

## A Prayer for the Fullness of God

Ephesians 3:14-20 <sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> 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, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- ❖ **Introduction** - This is a Prayer – It could make a huge difference for you today
  - **Are you Ready for a Break-Through** with your walk with Christ???
    - **Today could be that day...** The Spirit may do something through these Words
  - **Paul has spent a great deal of time so far in this book...**
    - Telling this group of believers, who they are in Christ...
    - And it is a marvelous revelation
    - And Paul gives us his reason for praying for these Ephesian Believers...
  - **It is found back in chapter 2...**
    - **“are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (v. 22).**
    - **For this reason,** therefore (that our new identity makes us the dwelling place of God)
    - Paul therefore prays for these Ephesians believers...
  - **And I must add...** this prayer should apply to Christians throughout the history of the church...
    - Paul was praying it for them because of what was true for them in Christ
    - Therefore... this is a prayer that applies directly to you this morning...
  - **Let me Ask You a Question**
    - **Do you ever want more in your Spiritual Life?**
      - Do you ever feel like your treading water... maybe you’re in the same place from years ago?
    - **And you look at some other Christians, and they seem to be living hard for Christ...**
      - And for you, it is a real struggle...
  - **I believe this prayer is the answer for all of that...**
    - What Paul is asking for is Magnificent... It is almost Unimaginable...
    - I must apologize for only spending one morning on these verses...
    - I have been reading through them and praying them on and off for almost two years now...
    - Paul is truly speaking of something remarkable...
  - **This may be one of the most remarkable passages in the entire Bible...**
    - Especially for the Christian in regards to his relationship to Jesus...
  - **There have been a great deal of Christian Writers and Preachers that would say:**
    - Paul is speaking of a different kind of Christian Experience here...
    - As big of a difference as there is b/w a believer and a non believer...
    - There is just as big of a difference here b/w the nominal Christian...
    - and the Christian experiences this...
      - How Marvelous is this prayer...
  - **Let Me Say one other thing in terms of Introduction here today...**
    - This is attainable for all Christians...
    - Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus... not just the elders and leaders...
    - But to the whole congregation...
    - **So... notice... this is Word to Christians only...**
      - if you are not in Christ... you have no part in this prayer...

- This doesn't mean you should check out... Maybe you would see something of Jesus today
  - ◆ Let's look into the passage

## ❖ Outline:

- Paul is Confident in God
- 1) That You Be Strengthened in Your Inner Being
- 2) That Jesus Would Dwell in Your Hearts
- 3) That You Be Rooted and Grounded in Love
- 4) That You May Comprehend the Love of Christ
- 5) That You May Be Filled with All the Fullness of God (Climax!!!)
- Paul is Confident in God

## ❖ Paul is Confident in God

- <sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory
- **For this reason... we have already established this...**
  - Essentially because of who we are now in Christ...
  - We are actually the dwelling place of God Almighty through His Spirit...
  - The Spirit of God has come to live within us...
- **And Paul is praying to his heavenly Father... our heavenly Father...**
  - And Paul is confident in Prayer...
  - He is confident because God is his Heavenly Father...
  - But also... because God is Rich...
    - God has more than enough to answer Paul's prayer for every believer in the city of Ephesus
    - And every believer to have this prayer...
- **God is rich in glory...**
  - Paul bows before God in heaven...
  - Not according to Paul's church attendance record... not because he had been a religious leader
  - Not because he was a really hard working missionary...
  - He bows humbly before God the Father...
- **ACCORDING to the riches of his glory...**
  - Paul knew God was overflowing with glory and might and beauty...
  - And He knew this prayer would be glorifying to God...
  - So... He says... Father... I have a request... and will you answer it in accord with...
  - Your Glory... And God's glory is endless!!!! It will one day fill the entire earth...
    - Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea."

## ❖ 1) That You Be Strengthened in Your Inner Being

- he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
- **Paul's Prayer is that you "be strengthened in your inner being"**
  - Strengthened with what? With Power
  - How would we be strengthened? Through the Spirit...
    - The Spirit of God is the source of power for the Christian
- **So... Paul is asking that the Spirit of God would give power to our inner being....**
  - Why is this so important?
    - Well... let's Answer two questions: 1) What is my inner being? 2) Why does it need power?
- **1) The Inner Being** – the center of the man... it is his heart... it is his personality...

