

Ephesians 3:14-21 – Revelation of the Love of Christ

If you were to be given one request, what would you ask?

We remember this was the challenge Solomon was given. His answer was noble. He asked not for himself but for the sake of his people.

2 Chronicles 1:7-12 English Standard Version (ESV)

7 In that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you." 8 And Solomon said to God, "You have shown great and steadfast love to David my father, and have made me king in his place. 9 O Lord God, let your word to David my father be now fulfilled, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can govern this people of yours, which is so great?" 11 God answered Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may govern my people over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. I will also give you riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had who were before you, and none after you shall have the like."

I will ask you this question again later, right.

When we look back in these first three chapters of the letter from the apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus (Asia Minor), Paul wants us to understand who we are in Christ Jesus - He wants us as Christians to understand our new identity in Christ.

- God chose us, called us - chosen by God before the foundation of the world.
- Adoption to sonship - predestined by God for adoption.
- Redemption through His blood, forgiveness of sins.
- Made known to us the mystery of His will
- Get the truth from the real source, Jesus
- Marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit
- We are heirs, obtaining an inheritance when we heard the word of truth, living to the praise of his glory.
- We were made alive, though we were dead in our sins and trespasses.
- We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.
- We are reconciled to God in one body so that there are no longer Jews or Gentiles, but simply Christians having equal access to the Father.
- We have learned that we are saints full of faith in Jesus.

Here in the last part of the of Ephesians chapter 3, the Apostle Paul lays emphasis on the fact that since we are God's children we are being strengthened in Christ. He is reminding us here of the Promise our Lord Jesus made to us when He sent us out to make disciples of all nations – I will be with you till the end of time. So if you weak in your Christian walk, God wants you to know the strength that is accessible to you, that strength is only in His Love through Christ Jesus

Ephesians 3:14-21 English Standard Version (ESV)

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

The Prayer for Strengthening (3:14-16)

The Apostle Paul continues here the prayer he started in chapter 1 where Paul declared that he did not cease to remember us Christians in his prayers. Paul said that he was praying that we would know the “**what is the hope to which He has called us, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe**” (1:18-19). So Paul returns here to his prayer for us as Christians, desiring that we would be “strengthened with power through God’s Spirit in our inner being.” From the riches of God’s glory, Paul prays that God would strengthen the Christians with power. He is talking about physical strength but spiritual strength. It is our inner being that is being strengthened; he is praying that God would make us spiritually strong.

The Result of Strengthening (3:17)

Let us now consider why this is so important, in chapter 1 the Apostle Paul prayed that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened so that we may know the hope we have, the riches we have and God’s power towards us. This knowledge is supposed to empower us from the inside out, strengthen our faith. By so doing that Lord Jesus himself may dwell in our heart – that Christ should be the very center of our lives.

So it is through faith that Christ can dwell in our heart, make our heart His home, everything we are revolves around Jesus and that we are deeply rooted in Him. Christ then becomes the controlling factor in our attitude and in our conduct.

Our inner being is being strengthened by God through the Holy Spirit resulting in the deep indwelling of Christ in our heart through faith. Notice the two images that Paul uses to communicate this idea: “Rooted and grounded in love.” Being rooted carries an agricultural image and being grounded or established carries an architecture image.

Matthew 7:24-27 English Standard Version (ESV)

24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Trees are amazing. When there are strong winds those trees still stand. They are rooted properly to be able to withstand any force that comes against them. In the same way, our foundation is the love of God. We are rooted and grounded **in love**. The first three chapters have poured out an amazing picture of God’s love for his people. He chose us, predestined us, adopted us, inherited us, blessed us, saved us, reconciled us, and strengthened us. The eyes of our hearts are enlightened to know the hope, riches, and power so that Christ will be the foundation of our lives. Christ will dwell in our hearts.

The Reason for Strengthening (3:18-19)

Why do we need this strength? Paul explains further in verse 18. Paul has prayed this so that we “may have the strength to comprehend with all the saints what are 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.”

Now consider who Paul is writing this to. He is not writing to unbelievers but to Christians. Paul is praying for God to strengthen us and why? Because we can discourage, lose our focus, forget our first love, try to take control instead of letting Christ take the lead.

Paul wants us to realize how important this is – the love of Christ. We need to know the love of Christ. So that is why he laid emphasis on it;

- Paul wants us to have the strength to comprehend the dimensions of the love of Christ - to get our mind around the love of Christ.
- He wants us to know the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love.

So what are the height, breadth, length, and depth of Christ's love?

Look at verse 19. Christ's love is immeasurable. The love of Christ is so vast that we cannot begin to comprehend it, it surpasses all understanding. But Paul prays that we may have the strength to understand this love.

Why do we need to understand the vastness of this love? - "you may be filled with all the fullness of God".

We cannot live as God's holy and chosen ones until we comprehend the love and mercy of Christ. We cannot begin to be followers and lovers of Jesus until we know the love of Christ (what He sacrificed for us).

We immediately slip back into foolish and sinful living when we forget the love of Christ. We stop desiring Jesus when we forget his love for us. We lose courage and get scared or disappointed under the weight of Satan's trials and temptations when we forget the love of Christ.

Wisdom flows out of this love. Knowledge exudes from this love. If we seek wisdom and knowledge, we are only gaining a part. Solomon went astray with his wisdom; knowledge easily leads to pride. But the love of Christ surpasses these things.

So let me ask you again - If you were to be given one request, what would you ask?

We might use many things to bring full meaning in life, but only one thing will suffice. These other things, life partners, good jobs, wealth, relationships, activity, spiritual experiences, will always peter out, but not with the love of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, this love we are talking is manifested in the body of Christ His church. If you think back to the example Brother Victor used last week about herd in the jungle of Africa, the weaker animals are so much safer when they stay with the rest of the herd. When they fall behind or forsake the herd they face the risk of being eaten up by predators. The same thing applies to us, we forsake the fellowship of believers we can easily get discouraged when trials come our way. Think about it this way, when a brother or sister shares a testimony in the church we are being built up in our faith because we are being reminded of the love of Christ.

So the big question is if this love is beyond comprehension, how then I can understand it.

The Power for Strengthening (3:20-21)

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..."- Ephesians 3:20 NKJV. God can do this through his strength. He not only can do what we ask, he can do all that we ask. In fact, he can do "above all that we ask." He can do abundantly above all that we ask. The power is seen that God can do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask." If this was not enough, he can do well beyond all that we ask or think! This strength can happen through the power of God.

The power of God is at work within us. His power can change our life; His power can transform those habits, vices, sins, and make us to be what God has called us to be. We have a glorious identity in Christ. His power can change everything about you.

"To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever." God's glory is to be seen in us, the body of Christ His church.