

6/26/22

Intercessory Prayer
Eph. 3:16-19

The prayer of Paul for enablement can be divided up into three parts: Eph. 3:14-21

- I. The introduction to prayer. vs. 14-15
- II. The intercession of prayer. vs. 16-19
- III. The veneration in prayer. vs. 20-21

We have looked at the introduction of the prayer of Paul that consists of three things: Eph. 3:14-15

- I. The posture before God in prayer. vs. 14
- II. The person of God petitioned in prayer. vs. 14
- III. The people of God affected by prayer. vs. 15

We come now to the intercession of Paul for the Ephesians, which consists of five petitions introduced by three purpose clauses. Eph. 3:16-19

1. A purpose clause in Greek is introduced by the word, that “hina”, there are three. vs. 16a, 18a, 19b
2. The first records the first two petitions. vs. 16
* Verse 17 is the outcome or result of the petition of verse 16, the explanation.
3. The second has the third and fourth petitions. vs. 18
* Verse 19a is the goal of the petition of verse 18, the explanation.
4. The third contains the fifth petition. vs. 19b
* This is both the summation and conclusion of Paul’s intercessory prayer for the Ephesians.

So we want to look at the five petitions of Paul’s prayer of intercession for the Ephesians, which consists of a three-fold purpose: Eph. 3:16-19

- I. Paul prayed the Ephesians be empowered by God spiritually. vs. 16-17
- II. Paul prayed the Ephesians be endowed with the love of God experientially. vs. 18-19a
- III. Paul prayed the Ephesians be yielded to be more like God corporately. vs. 19b

I. Paul prayed the Ephesians be empowered by God spiritually. vs. 16-17

* Intercession is prayer for others not self!

A. The apostle Paul prayed the Father would impart to the Ephesian from His wealth of resources. vs. 16

* This is the first purpose clause introduced by the word that “hina” and contains the first two petitions.

1. The measure of the petition presents the first petition, “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory.” vs. 16a-b

a. The expression “that He would grant you” does not imply any doubt regarding the petition. vs. 16a

1) The word grant “didomi”, means to give or bestow in the aorist active tense, making it affective “may give” in the present.

- 2) The salvation of Jew and Gentile made them fellow-citizen and members of the household of God, together were a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Eph. 2:19, 22
- b. The sufficiency of the measure is described, “according to the riches of His glory.” vs. 16b
- 1) The word according “kata”, means down from or along side His riches, literally in proportion to His riches. Eph. 1:7, 18
 - 2) The word riches “plutos”, means abundance of wealth, appearing four other times in the letter. Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8
* We get our word plutocrat from it, one whose power is derived from their wealth.
 - 3) The word glory “doxa”, mean God’s magnificence, excellence and dignity, the sum total of His attributes.
 - 4) Paul was praying that the Father would bestow upon them the sum total of all His communicable attributes necessary for their lives.
2. The second petition is declared, “to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.” vs. 16c
- a. This is the goal to be strengthened “krataioo”, describing the outcome of the

- request granted, to be made strong or increase in strength.
- b. The source is with might “dunamis”, God’s divine power, through His Spirit. Lk. 4:1; 14; Jn. 7:37-38; Eph. 1:19; 6:10; Acts 1:8;
 - 1) We get the word dynamic or dynamite from it.
 - 2) The Third person of the Trinity fills the letter. Eph. 1:13; 2:18, 22; 3:5, 16; 4:3, 4, 30; 5:9, 18; 6:17, 18
 - c. The way the request is manifested is in the inner man.
 - 1) The inner man is the new man in Christ. Col. 3:10; Rom. 7:22
 - 2) The inner man is in contrast to the outer man that is perishing, the inner man is being renewed day by day. 2Cor. 4:16
 - 3) The inner man refers to the soul and spirit of man, the real person at heart.
 - 4) The soul is comprised of our intellect, emotions and the will.
 - 5) The inner man has three things.
 - a) Reason for discernment.
 - b) Conscience for duty.
 - c) Will for decisions.
- B.** The apostle Paul elaborated on the first two petitions he prayed for the Ephesians. vs. 17

