

“A Prayer to God the Father, the One who is Able”

Ephesians 3:14-21

The introduction to the prayer (Orients us to the family blessings of God)

1. Humble acknowledgment of God’s rich blessing for His people (v.14)
 - a. For this reason... (also in 3:1)
 - i. The blessings of God’s grace poured out on Jew and Gentile, reconciling the two into one family
 - ii. Confident access to God (3:12)
 - b. Bending of knee
 - i. Humble posture of reverence and adoration
 - ii. Scripture does not say we have to pray in a certain way – but at times we err in taking it too lightly, to flippantly
2. Humble acknowledgement of the power and hope for God’s people (v.15)
 - a. The Father
 - i. A term of intimacy, dignity, and authority
 1. A father not only sought the good of the family but he also ruled the family.
 - b. The whole family derives its name from him
 - i. It’s all one church, one family
 1. “Every family” or “the whole family”
 - a. *patera – father; patria – family*
 2. The church is the family of God – receiving its identity, its name, its heritage, its hope from God the Father
 - ii. The family of God throughout redemptive history
 1. Those on earth – the saints alive now
 2. Those in heaven – the saints who have gone before us

The substance of the prayer (Orients us to lives that resemble God’s family)

Paul prays for the believers that they would:

1. Be strengthened with power in the inner man (vv. 16-17a)
 - a. To be empowered by the Spirit means that Christ dwells in their hearts.
 - i. The two phrases are parallels, not cause and effect
 - b. That all of God’s attributes (the riches of his glory) would be applied to the spiritual progress of the believers – a spirit-filled life.
 - c. That their maturity would be based on Christ’s indwelling in their hearts (*katoikeo – permanent dwelling*).
 - i. Christ is not a temporary resident who vacates the premises.
 - ii. He is in the business of doing a complete renovation
2. Be rooted and grounded in love (v. 17b)
 - a. The new community in Christ is founded on love.
 - i. A love that is rooted – a tree firmly planted, yielding fruit
 - ii. A love that is grounded – a building firmly built on a solid foundation, unshakable
 - iii. A love that comes from God, revealed in Christ, applied to the hearts of believers by the Spirit – for the benefit of all.
3. Comprehend the totality of Christ’s love (vv. 18-19a)
 - a. The mystery of God’s love has been revealed in Christ.
 - b. This love is infinite and the vast dimensions of it are described by the fourfold phrase, “breadth, and length, and height, and depth.”
 - c. We can’t grasp the scope of this love in a mere moment but rather it is a pursuit over a lifetime. Paul acknowledges that even near the end of his life he did not fully comprehend it (Phil. 3:12-16).
4. Be filled up to the fullness of God (v. 19b)
 - a. Already – Christ is the fullness of God and He indwells us (Col. 1:19; 3:17)
 - b. Not yet – We are finite, sinful, and incomplete in our quest for perfection.
 - i. We will never reach the fullness of God in being equal.
 - ii. But we will be sinless in the consummation of the ages.

The conclusion of the prayer (Orients us to the power available to God's family)

1. He is able (v. 20a)
 - a. To do what we ask
 - b. To do even what we think (but don't ask for)
 - c. To do more than this
 - d. To do more abundantly than this
 - e. To do far more abundantly than this (*hyperekperissou – exceeding abundantly, infinitely more, vastly more than more*)
2. By the power at work within us (v. 20b)
 - a. Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith (v. 17)
 - b. The resurrection power at work within God's people
3. To Him be the glory (v. 21)
 - a. God alone gets the glory through his redemptive work through Jesus Christ
 - b. He has secured His people, His church, for His glory, for eternity