

REVIVE CHURCH- PAUL'S PRAYER FOR BELIEVERS

EPHESIANS SERIES #12

In the first 13 verses of Ephesians 3 Paul makes known the mysteries that had been revealed to him by revelation. Mysteries that were hidden under the old covenant but made known by the Apostle to the church. There are many mysteries revealed within the New Testament but the two that Paul focuses on are:

1. Gentiles are heirs with Jews, are of the same body with the Jews and are partakers with the Jews of all the great things God has planned for His people through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
2. Through the church the multifaceted wisdom of God will be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 3:14-21 14For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Immediately following Paul's teaching that he received by revelation, he begins to pray for the church for their own spiritual revelation of these truths. He fully understood that in order to be effective in the assault upon the powers of darkness that believers need supernatural empowerment through the Holy Spirit. Because of the fullness of the love of God in Christ, God fully inhabits believers and the church is triumphant over evil. **The church must embrace these important aspects of God.**

Paul starts this section the same way he started the chapter "For this reason". **The focus of this chapter is Paul's prayer that begins in this verse (vs.14).** This is another glimpse into Paul's prayer life and a powerful example of how to pray for the church, the bride of Christ to come into maturity.

Paul fully recognizes that prayer is an essential part of assaulting the principalities and powers. The power that the Apostle Paul walked in was fueled by a powerful prayer life. In order for us to receive the full benefit of the written word of God we must apply ourselves to not just study but to actually pray. Pray for ourselves and pray for others. An incredible way to pray for yourself and others is to emulate how the Apostles prayed.

Apostolic prayers are all God-centered not enemy focused

1. All the prayers in the New Testament are **God-centered** prayers; meaning that each one is addressed directly to God!
2. *God-centered prayer, including spiritual warfare prayer, is the only model set forth in the New Testament.* It is the model that the early church used in resisting and dislodging demonic forces and cultural strongholds (Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). **These prayers engage with the plan of God and do not overemphasize the plan of the enemy! The church was consistently focused on what was made available to them, through the finished work of Christ!**
3. Even in a time of escalating persecution against the church, the apostles never addressed the devil, **but rather appealed to the Father for strength and boldness to stand strong and proclaim His Word with signs and wonders** (Acts 4:24-31). *There is a direct correlation with how Jesus taught the disciples to pray your kingdom come, your will be done in every Apostolic prayer.*
4. **All of Jesus' prayers recorded in the Bible were directed to the Father** (Jn. 14:16; 17:5, 11, 15, 25). Jesus taught His disciples to direct their prayers to the Father (Mt. 18:19; Lk. 11:2, 13).
5. **Apostolic Prayers are positive, enhancing love and unity**
6. The apostolic prayers being positive ask God for the impartation of positive virtues instead of the removal of negative ones.
7. These prayers are filled with power, fire and corporate unity.
8. **They are unlike any other form of prayer and are meant to bring the church into oneness of purpose and calling.** *There is a time for contemplation "search my heart o God" and there is a time to move forward knowing the divine plan of God to intervene.* Beloved we need to get caught up, out of our personal storyline and into the eternal narrative God has written. **We cannot settle with personal needs based prayers alone**, we are meant to go into the heavenlies together, get the heart of God, be set on fire and release it here on earth through prayer, song and life.

14For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The prayer begins with a focus on our identity, recognizing God the Father, the Lordship of Jesus and the family of believers. We can rest in certainty and security under our Fathers leadership.

16that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

God's strengthening only happens through the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. God's reserves for blessing His people are inexhaustible. The riches of His glory show that believer may draw upon God's power at any time, place or circumstance. Power failure is possible only if we fail to rely on Him and draw from another source. **The place of ministry is placed deep with the believer. The place of drawing is within so we must walk in awareness of that and ensure our well is filled with the waters of word and intimacy.**

The Bride in Song of Songs is described as having three sources of water, which refer to the different ways in which we experience the Spirit in our lives. (*Song of Songs 4:15*)

- A **fountain** is a hidden source of water that is below the surface. This speaks of an inward source of supply, or the indwelling Christ (Col. 1:27).
- A **well** speaks of the capacity to store water, so as to draw on when needed. Well water is water that is stored up that provides a supply in dry times. This refers to our personal history in God that we draw on from our past experiences. This speaks of a past stored up source of supply. **We learn from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that each of us are accountable to store up the oil of intimacy. We cannot borrow this from another.**
- **Streams** speak of an outward flow of water. *These streams flow from the mountains or high places* of Lebanon, thus, they speak of the Holy Spirit "water supply" coming from on high. This speaks of an outward source of supply.

to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

The inner man is the very seat and center of every human being whom God empowers and changes by His Holy Spirit. No lasting change can happen unless our inner man is transformed! "you want to know the true strength of a man, look inside to the inner man"

This interior, this place of sanctification is the control center of our thoughts and passions, our greatest strength and weaknesses so tend to it often.

17that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The dwelling place of Christ is the heart, the very center of our being. In using the word dwell, Paul is emphasizing permanent residence. God abides within the believer as the Holy

Spirit and strengthens us to grow in love. *Paul Prays that believers be filled with all the fullness of God and so experience stability in Christ rather than a transient experience of Christ. In other words, its not a come and go relationship, but an eternal fellowship.*

- Paul makes it very clear that it is by being rooted and grounded in the Lord that makes possible the growth of Jesus life in us.
- **Believers can only be fruit bearing as they are rooted in the love of God.**

Paul prays that the believers will have a comprehension of Gods love that transcends knowledge. He describes the width, length, depth and height of God's love to show that it is **inexhaustible and beyond our level of comprehending.** There is nothing that can keep Him from loving us and honestly this surpasses our knowledge.

Romans 8:37-39 37Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

19to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge

Paul is praying for the knowledge of love that surpasses knowledge. *This is obviously a play on words.* His hope is that the Ephesian church and every believer who would read this letter will have such a comprehension of the love of God in their inner man that a simple explanation is inadequate . **The goal is that all the fullness of God may dwell in the believer. This is the Christian's goal to be absolutely filled with God, this is also the goal of Jesus Christ!**

Ephesians 4:10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

20Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Usually this verse is quoted in an individual petition to God, but the true context is the church. **The power mentioned is the power of Jesus Christ working through the church through His Holy Spirit.** **Victories in the spiritual realm go so much further that what we are able to see. Paul gives us a glimpse of the effectiveness of the spiritual assault on the realms of darkness. This brings glory to God just as victory in battles brought glory to earthly**

kings. This glory in the church will return to Him because of His work in the church. The concept of glory is the concept of excellence because it excels over every other power. This glorious power extends to the end of time through the church.

Home group questions

1. In order for us to receive the full benefit of the written word of God, we must apply ourselves to not just study but also to prayer. Discuss
2. Discuss the power of Apostolic prayers and the primary focus. How does this challenge the way you pray?
3. If you want to know the strength of a man/woman you must look inside to the inner man. Discuss
4. How is the strength of your inner man (be personal). How is Holy Spirit transforming and empowering your heart?
5. How would you explain to someone the excellency of knowing Christ? Practice