- * Verse 17 is the outcome or result, the explanation of the petition of verse 16.
1. The plain sense is that he is not making a petition, but explaining the result of being made strong by the Holy Spirit in the inner man is, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” vs. 17a
 - a. The word “that” and “may” are not in Greek, literally it says, “to dwell the Christ through faith in your hearts”.
 - b. The Holy Spirit in our hearts produces a greater degree of the presence of Christ to rule our hearts that our intellect, emotions and will be subject to Christ.
 - c. The word dwell “katoikeo”, means to settle down and make oneself at home, an infinitive aorist active, denoting an affective full possession continuously, when and if we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the inner man. Lenski
 - d. This is through living out faith, distinct from the new birth by faith.
 - 1) The through “dia” indicates a process.
 - 2) The article is present “through the faith” paralleling “through His Spirit in the inner man”. vs. 16c
 2. The fact that Christ dwells in our hearts at home through faith is due to “being rooted and grounded in love.” vs. 17c
 - a. Once again, this is not a petition of Paul, but rather the explanation of being

- strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the inner man.
- b. The words “that you” are not in the Greek text, which gives the idea that it is the pursuit, instead of the result.
 - c. The two perfect participles “being rooted and grounded in love” are in the middle voice, the person is the participant and the stress on love is prominent, ongoing in the present.
 - d. The consequences and resulting outcome is that we will be able to live our spiritual lives constantly being strengthened by the Holy Spirit, as a result being nourished and unmovable by His love.
 - e. The word love is “agape”, God’s divine love, but in the context it is our love for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the vertical axis making us strong and stable.
 - 1) The word love “agape” appears 14 times in Ephesians.
 - 2) The metaphor of being rooted “rhizoo” is an agricultural one of a living plant or tree having deep roots drawing water and nourishment to grow, develop, mature and be strong.

* The word is found only one other time in the New Testament, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, **rooted** and built up in Him and established in the

faith, as you have been taught,
abounding in it with thanksgiving.”
Col. 2:6-7

- 3) The metaphor of being grounded “themelios” is an architectural term for the foundation of a building.
 - a) It is the most-costly.
 - b) It takes a long time.
 - c) It is what will hold and sustain together the rest of the structure.

Illustration

“Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree **Planted** by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.” Ps. 1:1-3

Application

1. The Scriptures record the wealth of the riches of God.

- a. For sinners, “Or do you despise the **riches** of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” Rom. 2:4
- b. For saints, “that He might make known the **riches** of His glory on the vessels of mercy,

which He had prepared beforehand for glory.”
Rom. 9:23

- c. For the Remnant, “Now if their fall *is* **riches** for the world, and their failure **riches** for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!” Rom. 11:12
 - d. The appraisal of the wealth of the riches of God, “Oh, the depth of the **riches** both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!” Rom. 11:33
2. The Bible clearly exhorts the believer to live abiding in Christ,
- a. The picture of drawing from Jesus, the vine. Jn. 15:1-8
 - b. The warning is to live as the new man in contrast to the old man. Rom. 6:6, 11; Eph. 4:22, 23; Col. 3:9, 10
 - c. The new divine nature is enables us to escape the corruption of the world and for everything pertaining to life and godliness. 2Pet. 1:3-5
 - d. Continuously being filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:18
3. The love of God reveals our inability, bringing us to the end of ourselves and depending on Jesus.
- a. “But above all these things put on **love**, which is the bond of perfection.” Col. 3:14
 - b. “Husbands, **love** your wives and do not be bitter toward them.” Col. 3:19
 - c. Paul said, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have

become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” 1Cor. 13:1-3

- d. There is no greater strength and proper motive than love, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the **greatest** of these *is* love.” 1Cor. 13:13

Paul prayed the Ephesians be empowered by God spiritually!

II. Paul prayed the Ephesians be endowed with the love of God experientially. vs. 18-19a

- A. The apostle Paul prayed the Ephesians understand the vastness of God’s love. vs. 18
 * This second purpose clause contains the third and forth petitions. vs. 18-19a
1. The third petition is to grasp the potential of the love of God, “may be able to comprehend with all the saints.”
 - a. This purpose clause is introduced by the word that “hina” in Greek, but is not found in our English text.
 - 1) The first was in verse sixteen.

- 2) The third will come in the last half of verse nineteen.
- b. The prayer petition is that the Ephesians comprehend the vastness of the love of God from verse seventeen.
- 1) The word comprehend “katalambano” has the idea of understanding, to lay hold of, to grasp for oneself and cease for one’s own possession, making it knowledge of experience.
 - 2) The potential is for “all the saints”, Jew and Gentile, no person “in Christ” is at any disadvantage to grasp this understanding and make it their own knowledge experience.
 - 3) This understanding and comprehension of the love of God is founded and dependent on personal faith and love attained by the word of God and through the Holy Spirit, a heart knowledge experience with God, not mere intellectual knowledge.
2. The vast potential of the love of God is described in a four-fold manner, “the width and length and depth and height.”
- a. There have been many fanciful interpretations of these four dimensions in the use of the cross.
 - b. The simple and most obvious meaning, it indicates the all encompassing, all inclusive, all sufficient and all powerful

love of God, as the Greek scholars tell us the article combines all four into one unit.

