

Sunday, May 31, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Ephesians 3:14-21—A Prayer to be Strengthened in Your Inner Man

Introduction

- This week we are going to continue our series of studies entitled Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul.
- Today we are going to begin looking at a second prayer in Ephesians located in Chapter 3.
- Ephesians 3:14-21—comes on the heels of Paul’s most detailed description of the mystery as the manifold wisdom of God and the unsearchable riches of Christ. Paul also makes known that it’s God’s desire that all men would see the fellowship of the mystery.

Overview of the Prayer

- The prayer contains four major parts.
- According to God the Father’s riches in glory Paul prays that the Ephesians would be:
 - Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man
 - Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith
 - Be rooted and grounded in love might be able to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height and know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge
 - Filled with all the fullness of God

Ephesians 3:16

- Paul prays that God the Father in verse 14 would “grant” some things unto them.
 - Ephesians 1:17—the expression translated give unto you is the same one that appears in Chapter 3:16. Therefore, there are some additional things that Paul wants God the Father to grant or give to the Ephesians.
- Notice that Paul’s request on their behalf is “according to” or in line with “the riches of his glory.”
- In other words, the things that Paul is requesting on their behalf are in accordance with the riches of God’s glory.

- All through Paul’s epistles he talks about the riches of God.
 - Ephesians 1:7—riches of his grace
 - Ephesians 1:18—the riches of his glory
 - Ephesians 2:7—riches of his grace
 - Ephesians 3:8—unsearchable riches of Christ
 - Philippians 4:19—riches in glory
 - Colossians 1:27—riches of the glory of this mystery
 - Colossians 2:2—riches of the full assurance of understanding

- II Corinthians 8:9—Jesus Christ became poor by making himself of no reputation coming in the likeness of men and dying on the cross for our sin so that through his sacrifice we might be made rich.

- That is why we define Grace as God’s Riches At Christ Expense.

- Ephesians 3:16—what is it then that Paul petitions God the Father to grant us according to the riches of his glory? To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

- To be “strengthened” means to be made strong, increase in strength, to grow strong.

- Notice that we are to be strengthened with “might.” Might means power.
 - II Corinthians 12:9—“for my strength is made perfect” that “the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
 - Ephesians 1:19—“exceeding greatness of his power”
 - Colossians 1:11, 29—“worketh in me mightily”

- Ephesians 3:16—how are we going to receive this strengthening with might? By the Spirit. It is only going to be the work of the Holy Spirit that produces and furnishes us with this strength. During the Dispensation of Grace God empowers and energizes his church through the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Romans 15:13, 19—it was not his strength that he was able to accomplish these things.
 - I Corinthians 2:4
 - I Thessalonians 1:5
 - II Timothy 1:7, 14

- Ephesians 3:16—please notice where does this spiritual empowering occur? In your inner man.
- II Corinthians 4:16—all of us have an outward man that functions, operates in, and relates to the physical material world around us. However, we also possess a spiritual inner or inward man that is immaterial.
- I Thessalonians 5:23—being made in the image of God man is a tricotomy possessing three parts.
 - Outward man—body
 - Inward man—soul and spirit
- When you get saved God the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your spirit. Thus establishing a spiritual relationship between you and God the Father.
- Ephesians 3:14, 16—Notice that in verse 14 Paul prays to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that in verse 16 the Spirit would strengthen us with might in our inner man.
- It is imperative that you understand that this mighty strengthening is going to occur in your inner man not your outward man.
- Today in the Dispensation of Grace God is doing something different than he was in time past he has concluded Israel his physical earthly people in unbelief and is forming the Church the body of Christ. A new spiritual heavenly agency. Therefore God deals with his body differently from how he dealt with Israel in the past.
- II Corinthians 5:16—we don't have a physical fleshly relationship with Christ the way Israel did in time past. Rather we have a spiritual relationship with our heavenly father.
- Ephesians 1:3—our blessings are all given to us by Christ but they are spiritual in nature not physical. That is why Paul prays that our inward man would be strengthened by the Spirit.
- As a result, some have accused us teaching that God is not working in your life.
- Galatians 4:19—God wants Christ to be formed in you.
- Colossians 1:27—Jesus Christ wants to live his life out through us.

- II Corinthians 4:10-11—when we walk by faith in who God has made in Jesus Christ it becomes his life that is being lived out through us. It is the life of Christ being made manifest in our mortal flesh.
- Philippians 2:13—God is at work today in you that believe. It is an inner man work so that the life of Jesus Christ can be shown forth in your outer man.
- I Thessalonians 2:13—it is faith in the words on page that activates the power of God in your inner man.
- It is easy to rejoice in grace when everything is going great. When trouble comes we have a choice to make, are we going to operate in faith or our own efforts and understanding.
- The word of God will work in you to fortify your inner man, Biblically inform your understanding, renew your mind, and mightily strengthen your inner man to deal with whatever life has thrown at your.
- The Grace Life strives to make this the normal function of your daily existence.
- We need to let the Holy Spirit through the word of God strengthen our inner man.