

Ephesians 3:14-21 *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family 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.*

Announcements:

1. Book Club: 8/4 5:30 Gentle & Lowly - Whole Book

Thanking Ryan Kunisch:

A deep thanks to Ryan Kunisch for his commitment and fortitude in service to our church. Level headed.

Served as a true bridge in the history of our church faithfully serving for years at L2 and serving to establish our church here.

Especially during that time I was regurgitating what I practiced with Ryan.

One of our earliest true believers. A true friend. A defender. Big thanks to Ryan.

Ephesians 3:13-21 | Beyond Knowledge

In today's text we see one of the great prayers of scripture. Let's begin with how Paul addresses this prayer.

Ephesians 3:14-15 *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,*

Paul returns to this phrase that opened up the chapter, "For this reason." Paul interrupted himself at the beginning of the chapter with this wonderful parentheses that covered his own apostolic ministry which shines forth for the unity of the church. Therefore this return to the phrase "for this reason" is comprehensive of everything that he has written thus far.

It is the reason of our being blessed in Christ Jesus with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ep 1:3). It is the reason of Paul having heard of the faith in Christ and the love toward the saints that are evident in the church he is writing to (Ep 1:15). It is that we personally we're dead in our sins but have been made alive in Christ (Ep 2:5). It is that the alienation that we experienced from God has been removed and the alienation we have

experienced from each other has been removed (Ep 2:17). It is that Jew and Gentile have been united according to the eternal purpose of Christ, for the Church to proclaim God's glory to the heavenly beings (Ep 3:10).

It is for this reason, the glorious fact and implications of the gospel, that Paul bows his knees to the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

The Father of every family, this is an intimate way of describing that God is the source of all family, of all fatherhood, of all relational connectedness. We do not call God father because we psychologically mapped our deepest needs onto the clouds. But rather God is the archetypal father of whom all our earthly fathers are merely a derivation. He is the ultimate Father, the truest source. So in light of the glory already unfolded, and to the highest Father what does Paul ask for the people he loves? Two interrelated things: That they would be strengthened in their inner being, and that they would know the love of Christ.

1. Strengthened

Ephesians 3:16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

The first part of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that they would be strengthened with power through his Spirit in their inner being. Let's work backwards. What is the inner being? The private space is getting smaller and smaller, having become almost entirely removed by social media. We ourselves are formed more as aggregates of the materials and narratives around us, than we are as true individuals in the world.

Abraham Kuyper was correct when he wrote in 1898 that the "hypertrophy of our external lives leads to the atrophy of our internal lives." Many of us feel so thin, and have so little to give because we have an incredibly malnourished inner being. We can basically say the opposite of Paul in 2 Corinthians 4, where he writes that he doesn't lose heart "Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." How many of us could say that our outer self is being cultivated, manicured, entertained, while our inner self wastes away day by day. We go for the ride of each offense or news story because we have no inner ballast. We have no internal strength or internal power.

Here Paul prays that we may be strengthened in our internal lives to have real power. But at what scale is he praying? It is according to the riches of God's glory. Glory means weight, heaviness, substance. That the Holy Spirit would create such substance in our internal lives that our inner being is truly fortified. And the reason for this fortification is

not so that you can rest in who you are as a person, it isn't a step in your self-actualization so that you can claim your power, no.

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

I read a wonderful description of this concept that is being relaid here by D.A. Carson in his book *Praying with Paul*. And it is relatable if you buy a home in Denver. So I'm going to put the story in first person. Maegan and I bought a home in 2017, it was built in 1900 and had been remodeled on a budget countless times since then. We moved in, thankful to be in a home but with a lot of work ahead. I used to say we didn't buy a home we bought a fort that children built for themselves in the woods. (Mainly because it had plexiglass windows). But over the course of four years and little projects constantly going, it is at a place now where we really like it. It is comfortable and suits us. But it took time and effort.

Christ moves into our hearts right away at our conversion. But they are morally in disrepair. Drafty, no windows, the wrong paint. Self-centered, sexually immoral, deceitful, the works. But by the power of His Spirit, changes begin to take place. We begin to tell the truth. We confess our sexual immorality. We love even inconvenient people. Christ is dwelling in our hearts. From the inside out we begin to shine like Christ.

And this looks like an internal life that is rooted and grounded in love. We are at our core people who know how to give and receive love. And love is the opposite of our culture of expression and enmeshment. Love means a person actually has something to give. And When they give, it is not for the purpose of taking from the other person. Now this being rooted and grounded in love is related to an ability to know the love of Christ. This is what Paul prays for next.

2. Comprehend

Ephesians 3:18-19 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.

If you were to pray for someone to mature in their faith, what would be the thing you prayed for most? To overcome a particular temptation, yes that is good. To love their neighbors more deeply, this is good too. But more primary than either of those is to be transformed by a deep knowledge of the love of Christ, something that requires the strength of Christ to even comprehend. Paul describes it as voluminous. Like an ocean of love that we are in the middle of, tasked with swimming to its edges. And notice it is with all the saints, it is something we can't comprehend alone.

Breadth, is shown in his love which stretches to all peoples, tribes and nations. None of the normal barriers that we create between ourselves are to be upheld.

Length, is shown in his love that stretches through all time. All love desires to make itself permanent. His love is.

Height, We are loved into the most glorious position as the Lord of all creation takes up residence in our hearts, invites us into his family, dwells among us.

Depth, into the very depth of our sin, Christ died so that we might be saved.

This love is beyond knowledge, and yet can be known. You cannot experience this love without contemplating it. This is a transcendent love and therefore requires contemplation. It can't be received in mere propositions or axioms, because it is beyond that type of knowledge, it must be contemplated. Thought about. For large blocks of time with no interruption. it must be prayed for in others.

The outcome is being filled with all the fullness of God... what do you say to that?

How can knowing Christ's love change you? Well that is the way we are changed. As a child, you learn how to live by acting and then looking at your parents face. It is their face that instructs you, their presence that comforts you. This is the love of our father.

3. Beyond Imagination

Ephesians 3:20 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 final doxology that Paul gives for his prayer, must come into shape otherwise our minds would stop our contemplation at our next sin. Our hearts would halt our exploration of the love of Christ at our next suffering. But no you must grasp that we are talking about the one who is able to do more than we ask or think, according to his power at work within us. Our contemplation moves to a faith in God not merely an internal experience.

Do you see the perpetual dynamic of this prayer. We must have the riches of Christ's glory to strengthen us to have him dwell in us. We must be grounded in love from his dwelling in us to be strengthened to comprehend the depth of his love towards us, and we must in transformed love resound once more to his glory in order to continue in his love. This is the highest prayer. Let us with all the saints pray this for one another.