

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

A prayer for the church

I. Introduction

- Anyone who has every prayed has wrestled with prayer. You have wondered why it is that God denied you what you prayed for when you felt certain that it was his will. You have wondered whether it was a particular sin that kept God from answering your prayer or whether you were mistaken about what God's will was. You have wondered why it seems that God's timing is not at all your timing. He seems to almost revel in answering prayers at the last possible minute. It begs questions like; Is God one who delights in making his children squirm or is it simply that we are so untrusting that we squirm when we ought to be patiently and confidently trusting whatever answer God gives, whenever he gives it?
- One of the questions that reformed christians are often asked is, "if God is so sovereign, why bother praying for anything? It's all predestined to happen anyway right?" Paul is our example in dealing with this question. Paul had a deep awareness of God's absolute sovereignty and this, rather than hinder his prayer life, seemed to make it more deep and more fervent.

II. Paul prays because of what God is doing

❖ Ephesians 3:14--*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,*

- By "for this reason" Paul is saying "because of what I see God already doing."

🎧 What is it that God is already doing?

1. Saving the far off as well as those near (Ephesians 2:11-13; 2:16)
 2. Reconciling Jew and Gentile in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16)
 3. Building them into a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:20-22)
 4. Revealing the hidden manifold wisdom of God. Not just to this world but even to the angels (Ephesians 3:9-10)
 5. Allowing/Ordaining that participants in his activity endure persecution (Ephesians 3:1, John 15:18)
- Paul is moved to pray because of the magnitude and significance of what God is doing. He is basically saying "This is some amazing (non-hyperbolic usage) stuff! I need to pray!"

III. Paul prays for all believers everywhere

❖ Ephesians 3:15--*from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named*

- Greek word *pasa* is a collective term that is translated either "every" or "whole."
- I believe whole is a better translation because Paul is speaking of the family that derives it's name from God. A family that has members in heaven and on earth. Does this describe the whole of humanity? No. So then who is this family? The Church.

❖ Ephesians 3:15--*Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (KJV)*

IV. The content of Paul's prayer

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- ❖ Ephesians 3:16-19--*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*

1. Inwardly strengthened with power by the Holy Spirit
2. Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith
3. Rooted and grounded in love
4. Strength to comprehend God's love¹²
5. Experience God's immeasurable love
6. Filled with the fullness of God

V. The Doxology

- ❖ Ephesians 3:20-21--*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*

🗣️ Paul is erupting in praise yet again. Why?

1. Because the things Paul sees God doing are all enormous, the things Paul prays for are enormous, yet in the sight of these huge things he realizes that God is still way, way bigger.
2. He simply can't wait to praise and glorify him as he does all these things.
3. He is aware that these enormous things will continue through all generations of the church and we will glorify him forever because of m.

VI. Prayer