hearts" speaks of an on-going and continual experience of His presence touching our hearts in order to convince us of His love so we are not in constant doubt of His love.
2. Our hearts need the Spirit's strengthening because they can grow weary, wander, grow cold, become fearful, be deceived, and be weighed down by the cares of life.

**a) *My flesh and my heart may fail ,but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever***  
**-Psalm 73:26**

#### C. **"BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE"**

1. Paul used architectural and agricultural terms to convey our lives being spiritually strong in God's love in the midst of storms—of fears, accusations, temptations, pressures, etc.
  - a) *Being "rooted" is related to agriculture and being "grounded" to the architecture of a building. A tree that is deeply rooted and a house that is built on solid ground doesn't blow over in a storm*

### VII. **VRS 18**

#### 1. **"<sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints"**

- B. Paul prays that we would discover the love of God in the context of biblical community. God's love is meant to be experienced together, not in isolation. We often grasp the fullness of His love more deeply with the family of God than we ever could alone.

## VIII. VRS 18-19

### 1. *“what is the width and length and depth and height*

#### B. THE FOUR EXPRESSIONS OF GOD’S LIMITLESS LOVE

##### 1. THE WIDTH OF HIS LOVE

- a) God's love is wide enough to embrace both Jews and every tribe, tongue, and nations, making them one in Christ

##### 2. THE LENGTH OF HIS LOVE

- a) It's long enough to go to the greatest lengths to pull us in that were far off. *His love traveled from the furthest distance of His throne to the lowest parts of a teenager's womb.*

##### 3. DEPTH OF HIS LOVE

- a) God's love is deep enough to reach the lowest pit and lift us out, while also drawing us into the depths of His heart. It meets us in our deepest pain and reveals the greatness of His love for us.

***(1) He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground-Psalm 40:2***

##### 4. HEIGHT OF HIS LOVE

- a) God's love is high enough to lift weak, broken, and sinful people from the depths of sin and *seat us with Christ in the heavenly places.*

## IX. VRS 19

### 1. ***<sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”***

- B. The love of Christ is eternal and infinite, far beyond the limits of human reason. It surpasses what our finite minds can fully comprehend.

**1. *You hem me in behind and before; You have laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.-Psalm 139:5-6***

C. The fullness of God is the complete expression of all that God is—His character, attributes, holiness, power, love, and perfection—fully revealed in the person of Christ living in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **X. THREE FOLD FRUIT OF PAUL'S PRAYER**

### **1. TO EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF CHRIST**

a) To receive a deeper revelation of Christ's love that strengthens our inner being and deepens our fellowship with Him.

### **2. TO BE FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD**

a) To be so transformed by Christ's love that He increasingly rules our hearts and His life is expressed through us.

### **3. TO WALK IN LOVE**

a) To reflect Christ's love by loving one another and building up His body, the church.

**(1) Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us,-Eph. 5:1-2**

## **XI. (VRS 20-21) PAUL'S PRAYER LEADS INTO PRAISE**

**1. <sup>20</sup> 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, <sup>21</sup> to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**

B. Paul concludes his prayer not by focusing on the believer's ability, but on God's limitless power to accomplish what he just prayed.

C. Rather than wondering if such a prayer is too great, Paul reminds us that God specializes in doing what is impossible.

