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Ephesians 3:14-21
Title: Powerful Prayer
5/12/24

Discussion Questions:

1. It is our identity that enables us to pray with power. From the list, which description of your identity means the most to you and why?
2. Compared with Paul's reasons, what are the reasons you most often pray?
3. Why do most people focus on outward needs and not inner strength?
4. How or when are you most reminded of God's love for you?
5. What stands out most about Paul's prayer for your life?

Teaching Notes:

My Identity in Christ
From Ephesians 1-3

- I am chosen by God
- I am redeemed & sealed with His Spirit.
- I am a believer, accepted & adopted as part of His family.
- I am loved and lavished with His grace
- I was dead in trespasses and sin.
- I am forgiven of all my trespasses and sin.
- I am alive in Christ.
- I am seated with Christ in heavenly place
- I am His masterpiece/workmanship created for good works
- I am a citizen in His kingdom
- I am a member of His household
- I am a stone in His temple
- I am a prisoner for His purpose
- I am a minister with a ministry
- I am a servant of the Lord.

Big Idea: We need God to live out our identity in Christ, and prayer is our connection with God.

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

Notice how Paul sets up this prayer...

3:14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

...How, what, why...

How does Paul pray? “For this reason...”

1. Pray from God’s work and for God’s will.

Pray because of what God has done & what God has said.

...Stay away from praying your will, your way, & w/your desires.

When you are afraid or worried, pray...

...but don’t let your fears or worries direct your prayers...

...let God’s word & God’s will & God’s work direct your prayers.

Second thing to notice, Paul kneels.

2. Pray with humility and earnestness.

Let’s be people that pray like we know God is our only hope but like we really do have hope in God.

Next, Paul prays for them because they are family.

We are all family in Christ with God as our Father.

3. Pray to the Father as family.

In Christ, it is not us and them, it is us and Him.

What exactly does Paul pray for?

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

4. Pray for inner strength.

He is not praying for easier times, but for stronger Christians.

Inner strength helps us endure hard situations...

...to speak up or talk about things that are uncomfortable...

...or forgive when we don’t feel like it.

What does it look like to have inner strength?

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

Dwell means to be at home...

5. Pray for Christ to be at home.

Jesus doesn't want to be a renter. He is not a house guest.

We have to allow Him access for Him to dwell.

that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— **19** to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;

One of the most life changing things is to know you are loved.
Paul's prayer is that they would know God's love **for them**.

6. Pray to know God's love.

His love is wider than our sin.
It is longer than our memory.
It is deeper than our failures.
It is higher than our hopes.

Rooted: His love provides connection, strength & provision.

Grounded: refers to a foundation

We should leave no doubt that we love people...
...because there is no doubt God loves people.

And in the last part of v19 Paul says
that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

"Fullness" was often used of a ship being filled with freight or merchandise or sailors or soldiers.

So...

7. Pray for God's filling.

We also find over and over in Acts...
...the Holy Spirit filling people & being given spiritual gifts to use.

And Paul ends his prayer with worship and why we pray...

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

8. Pray by faith for His glory.

