



EPHESIANS 3

Crack Of Dawn BIBLE STUDY

Chapter Overview

In Ephesians 3 Paul describes himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of Gentiles as he reveals the mystery God hid for ages, but revealed in Christ. He also describes himself as a servant of the gospel, enabled only by God's grace. He administers the mysteries of God's purpose for the church - that His manifold wisdom is made clear to the "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms". He prays that they will know "the love that surpasses" knowledge and be filled with the "fullness of God".



Paul as Prisoner

vv. 1–6

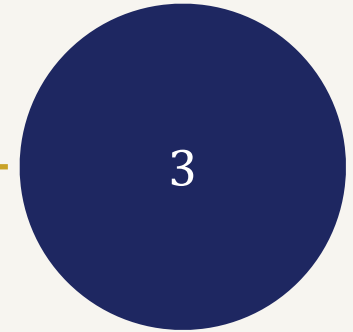
For the Gentiles



Paul as Servant

vv. 7–13

Grace to preach boundless riches of Christ



Paul as Intercessor

vv. 14–21

"Filled up with the fulness of God"



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Ephesians 3:10 says that God's wisdom is made known "through the church." What does that say about the importance of the local church?

Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels! From The Message

A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Ephesians 3:14–21

Paul's prayer for the believers in Ephesus — a plea for inner strength, a love that surpasses knowledge, and a closing hymn of praise.

New American Standard

14-19 For this reason I bend my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.

The Message

14-19 My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

New American Standard

20-21 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

The Message

20-21 God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the church!

Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!

Glory down all the generations!

Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!

Kneeling Before the Father

“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.”

Paul begins in humility and reverence. God is named as the source of every family — the origin of all belonging, in heaven and on earth.

What reason? (The answer comes from the previous chapter)

Ephesians 3:8 from The Message says it this way: “God saw to it that I was equipped, but you can be sure that it had nothing to do with my natural abilities.”

Why might Paul's posture — kneeling — matter, given prayer in that culture was usually done standing?

How would you explain the role of humility and reverence for God when we pray?

Strength in the Inner Being

“...that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”

The first request: inner strength, drawn not from human effort but from the abundance of God's own riches, given through the Holy Spirit.

What's the difference between relying on human effort and being strengthened “with power through His Spirit”?

How do you remember to ask God before attempting something greater than you are?

Where in your life right now do you feel you need this kind of strength?

Christ at Home in the Heart

“...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love...”

Paul asks that Christ would settle in — not visit, but dwell — and that love would be the soil believers are rooted and built upon.

What's the difference between Christ “visiting” and Christ “dwelling”?

What would change if you lived like He was permanently at home in you?

What does it look like practically to be “rooted and grounded in love” day to day?

18-19

Grasping the Immeasurable Love

Paul prays believers would have power, together with all God's people, to grasp the full dimensions of Christ's love:

Wide

Long

High

Deep

A love that surpasses knowledge — so that believers may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

How can love “surpass knowledge” and still be something we're meant to know? Does that feel like a contradiction, or does it make sense to you?

Why do you think Paul uses four dimensions — wide, long, high, deep — instead of just saying “great”?

The Closing Doxology

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...”

Paul closes with praise: glory to God in the church and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, for ever and ever.

Paul says God can do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” — what's something you've stopped asking or imagining for because it felt too big?

Why end a prayer about inner strength and love with praise about God's power?

SUMMARY

The Shape of the Prayer

1

POSTURE

Humble, kneeling reverence before the Father

2

REQUEST

Inner strength, Christ dwelling in the heart, a love-rooted life

3

GOAL

To grasp and be filled with the fullness of Christ's love

4

RESPONSE

Praise to a God who does far more than we can ask or imagine