

PRAYER'S REWARD

(WHY I KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE IT)

Ephesians 3:14-21



THE FATHER PROVIDES (IN PRAYER)

- ◆ STRENGTH
- ◆ WISDOM
- ◆ FAITH

“To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” (V. 21)

Bill Kirk

“PRAYER’S REWARD”

Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction

1. Paul is writing to the believers in Ephesus (the chief city of Asia Minor)
2. He is writing from prison and deals with sound doctrine (Ch 1-3) and Christian responsibility (Chapters 4-6)
3. An incredible prayer for believers comes from Paul’s lips in Chapter 3 (v. 14):

“For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- And what Paul prays for is powerful and practical.
- What he prays for ministers to us all.
- God records the prayer because God wants to do **now** what He did **then**.

(In other words)

- The Lord had you in mind when Ephesians was written.
- The Lord had you in mind when you received this word in your own hands.
- And the Lord has you in mind right now, to do what was promised in Ephesians 3.

Question: Is it just that important – this prayer?

Answer: It’s so important that it drives Paul to his knees.

(v. 14) ***“For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

- It was common among Jews to stand in prayer.
- But Paul bows his knees, which is a sign of three things:
 1. His praying is **earnest** and **desperate**.
 2. His heart is **humble** and **contrite**.
 3. His attitude is **utterly dependent** upon God.
- In verse 14 Paul prays **“to His Father”** which means:
 1. He is praying to the God who **hears** His children.
 2. He is praying to the God who **answers** prayer.

(The question is)

- What does Paul pray for? (And) What does God provide?

I. God Provides “Strength” For The Inner Man!

(v. 16) *“I pray that God out of His glorious riches may strengthen you with power by His Spirit in your inner man.”*

Question: What is the first request from Paul that God will answer?

Answer: the first request is for strength and power in the inner man!

- The word **“strengthen”** (KRATAIOTHENAI) means:
 1. To be made strong
 2. To be made tough
 3. To be able to endure

- The word “**power**” (DUNAMEI) means:
 1. Force
 2. Energy
 3. Might
- The words “**inner man**” mean; the deepest part of our being, our soul, our heart.

Question: How does God strengthen us (with power) in the inner man?

Answer: (v. 16) “**By His Spirit.**” which means:

The inner man or redeemed deep center of our personality is renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. (I repeat)

(In other words)

- Paul knows the secret of strength and power for you and me.
- So Paul prays the will of God, that you and I will be strengthened and empowered from on high in our inner man.

Question: How does it continually happen?

Answer: We are baptized in the Holy Spirit

We then pray in the Spirit day after day

We yield to the Holy Spirit’s conviction

We wait on the Lord for streams of refreshing (it’s Acts 1:8 then Eph. 5:18)

- The good news of v. 16 is – that God pours out His Holy Spirit upon us “**out of His glorious riches**” which means there is no shortage with God and no limit to what He can do through you and me.
- We are limited – but God is not
- You may be weak – but God is strong!
- You may be weary – but god is full of power!
- You may be faint – but God will supply all that you need to be strong in the Lord.

II. **God Provides “Wisdom” to Make Right Choices**

(v. 17) “*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love.*”

Question: What does it mean for Christ to “dwell in your heart”?

Answer: The word “**dwell**” means:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. To be at home with | 3. To rule and reign |
| 2. To settle down in | 4. To control and guide |

Question: What is Paul praying for?

Answer: That Christ will dwell, or rule and reign, and call the shots in the center of our wills.

(In plain vanilla)

- God has provided the wisdom and power (as we yield to God’s presence in our inner man) **to make the right choices.**

(In other words)

1. To the degree I submit my will to God's, to that degree I'll have the power to say "**no**" to sin.
2. To the degree we live transparent before God, (in v 17) to that degree we become rooted and grounded.

- The word "**rooted**" is a picture of a tree (firm).
- The word "**grounded**" is a picture of a foundation under a building (solid).

(In other words)

- Paul is praying that we become so aware of God's presence within us – that we consciously live 24/7 to please His name.
- And to the degree we live to please his name, to that degree we will be **controlled by the Spirit (and not by the flesh)**

III. God Provides "Encouragement" In Every Season Of Life

(vs. 18, 19) *"That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge."*

Question: How many of you have ever needed an encouraging word?