- c. This is part of the “mystery of Christ” Paul referred to in verse four that was hidden in previous generation and people, but now made known to the saint in the church.

B. The apostle Paul prayed the Ephesians apply the vastness of the love of God. vs. 19a

1. This is the fourth petition for the Ephesians, “to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.” vs. 19a
 - a. Verse 19a is the goal of the petition of verse 18.
 - b. This is the living out by personal experience by application of the love of God towards others.
2. The knowledge once again is not mere intellectual and theoretical information, but “to know”.
 - a. The word know “ginosko”, means knowledge joined by experience.
 - 1) Not some philosophical belief.
 - 2) Not some academic religious view.
 - b. The love is now specified, “the love of Christ”, focusing on His love for us and other sinners.
 - 1) That Jesus died in place of sinners.

- 2) That Jesus reaches out to sinners that they may repent and be saved.
 - 3) That Jesus does not deny, reject or looks down on any sinner, regardless of the sins they have committed or the low state of depravity they are presently living.
3. The petition of Paul sounded like a contradiction, but was not, “which passes knowledge.”
 - a. Paul is praying that the Ephesians might obtain that what is unattainable by mere knowledge.
 - 1) This time the word knowledge is different “gnosis”, which means intellectual, informational.
 - * Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 1Cor. 8:1
 - 2) This kind of knowledge again stands in sharp contrast to the first one mention in this verse “to know” “ginosko” by personal experience as one lives it out.
 - b. Paul used the word surpasses “huperballo”, that indicates to throw beyond, to exceed or transcend.
 - 1) The idea being the inability to understand or comprehend the vastness of the potential of the love of God simply intellectually.

- 2) The inability to understand how God could forgive and save a murderer, rapist, etc.
- 3) God is so different from us, having no sin nature or evil intents by His love for man, while at the same time being holy must judge sin, until there is repentance to except the gift of His love, Jesus.

Illustration

Shakespeare said, “Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds. Or bends with the remover to remove: O, no! it is an ever fixed mark, that looks on tempest, and is never shaken.”

Application

1. Jesus said some important things to believers about His love.

- a. “A new commandment I give to you, that you **love** one another; as I have loved you, that you also **love** one another.” Jn. 13:34
- b. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another.” Jn. 13:35
- c. “If you **love** Me, keep My commandments.” Jn. 14:15
- d. “Greater **love** has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” Jn. 15:13

2. Agape love is the focus of the New Testament.

- a. The fruit of the Spirit agape manifest God’s communicable attributes through us, “But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.” Gal. 5:22
 - b. Paul says the love of Christ constrained him. 2Cor. 5:14a
 - c. The reward of the believer at the Bema-Seat will be based on the motive of the heart, love for God and man. 1Cor. 3:12-15; 4:5
3. The epistle bears witness and gives much emphasis on the love of God.
- a. By the division.
 - 1) The wealth of the believer by the love of God. Eph. 1:3
 - 2) The walk of the believer in the love of God. Eph. 4:1-6:9
 - 3) The warfare of the believer through the love of God. Eph. 6:10-24
 - b. By the content.
 - 1) “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in **love**” Eph. 1:4b
 - 2) “Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your **love** for all the saints.” Eph. 1:15
 - 3) “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great **love** with which He loved us.” Eph. 2:3
 - 4) “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in **love**.” Eph. 4:2

- 5) “but, speaking the truth in **love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ.” Eph. 4:15
- 6) “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in **love**.” Eph. 4:16
- 7) “And walk in **love**, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” Eph. 5:2
- 8) “Husbands, **love** your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” Eph. 5:25
- 9) “So husbands ought to **love** their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” Eph. 5:28
- 10) “Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so **love** his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.” Eph. 5:33
- 11) “Peace to the brethren, and **love** with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Eph. 6:23
- 12) “Grace *be* with all those who **love** our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.” Eph. 6:24

Paul prayed the Ephesians be endowed with the love of God experientially!