- The inner being is who you are within... not what people see on the outside...
- The inner being is who you are within... It is where you desire and think
- It is the innermost part of who you are... This is the place within you that drives you
- **2) Why does it need to be strengthened with Power?**
  - Our **inner being** is weak and attacked very often...
    - We have no power without the Spirit...
  - This is where Paul said his delight for God was
    - **Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,**
  - **It is from this inner being** or inner man that we find strength to fight temptations...
    - It is also where we find motivation to serve God
  - **Paul prays** for a strengthening of the inner being...
    - As we are strengthened by the Spirit of God with Power...
      - ◆ Our delight in the ways of God will increase...

- **Application: Don't you want to be strengthened within?**
  - Don't you struggle with getting on your knees before God for Prayer and Bible Reading?
  - Don't you struggle with who you are as a person? Do you sometimes feel divided?
  - Do you struggle with a lack of joy and excitement for the ways of Christ?
  - HEY! Are you struggling with fears and anxieties and depressions...?
    - Pray that your inner man would be strengthened!
    - Is it not your inner being that struggles with such things?
  - Do you feel weak as a Christian?
  - Would you pray this prayer with Paul?
  - **Pray that God would strengthen your inner being with power through the Spirit**

## ❖ 2) That Jesus Would Dwell in Your Hearts

- **<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—**
- **The idea here is that Jesus might dwell deeply in your hearts**
  - “May dwell” means that Jesus would settle in to live within your heart...
- **You may ask the question... well... doesn't Jesus already live in my heart...**
  - Isn't this what happened when I first got saved...
  - And I would answer “kind of” but not to the extent Paul is speaking here...
  - **When we were saved...** we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...
    - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ...
    - So, yes, the spirit of Christ has been poured into the Christian...
- **But, here Paul is going a little further, a little deeper...**
  - He asks for us to “be strengthened with Power through the Spirit in the Inner being” ...
  - “SO THAT” Christ may dwell in your hearts...
- **So... it seems to me that Paul is speaking of something stronger... a stronger presence of Christ**
  - This is not a second blessing after the Holy Spirit comes... but...
  - I believe this is an ongoing continual indwelling of Jesus
- **I believe this is about communion with Jesus...**
  - I believe this is about a closeness in your walk with Christ... a quality
  - This is what Paul is talking about... not the technicality of... well we already have Christ...
  - But you all know... there are times where you are closer to Jesus than at other times...
- **Sin Usually breaks our fellowship with Christ...**
  - When we quench the Spirit or grieve the Spirit with sin... our closeness with Christ weakens...
  - When we skip prayer, or Bible Reading, or attending and serving our local church
    - Our closeness with Christ weakens

- **I also believe this is about growth as a Christian...**
  - We already have... but now we want more... and we want more of Him...
  - Here... I think we are talking about knowing more of Jesus...
  - Here, Paul is praying that we get more and more of Jesus...
  - Isn't this the point anyway... to have Jesus... it is not that we are saved...
    - Rather... it is that Jesus is precious to us...
- **The indwelling of Christ is a pre cursor to the day when we will dwell with God eternally!**
- **Finally... He says here... "Through Faith"**
  - This is an exercise of Faith... It is by Faith that we come to know Christ...
  - Therefore it is no surprise that it is by Faith that we continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus
  - I believe Paul is encouraging the believers to trust Jesus... to trust Him to dwell within them
    - I think He is also instructing them on the way in which this indwelling occurs...
    - By faith... By active believing...

### ❖ 3) That You Be Rooted and Grounded in Love

- —that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- **Here the prayer is simple and straightforward enough... be rooted and grounded in love...**
  - Now... if you notice... this will lead to something else in verse 18...
    - Your ability to comprehend the love of Christ
- **But first... we see here... we are to be rooted and grounded in love...**
  - Rooted means... deeply rooted... or established
  - The idea is of a great oak tree... with its roots going deep down into the earth
    - Where its root system is almost as big as the tree itself that you see
    - He is praying for you to be deeply rooted...
  - **And Grounded...** means to be strengthened or to have a foundation
    - So... the idea here is like that of a firm foundation that a building is built upon
    - It needs to be something hard and sturdy... something strong and durable
    - We do not want to build on sand or mud... rather we build on concrete with iron
    - Concrete with reinforced iron through the foundation...
- **And what is it that we are to be deeply rooted and grounded in?**
  - What is Paul praying that we have as a foundation for our inner being?
  - Well... it is LOVE
- **Love is the strongest and greatest of all expressions in the universe**
  - **1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things... <sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**
    - Love is greater even than death
    - Love is more than an emotion and an attitude... it is an expression of the will
    - We can choose to love...
- **And here... Paul wants us our lives to be rooted deeply in Love**
  - And here... I think He is praying that we will:
  - Know Love and Live Love
  - Notice what John... the disciple whom Jesus loved said...
    - **1 John 4:7- Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the**

world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

◆ God is Love... and we too are called to Love

- Paul wants our entire being to be rooted and grounded in Love...
  - Knowing Love, and Living Love...

