

"The Revelation of God's Mystery"

Ephesians 3:1-21

Part 7

Introduction: The past two weeks we have been looking at the prayer which Paul offered for the believers at Ephesus in Ephesians 3.

Paul's Prayer

Part 3

So far, we have looked at:

I. The Request for Strength

Notice Ephesians 3:16

This strengthening comes by the Holy Spirit and for that reason there are two important Truths which we must abide by:

1. **We must not quench the Spirit.**

1 Thessalonians 5:19

¹⁹ Quench not the Spirit.

2. **We must not grieve the Holy Spirit.**

Ephesians 4:30

³⁰ And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

It is important that we submit to the Holy Spirit in order to be strengthened in the INNER MAN.

II. The Request for Surrender

Notice Ephesians 3:17a

Paul now prays that Jesus Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith. The word "DWELL" means "TO SETTLE DOWN and to FEEL AT HOME".

III. Request for Stability.

Notice Ephesians 3:17b-19a

Paul begins this section with a declaration in verse 17.

We are ROOTED and GROUNDED in love.

- **Our salvation has its roots in the love of God.**

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

¹⁷ *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

- **Our salvation is secured by the love of God.**

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Jeremiah 31:3

³ *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love:** therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

1. The Request

Notice Ephesians 3:18-19a

Paul now reveals this third request and it is to know the love of Christ. He presents the love of Jesus Christ as being 4 dimensional. This is where we stopped last week so today, we are going to look at these 4 dimensions of God's love.

a. The Breadth of God's Love.

Paul begins his request for all believers to know the breadth of God's love. The best way to understand what Paul is requesting here is by asking the question, "How broad is the love of God?"

Picture with me if you would a river at flood stage and in your mind observe how broad the river becomes as it rises out of its banks. It comes out of its banks and it covers acres upon acres of land.

This is the very idea with the love of God. It is so broad that it covers the entire earth but to be more detailed, His love covers every sinner that has ever lived.

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Hebrews 2:9

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty for the sins of every person that has ever lived. But they must accept Him as Savior before His blood is applied to their lives.

All of this shows us just how broad the love of God really is.

b. The Length of God's Love.

The question here is, "How far will God's love go?"

There is not one person who can go so far into sin that they will step outside the love of God. THIS BY THE WAY APPLIES TO BELIEVERS. Maybe you have turned to sin, and you are wondering if you have traveled outside the love of God. The answer is, "NO!" You can never go beyond the length of the love of God.

Luke 15:11-24

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

*20 And he arose, and came to his father. **But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.***

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

c. The Depth of God's Love.

Now the question arises, "How deep does God's love go?" I want to consider two answers for this question.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷ *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

The depth of God's love can be seen in the cross. He sent His only Son from the riches of heaven to this sin filled world and condemned Him to die on a cross. There was nothing lower than a man dying on a cross.

But there is yet another way to see the depth of God's love. No matter how far into sin someone falls they are never out of the love of God. Believers have fallen into some very immoral places but even there they are still in the realm of God's love.

Let us remember David and the sins which he committed.

Psalm 32:1-5

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

² *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

³ *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

⁴ *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*

⁵ *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

d. The Height of God's Love.

The height of His love can be seen in something we have already looked at.

Ephesians 1:3, 2:6-7

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

God has taken us from the depths of sin, and He has seated us in Christ in heavenly places.

Jude 1:24

²⁴ Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

IV. Request to be Controlled

Notice Ephesians 3:19b

Here Paul prays for believers to be filled with the fulness of God. Let me share with you the words of Clarke on this request.

"Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be filled with God is a great thing; to be filled with the fullness of God is still greater; but to be filled with all the fulness of God utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding."

The question here is what does Paul mean? Let me show you a verse that will help.

Ephesians 5:18

¹⁸ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

To be drunk with wine is to be controlled by alcohol. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. To be filled with the fulness of God is to be controlled by God. Let me refresh your minds with what we have been looking at in Romans.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

These verses would describe what it looks like to be filled with all the fulness of God.

It is ONLY by faith that we will be filled with all the fulness of God.

Hebrews 10:38

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Conclusion:

V. The Doxology

Notice Ephesians 3:20-21

The focus of these first three chapters is the church as the body of Jesus Christ. Paul is challenging us as the church to put into practice all that we have learned. He is challenging us to live by faith in the Truths located in these chapters. We have not yet begun to see the power of God. He can do what we cannot even imagine in our minds.

If we are willing to trust Him and to serve Him there is no limit to what He can do through His church. God's power works within us and He desires that we live for Him so that He can manifest His power.

He wants us as living sacrifices so that He can work through us. There is a world of darkness all around us and God desires to use His church to show forth His love and grace to the world so that He will be glorified.

Notice Ephesians 3:21 again.