

# “YOU ARE STRENGTHENED”

**Text:** Ephesians 3:14-21  
**Subject:** “The Great Prayer God Wants To Answer”

## **Introduction**

### **(Thus Far We’ve Discovered In Ephesians:)**

- ◆ In chapter 1, you are **Accepted, Adopted**, and have great **assurance** – that God In verse 11, is working all things after the counsel of His own will.
- ◆ In chapter 2, you’ve been **Quickened, Raised** and are **seated** (which means:)...
- ◆ ...you’ve been made alive, you’ve been elevated to a higher level of living and now have fellowship with Jesus continually.

### **(Now In Chapter 3)**

- ◆ The Great Prayer from prison!
- ◆ Many call this the third most important prayer in all the Bible.
  - #1. The Lord’s model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)
  - #2. The Lord’s prayer for His disciples. (John 17)
  - #3. The prayer of Paul from prison. (Ephesians 3)

**Question:** What’s so incredible about this prayer?

- #1. It was so important that it drove Paul to his knees in verse 14.

“For this cause I bow my knees”

  - ◆ Bowing is a sign of dependency, reverence, humility and earnestness!
  - ◆ So this prayer motivated Paul to desperation.
- #2. It was a prayer for spiritually minded people.
  - ◆ In Paul’s first prayer (Ephesians 1:15-23), Paul prayed for **enlightenment**,
  - ◆ But in this prayer, Paul prays for **enablement**.
  - ◆ He wants us to lay hands on what God has provided for us. **(In Fact:)**
  - ◆ Other prison prayers deal with spirituality of the inner man, (not the material needs of the outer man). Philippians 1:9-11 and Colossians 1:9-12

### **(In Other Words)**

- ◆ God records Paul’s prayer in Scripture, so that we can pray this way!
- ◆ God inspired this to the Ephesians, so that we as well could be inspired.
- ◆ God wanted the believers then to receive something, and God wants us to receive something.
- ◆ God put this prayer in your hands, to lead you to pray and receive enablement from God.

**Question:** How many of you want what God wants you to have?

**Question:** Then, exactly, what is it we are taught to pray for, so that God can respond and answer?

### **Discover 3 Prayers God Wants To Answer**

#### **I. We Pray For “Strength” Of Heart (V. 16)**

(Verse 16), “That God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man”.

**Question:** What was the first thing Paul prayed for?

**Answer:**

- ◆ Strength and power for the inner man!
- ◆ Strength and power by the Holy Spirit!
- ◆ God’s presence and power in daily living!

**Question:** What does it mean to be strong?

**Answer:** The word “Strengthen” in verse 16, comes from the Greek word (KRATAIOTHENAI) which means:

- #1. To be made **strong**, #2. To be made **tough**, #3. To be made **enduring**.

◆ It means to have force and energy to act, resist or endure.

**Question:** What does the word “Might” mean?

**Answer:** The word might (DUNAMEI) means, power, force and energy.

**Question:** Where does Paul tell us that this strength and might come from in verse 16?

**Answer:** “By **His Spirit** in the inner man”. **(In Other Words)**

- ◆ The receiving of the Holy Spirit’s help and power was not an optional matter.
- ◆ The disciples in Ephesus must experience this marvelous infilling of the Spirit.
- ◆ Its Paul’s prayer for every believer.

**Question:** Why does Paul tell us to be strengthened and empowered? (So)

**Answer:** “In the inner man” we can be renewed. **(In Other Words)**

- ◆ Its in the inner man of the heart and soul where we overcome things like:
  1. Temptation to sin
  2. Trouble and pain
  3. Grief and sorrow
  4. Self and carnality
  5. Fleshly propensities
  6. Discouraging lies

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ To break lose of the flesh’s power, our spirit must be made strong and mighty (in the inner man)

**Question:** Is it that important?

**Answer:** Its important because:

- #1. Every bit of spiritual food adds to your strength and endurance.
- #2. As your strength increases, the frequency of sin decreases. **(In Other Words)**

- ◆ The nearer we come to God, the further we go from sin! (and)
- ◆ The further we go from sin, the stronger we become in God!

### #1- We Pray For Strength

## II. We Pray For “Submission” Of Heart (V. 17)

(Verse 17), “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith”

**Question:** What does it mean for Christ to “Dwell in our hearts”?

**Answer:** The word “Dwell” means:

1. To **rule**                      2. To **reign**                      3. To take up **residence**

- ◆ It’s a word with deep meaning!
- ◆ It’s a word that provokes us to action!
- ◆ The word “Dwell” (KATOIKESAI) means: (not only to rule, reign and reside in),
- ◆ It means, ...to live in a home      ...to settle down      ...to be at home with

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ To pray that “Christ will dwell in our hearts” means:
  - #1. That we are conscious that Jesus resides within us, (and)
  - #2. We allow Jesus to control and guide and motivate our actions.

◆ I call this praying for a “**Submissive Heart**”.

1. A heart where Jesus feels right at home,
2. A heart where Jesus is Lord and supreme,
3. A heart where Jesus leads and I submit to His Lordship.

**Question:** Is there any part of you not yet submitted to the Lordship of Jesus?

**Question:** Is there any reason why Jesus might not feel comfortable in your house?

**Question:** Are there any dirty dishes, any piles of clothes, any dust, any junk that Jesus would have to step over if He came to your house (your heart)?

**#1 – We Pray For Strength Of Heart**

**#2 – We Pray For Submissiveness Of Our Heart And Will**

**III. We Pray For “Saturation” Of Heart (V. 19)**

(Verse 19), “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God”

**Question:** What does it mean to be filled with all the fullness of God?

**Answer:** It means to pray that God will (by His Spirit) fill us and flood us to overflowing.

- ◆ The language of this verse suggests a progressive and continual experience,
- ◆ It means to pray continually that God will constantly fill us.
- ◆ It means to be “Satisfied with an unsatisfied satisfaction”.

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ If we think we have all that God can possibly give – we will stop seeking God for more, (and)
- ◆ When we reach an apex, there is only one direction to go, (That’s down).

**(On The Other Hand)**

- ◆ If we realize God has more, we will keep seeking God and will be ever increasing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**(It’s No Secret That:)**

#1. Paul started his prayer by requesting an increase of the power of the Holy Spirit, (in the inner man).

#2. Paul ended his prayer with the same request. (Why?)

- ◆ Because we all need God’s power to be successful in Christian service!
- ◆ Because no one has reached the apex (and doesn’t need God anymore).
- ◆ Because there is room for expansion in us for the Holy Spirit to fill us more.

**Conclusion**

**Question:** Pastor, how do we know that God will answer prayer?

**Question:** How do I know that God will do what Paul prayed for in chapter 3?

**Question:** What gives us assurance as we pray and believe for these 3:

#1. A “**Strengthened**” Heart, #2. A “**Submitted**” Heart, #3. A “**Saturated**” Heart?

**(The Promise of Verse 20)**

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us”

- ◆ “**Exceedingly**” (means:) – “To surpass, to overcome, and to go beyond any request”.
- ◆ “**Abundantly**” (means:) – “To overflow with more than enough”.
- ◆ “**Above All That We Ask Or Think**” (means:) – “To provide beyond any need present”.

**AMEN!**  
Bill Kirk, Pastor