



Ephesians 3:14-21

THE POWER AND LOVE OF CHRIST

Ephesians 3:14-2

- ▶ It is important that we understand not only the truth of all that we possess in Christ, but also that we are divinely enabled to live out our great salvation.
 - ▶ Do you feel sure of God's love for you? Why or Why not?

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- ▶ Many churchgoers are woefully ignorant of the vast spiritual wealth that is theirs in Christ. Others know a good deal about the Bible and the Christian faith, and yet fail to live by these truths. A meager spiritual existence is a tragedy; the children of God possess riches and resources beyond measure. We have the capacity to experience an abundant life (John 10:10).
- ▶ In order for God to receive the glory He deserves and in order for us to find the fulfillment and purpose for which we were created, we need God to move in our hearts.
- ▶ In a passionate pastoral prayer, Paul gives a glimpse of the kind of rich existence that is possible when we are “filled with all the fullness of God.”

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▶ Fullness of God

- ▶ Being “filled with all the fullness of God” has to do with living out fully that which we already possess fully.
- ▶ It means to be so strong spiritually, so compelled by divine life, that one is totally dominated by the Lord with nothing left of self.
- ▶ Human comprehension of the fullness of God is impossible, because even the most spiritual and wise believer cannot completely grasp the full extend of God’s attributes and characteristics – His power, majesty, wisdom, love, mercy, patience, kindness, and everything He is and does.

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- ▶ However believers can experience the greatness of God in their lives as a result of total devotion to Him. When we trust in Christ, we are completely immersed into the Spirit and completely indwelt by Him. God has nothing more to put into us. He has put His very self into us, and that cannot be exceeded. What is lacking is our full obedience, our full trust, and our full submission, not God's full salvation, indwelling or blessing.

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- ▶ In Paul's previous prayer he focused on enlightenment. This prayer emphasizes enablement.
 - ▶ It is not a matter of knowing but of being.
 - ▶ Laying our hands on what God has for us and by faith making it a vital part of our lives.
- ▶ What Paul is saying is "I want you to get your hands on your wealth, realize how vast it is, and start to use it."

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- ▶ In this text Paul asked that the Holy Spirit deepen His work in their lives in three ways:
 - ▶ 1. That Christ would make his home – more literally, “be at home” – in their hearts by faith, that is, that He would move from being an acquaintance to being the center of their church family
 - ▶ 2. That they would grasp God’s love at a spiritual level, beyond intellectual or theological knowledge
 - ▶ 3. That they would be filled with God’s fullness, that is, that the Holy Spirit would reveal the things of Christ (John 16) more fully, achieving God’s fuller work in each life – unhindered, unquenched, ungrieved.

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- ▶ 3:14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,
- ▶ 3:15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.
- ▶ 3:16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.
- ▶ 3:17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.
- ▶ 3:18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.

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- ▶ 3:19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.
- ▶ 3:20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.
- ▶ 3:21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

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- ▶ 3:14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the **Father**,
 - ▶ Father – Our awesome Creator is simultaneously a tender, loving, concerned, compassionate divine Parent who welcomes and invites His children to come to him.
- ▶ 3:16 I pray that from his **glorious, unlimited resources** he will **empower** you with inner strength through his Spirit.
 - ▶ “according to the riches of His glory” – The limitless riches of God’s power are available for the spiritual welfare of every believer.
 - ▶ Empower – Granting, allowing, bestowing, imparting, permitting, placing, offering, presenting, yielding, and paying. Implies giving an object of value. It gives freely and unforced.
 - ▶ Literally means “becoming mighty by His power”

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- ▶ 3:17 Then Christ will **make his home** in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.
 - ▶ Make his home – dwell, live in, to settle down in, to take up residence
 - ▶ Mirror Note: The dimensions of your inner person exceed any other capacity that could possibly define you.

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- ▶ 3:18 And may you have the power to **understand**, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.
 - ▶ Understand – The word used here can be interpreted 3 different ways:
 - ▶ 1. To seize, lay hold of, overcome
 - ▶ 2. To perceive, attain, lay hold of with the mind; to apprehend with mental or moral effort.
 - ▶ 3. To quench, extinguish, snuff out the light by stifling it.
 - ▶ Could be translated as “to receive experientially, not simply to understand intellectually.”

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- ▶ 3:19 May you **experience** the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the **fullness** of life and power that comes from God.
 - ▶ Experience – To perceive, understand, recognize, gain knowledge, realize, come to know. This is a knowledge that has an inception, a progress, and an attainment. It is the recognition of truth by personal experience.
 - ▶ Fullness – Full number, full complement, full measure, copiousness, plenitude, that which has been completed. The word describes a ship with a full cargo and crew, and a town with no empty houses. It strongly emphasizes fullness and completion.
 - ▶ It points to a broad-based spirituality, balanced through participating in all of God's blessings, resources, and wisdom.

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- ▶ 3:19 – Mirror: I desire for you to become intimately acquainted with the love of Christ on the deepest possible level; far beyond the reach of a mere academic, intellectual grasp. Within the scope of this equation God finds the ultimate expression of himself in you.
 - ▶ So that you may be filled with all the fullness of God! Awaken to the consciousness of his closeness! Separation is an illusion! Oneness was God's idea all along! He desires to express himself through your touch, your voice, your presence; he is so happy to dwell in you! There is no place in the universe where he would rather be!

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- ▶ 3:20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power **at work** within us, to accomplish **infinitely** more than we might **ask** or think.
 - ▶ At Work – Active operation or working of power and its effectual results.
 - ▶ Infinitely – Superabundance, excessive, overflowing, surplus, over and above, more than enough, profuse, extraordinary, above the ordinary, more than sufficient. It is the highest comparison imaginable.
 - ▶ Ask – To request, petition. The word usually describes making request of someone in higher position; such as an individual asking something from God, a subject from a king, a child from a parent, or a beggar from a person of substance. The word denotes insistent asking without qualms, not “commanding” God, but solidly presenting a requisition whose items He longs to distribute.

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- ▶ We notice the emphasis on spiritual posture in Ephesians. As lost sinners, we were buried in the graveyard. But when we trusted Christ, He raised us from the dead and seated us with Christ in the heavenlies. Because we are seated with Christ, we can walk so as to please Him and we can stand against the Devil. But the posture that links “sitting” with “walking” and “standing” is “bowing the knee.” It is through prayer that we lay hold of God’s riches that enables us to behave like Christians and battle like Christians. Whether we actually bow our knees is not the important thing; that we bow our hearts and wills to the Lord and ask Him for what we need is the vital matter.

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- ▶ J. Wilbur Chapman often told of the testimony given by a man in one of his meetings. The man said: “I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, ‘Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?’ As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said ‘Father, Father, do you know me?’ Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, ‘Oh my son, at last I’ve found you! I’ve found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours.’ Think of it. I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for eighteen years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had.”
- ▶ Like the father in the story, God has so much love and power to give. What keeps you from recognizing, and receiving, all that God has for you?

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- ▶ What does it mean to “know the love of Christ which passes knowledge”?
- ▶ More light is shed on God’s love in Romans 8:31-39