➤ **Then... Paul goes on from saying he wants us to be rooted deeply in love**

- And He gives us something more... a way deeper into love
- I think He is praying this next part, because he knows... we need this
- If we ever want to be rooted and grounded in love...

❖ **4) That You May Comprehend the Love of Christ**

- <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,

➤ **Look... there is a reason this is a prayer... it is because this is something only God can do in us...**

➤ **Paul is asking the Father... that these Christians... would have the strength to comprehend**

- The vastness of the love of Christ...
- Which he says surpasses Knowledge...
- This love of Christ is something that goes beyond our mental capabilities...
- And here... Paul is asking the Father that we understand it!

➤ **This is an amazing verse...**

➤ **He first prays that we have the strength to comprehend**

- This is that you may be “Fully Able”... to “realize or grasp”
- So... we can tell... this is going to be something really big

➤ **Next we see he is praying for us to comprehend**

- The breadth, length, height and depth of the love of Christ
- I doubt he is speaking of four aspects of the love of Christ here...
  - That would limit it...
- **Rather... it seems He is trying to convey the VASTNESS of His love...**
  - When I read this, I thought of the universe...
  - Someone else I studied though of the fullness of the oceans...
  - **The universe stretches out in every direction and throughout time**
    - ◆ And there is no end to it that we know of...
    - ◆ And there is very little known of the universe by all our scientists
      - Throughout all of our time...

▪ **Here with the love of Christ...**

- There is a vastness to it... and it stretches out in every possible way
- There is a reason Paul Prays for this... that He says it like this...
- Because it was beyond Words... He couldn't describe it fully....
  - ◆ He just says.... IT IS REALLY REALLY BIG... that is all I have!

➤ **That Surpasses Knowledge**

- He is praying they understand something... that is beyond understanding...
- That seems odd doesn't it... contradictory maybe...
- But I think you see... this is something that goes beyond the human intellect...
- It is something that only God through His Spirit can do...
- Remember the first part of this passage... it is the Spirit that He asks to strengthen us
  - may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

➤ **Application:**

- This is key in your life Christians...
  - Want to walk in a full walk with God... then this is key for you
  - You say... what do I do then... Paul Prayed this for these guys...
  - What about me?
- **Pray** it for yourself... make it a matter of prayer daily...
- Then... **search** it out...
  - Search out the love of Christ as you see it in His Word...
  - Seek to see all the ways in which Jesus loves
- Then **meditate** on it...
  - Keep it always right there in the forefront of your mind...
  - Think on the love of Christ in your life and in others...
- Then **practice** the love of Christ...
  - Put your faith to work... live it out daily...
- **Then... I would say... Fall on it...**
  - Fall on the love of Christ when all else fails... when nothing can sustain you
  - When you are weak and needy and have lost your way
  - Fall into the loving Grace of the Love of Jesus Christ...
  - **Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

#### ❖ 5) That You May Be Filled with All the Fullness of God

- **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**
- And here we come to what I consider to be the Climax of the Prayer...
  - Here is the goal... to be filled with all the fullness of God...
  - There is much that can be said here, but we will say just a few things...
- **You want this Christian!... You should long for and beg to be filled with the fullness of God...**
- **The Psalmist said:**
  - **Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**
- **My Understanding is that the fullness of God is Jesus...**
  - Collossians 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily
- **It seems like Paul is asking that we be filled with the fullness of God...**
  - Much like Jesus was filled with the fullness of God while He took on human form...
- **Now... if I understood completely what this meant... I would be doing pretty good**
  - But, I have been thinking on these verses for two years... on and off
- **But... It seems to me... Paul is praying that you have as much of God as is humanly possible**
  - That your life be a full reflection of God in all things...
  - That you experience God in all aspects of your life...
- **The key... the key to being filled with the fullness of God... it seems to me**
  - Is that you know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge...
- **Application:**
  - Imagine the difference in your life Christian... if this begins to happen...
  - If you begin to be filled with the fullness of God...
  - Oh how we should pray for this... This my friends... this should be your hearts desire...
  - **Seek God in this:**
    - **Psalm 14:2 The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.**

- Psalm 63:1 “You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water”
- Isaiah 55:6 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;

#### ❖ Paul is Confident in God

- <sup>20</sup> 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, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- **Finally... look at this verse... see Paul’s Confidence in God...**
  - Expound

#### ❖ Invitation

- An Exhortation
  - Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
  - Christian... this ought to be your way... it is your responsibility to God