III. Paul prayed the Ephesians be yielded to be more like God corporately. vs. 19b

- A. The apostle Paul prayed they might be filled with all the fullness of God. vs. 19b
 - * “that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
 1. This is third purpose clause that contains the fifth petition.
 - a. This purpose clause is introduced by the word that “hina” in the Greek.
 - b. Like the other two. vs. 16a, 18a
 2. This is the climax of Paul’s prayer!
 - a. The expression, “to be filled with the fullness of God does not mean that a person can be filled with the same measure of God’s fullness.
 - b. The expression refers to the riches of God’s grace in Christ available to us.
 - 1) “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the **riches** of His grace.” Eph. 1:7
 - 2) “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding **riches** of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:7
 - 3) “that He would grant you, according to the **riches** of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.” Eph. 3:16

3. The words used by Paul verify the potential reality of the petition in prayer for the corporate church “you” is plural.
 - a. The word filled “pleroo”, means to make full to the brim, the aorist passive making it affective, we are to be filled and can be filled. Lenski
 - 1) It is used for the church, the body of Christ to indicate that in some way we complete Jesus, “the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Eph. 1:23
 - 2) It is used for Jesus, Who descended and also ascended above all heavens “that He might fill all things.” Eph. 4:10
 - 3) It is used for the continuous filling of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer to live out the life of Christ. Eph. 5:18
 - b. The word fullness “pleroma”, is a different word and denotes fullness for all that is necessary and needed.
 - 1) The word is used for a ship inasmuch as it is filled and manned with sailors, rowers, and soldiers, ready for its journey. Strongs
 - 2) The word is used of the fullness we all have received of Christ, for the adequate state for salvation in Christ, “For you are complete in Him and for the stature of a mature Christian of the

- fullness of Christ. Jn. 1:16; Col. 2:10; Eph. 4:14
- 3) The word with “eis”, means to or unto, appearing 4 times in the letter. Eph. 1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:13
- B.** The apostle Paul is referring to God the Father as the source of this filling for the believer. vs. 19b
1. The phrase “all the fullness of God” refers to the Father and looks back to “the riches of His glory”. vs. 16
 - a. All of His communicable attributes.
 - b. All that He desires us to be, to its full measure.
 - c. All that God wants to take us through to make us more like Him.

* Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount said, “Be perfect as your Father which is perfect” complete, mature, lacking nothing for our life in the Spirit “in Christ”. Matt. 5:48
 - d. The five petitions are like steps on a ladder, interrelated and interconnected arriving to the top, “all the fullness of God”.
 2. The Father has been pointed out as the source of blessing throughout the epistle.
 - a. Paul said this was the dispensation of the grace of God the Father. Eph. 3:2

- b. Paul was a minister by the grace of God the Father. Eph. 3:7
- c. Paul's prayer intent was that the manifold wisdom of Father be known by the church to the angels. Eph. 3:10
- d. Paul prayed bowing his knee to God the Father of Jesus Christ. Eph. 3:14

Illustration

It has been said that love is not blind- it sees more, not less. But because it sees more, it is willing to see less.
#3208

Application

1. The three persons of the Godhead are **involved** in Salvation to glorification.
 - a. The Father is the source or origin, the Son is the channel and the Holy Spirit is the agent.
 - b. Three persons, yet one God, one Lord, one Spirit and one Savior!
 - c. Yet Father and Son are co-equal.
 - d. The Father demonstrated His love by giving His Son for us on the cross. Jn. 3:16
 - e. The Son loved us so much that He laid down His life for us. Jn. 10:18
 - f. The Holy Spirit imparts to us the fruit of the Spirit, agape love. Gal. 5:22
2. The corporate witness of the church of Jesus is to be marked by maturity, love serving others.

- a. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just **as** God in **Christ** forgave you." Eph. 4:32
- b. "If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself," you do well." Ja. 2:8
- c. "And above all things have fervent **love** for one another, for "**love** will cover a multitude of sins." 1Pet. 4:8
- d. "My little children, let us not **love** in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." 1Jn. 3:18
- e. "**Love** has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." 1Jn. 4:17
- f. "We **love** Him because He first loved us." 1Jn. 4:19

Paul prayed the Ephesians be yielded to be more like God corporately!

Conclusion

The five petitions of Paul's prayer of intercession for the Ephesians, consist of a three-fold purpose:

- I. Paul prayed that the Ephesians be empowered by God spiritually!
- II. Paul prayed that the Ephesians be endowed with the love of God experientially!
- III. Paul prayed that the Ephesians be yielded to be more like God corporately!