Question: How many of you have ever wondered if God knew where you were?

Question: How many of you have ever (in a low moment) didn't feel or sense the love of Christ being poured out to you?

- In this passage Paul reminds every believer of this one truth. (What is it?)
- That you will never have to worry about having adequate spiritual resources to meet the demands of your life. (Repeat)

Question: How can you be sure of God's faithfulness in every season of your life?

Answer: You have this guarantee from God: that God's love (in Christ) is wide, long, high and deep.

1. **Wide** – covering the breadth of your entire experience of life.
2. **Long** – continuing the length of your entire life on into eternity.
3. **High** – or rising to the heights of your greatest joy and celebration.
4. **Deep** – or reaching to the very depths of your despair and discouragement.

(What an encouragement in every season)

- That the love of Christ is wide, long, high and deep.
 1. **Wide** enough to include you and me.
 2. **Long** enough to reach you wherever God finds you this moment.
 3. **High** enough to lift you up like wings lift an eagle.
 4. **Deep** enough to reach the most wretched sinner and forgive the vilest of sin.

(In plain vanilla)

- Whether you are soaring like an eagle or in the depths of depression – the love of Christ is reaching out to you.
- And Paul's prayer is that you personally experience the loving embrace of God.
- The Greek word here means experiential knowledge of God' assurance.

- It's you and me running into the arms of Jesus – allowing Him to pour out His love and grace upon us.

IV. God Provides “Faith” For Your Impossible Mountains

(V. 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.”*

Question: What is God saying through Paul?

Answer: That he wants us to pray and trust God for the answers to come.

Question: Why should you believe God for the hard requests – the seemingly impossible answers?

(v. 20, Because God is able to do...)

1. **Exceedingly** – which means to surpass, to go beyond our request and overcome anything.
2. **Abundantly** - which means to overflow with more than enough.
3. **Above** – which means to go over and above any need.

(In other words)

- God is provoking us here to dare to **ask Him** in prayer.
- God is provoking us to **believe Him** for the impossible
- God is provoking us to **prove Him** and see what He can do.

(In other words)

- Quit looking at who you are and what you have (and)
- Look to the **Lord** and what **He can do**.

(It's God's word in Romans 4:21)

*“And being fully persuaded that, what God had promised, **He was able to perform.**”*

(It's Luke 1:37)

*“For with God **nothing** shall be impossible.”*

(It's Hebrews 11:6)

*“God **is a rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him.”*

(It's Jeremiah 33:3)

*“Call unto Me and **I will answer thee**, and show you **great and mighty** things which thou knowest not.”*

(It's Matthew 21:22)

*“Ask in prayer, believing and you **will receive.**”*

(It's Acts 4:30)

*“That signs and wonders **may be done** in the Name of the Holy Child Jesus.”*

Conclusion

Question: Why does God provide...

- ◆ **Strength** for your inner man?
- ◆ **Wisdom** to make right choices?
- ◆ **Encouragement** in every season?
- ◆ **Faith** for your impossible mountains?

(Why does God do all of this in answer to prayer?)

(V. 21) “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all the ages, world without end. Amen.”

(God does all of this for two reasons)

1. So that we can praise God like Paul, even when our circumstances are less than desirable.
 - Paul is praising God while in captivity.
2. So that we can give God the glory for everything good He provides us:
 - Paul understands what God wants us to understand.

(What is that?)

That since our strength, wisdom, encouragement and faith come from God (and not man) – **all glory must go back to God for everything good that is accomplished in our lives.**

(In other words)

1. **God wants to strengthen you by His Spirit.**
2. **God wants to dwell in and rule your heart to make right choices.**
3. **God wants to encourage you in every season of life.**
4. **God wants to give you faith for your impossible mountains.**

(Why?)

- So that praise will burst forth from your life and lips and you'll **give God all the glory** all the days of your life.

Question: Why is this Ephesians text so powerful?

Answer: Because it reveals that God will give you the power to praise Him even when you're in the wilderness, the desert, the fire, the storm, the prison or in the valley.

(In other words)

- The devil could put Paul in prison but the devil couldn't keep God out of prison – from working greatly in Paul's heart.
- And God will do the same for you as Paul prayed God would do for the Ephesians.

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