

Growing Deeper
Ephesians 3:14-21

INTRO: Growth is important to every child of God. To grow as Christians, we need to go deeper in our personal experience with Christ the Lord. As we grow in grace, we will have a greater appreciation for the blessings that God has bestowed upon us, and we will have a greater love for the brethren and for the lost.

Just as Paul's the Apostle prayed for the church at Ephesus to grow in love through a deeper knowledge of Christ, I too pray this for you. I pray that God the Father will give you a deeper enlightenment of spiritual things. This will result in a greater depth of love for each other and for the unsaved.

I. VSS. 14-15, THE PRAYER OF PAUL FOR THE EPHESIAN CHURCH

- A. Vs. 14, Paul resumes the sentence he began in 3:1.
1. "For this cause," "for this reason." What was the cause for prayer?
 - a. Because of the rich blessings of grace bestowed on Jew and Gentile believers (2:4-6).
 - b. Because of election, predestination, adoption, etc. (1:4-5).
 - c. Because of redemption and reconciliation through the blood (1:7; 2:13-14).
 2. Paul's posture in prayer-- "I bow my knees....."
 - a. Paul's posture in prayer showed reverence and humility.
 - b. Kneeling is not the only position for prayer:
 - 1.) Abraham stood before the Lord when he prayed for Sodom (Gen. 18:22).
 - 2.) Solomon stood while dedicating the Temple.
 - 3.) David "sat before the Lord" when he prayed for the kingdom.
 - 4.) Jesus "fell on His face" when He prayed in the garden.
 - c. Our posture in prayer should show adoration to the Lord.

3. "Unto the Father....." Paul's prayer is presented to the Father. Because of the shed blood of Christ, we have access to God the Father (2:18). God the Father is glorious and holy (1:17), deserving all of our praise and thanksgiving (5:20).
 - a. "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is a statement proving the Deity of Christ.
 - b. Note that He is "our Father." He is ours by virtue of regeneration and redemption.
- B. Vs. 15, All the saved are in the family of God and have the same Father, God.
 1. The family in heaven and on earth gets its name from the Father. We are the Father's family, the family of God.
 2. The names of all the elect, whether they are in heaven or on earth, are written in the book of life and are engraved on the breast plate of our High Priest.
 3. "As many as received Him" are in the family (John 1:12-13).

II. VSS. 16-17a, STRENGTHENED IN THE INNER MAN-- THE PETITION STATED

- A. Vs. 16, The first part of Paul's petition is that God would according to the riches of His glory, strengthen believers.
 1. "According" is the Greek word *kata* meaning "out of."
 - a. Eph. 3:8 tells us that God has a bottomless treasure chest of riches wherewith to strengthen believers out of.
 - b. God is glorious and rich in:
 - 1.) His power (1:19),
 - 2.) His love (2:4),
 - 3.) His mercy (2:4),
 - 4.) His grace (1:2, 6, 2:7),
 - 5.) His wisdom (3:10).
 2. "Strengthened" means to "wax strong, to be strong, to show yourself brave." This strengthening is being made strong with spiritual power. This power, this strength helps us to discern between right and

wrong and to keep our lives pure. This strength will affect our will and help us to do what we ought to do.

- a. Strong to overcome the resistance.
 - b. Strong to overcome the temptations of this life.
3. "Might" is the Greek word *dunamis*, dynamite, dynamic living power. Christians can live Spirit filled, victorious lives.
 4. "By His Spirit in the inner man."
 - a. This means the Holy Spirit empowering the inner man. II Cor 4:16, "For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."
 - b. This means that we are controlled by God.
 - c. It is yielding to the Holy Spirit and letting Him control the inner man instead of the flesh being in control. When we do this, we will have victory (Rom 6:1-2, 6, 12-14, 16).
- B. Vs. 17a, When we yield to the Holy Spirit, we will have spiritual power. We will be clean because we will pray and read the Word (Eph 5:26).
1. The verb "dwell" means, "to settle down and feel at home."
 2. These were believers that Paul was writing to. Yet he desired that they have a deeper experience with Christ, that Christ would feel at home in hearts fully sold out to spiritual things, having faith, believing in what God says, trusting Him fully.

III. VSS. 17b-19, COMPREHENDING CHRIST'S LOVE

- A. Vs. 17b, Paul continues praying, and he repeats his request that Christ be the center of believer's lives, not on the fringes but in the center.
1. "Rooted" is a biological term.
 - a. A tree must sink its roots deep into the soil if it is going to be nourished and stable.
 - b. The Christian must sink his spiritual roots deep in the love of God.

- c. We need to read carefully Psalm 1:1-3 and sink our roots deep in the love of God realizing what He has done for us.
 - 2. "Grounded" is an architectural term.
 - a. This refers to a building's foundation that on which to build.
 - b. When I was in Louisville, Kentucky in Bible College, I worked at the First National Bank. The bank was forty stories tall. Because the foundation was deep, the building could reach up into the clouds. To go high, you must go deep.
 - 3. Every storm in life, at work, in marriage, in school, etc. reveals the depth of our spiritual roots. Every trial deepens the roots of a spiritual man.
- B. Vs. 18, "Comprehend" comes from the Latin word "to grasp." Oh, to grasp to scope of the abundance of God's love.
 - 1. Paul wanted the Ephesians to lay hold of the depth of the love of God.
 - 2. Oh, to see the four dimensions of the love of God. God's love for us reaches us where ever we are.
- C. Vs. 19a, The love of God is truly "greater far than any tongue can tell."
 - 1. We have all we need to live for the Lord. His riches are unsearchable (3:8), and His love passes knowledge (3:19).
 - 2. All of His riches and love are available to the believer. Why eat out of the slop bucket of the world when you are rich in Christ and so greatly loved by Him!
- D. Vs. 19b, God wants us to be filled with the Spirit (5:18), so we can experience His fullness.
 - 1. As far as position, we are complete, full, in Christ (Col. 2:9-10). Complete means filled to the fullest.
 - 2. Practically, we only have what we comprehend, apprehend, and grab hold of by faith. God wants you to experience His fullness. We do not need to be spiritual paupers.

IV. VSS. 20-21, GLORY TO GOD

- A. Vs. 20, Paul closes this prayer for the Ephesian church with a doxology.
1. He praised God who is able to do more than we could ask or imagine “according to the power that worketh in us.”
 2. Thank God for the power that raised us from spiritual death and given us power, dynamic power, to live victorious lives.
- B. Vs. 21, The *ekklesia*, the local, visible church, is to glorify God. It is the church that we are to experience the fullness of God. John Wesley said, “God knows nothing of solitary religion.”
1. Our message is to be the Gospel.
 2. Our worship is to exalt, extol, and adore God.
 3. Our mission is to reach the lost (Matt. 28:19-20).
 4. “To God be the glory, great things He hath done.”

CONCLUSION: The more we are rooted and grounded in love, the deeper we will go into spiritual things, and the more His love will flow through us to others.

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