

Ephesians 3:14-21 – You are loved more than you imagine

A. Introduction – Three Preliminaries

- Paul is in prison and unable to visit the Christians in Ephesus (3:1; 4:1). However, he can pray for them (compare 1:15-23).
- Notice three preliminary points about his prayer
 - ***It is Passionate (14)*** – people normally stood to pray – kneeling was a sign of deep emotion and passion (Luke 22:41; Acts 20:36).
 - ***It is Personal (14)*** – the single most important truth to remember about prayer is that we are speaking to our Father (1:5; 2:18).
 - ***It is Particular (15)*** – it is a prayer for the whole family of God's people – prayer is a family exercise.

The prayer consists of three petitions

B. Petition 1 – Be Strengthened (16-17)

- The two phrases here are parallel:
 - That they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in their inner being (16).
 - That Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith (17).
- We are already sealed with the Spirit (1:13-14), but we should seek to be filled by the Spirit every day (5:8). He strengthens us.
- Christ already indwells us (Colossians 1:27), but Paul prays that He may have a full control of our lives. ***“Dwelling”*** has the idea of permanent residence – He comes to take possession of every part of our lives.

C. Petition 2 – Be Enlightened (17-19)

- The heart of the prayer – that they may know that God loves them.
- ***A Solid Foundation (17)*** – like a tree they need to be rooted in God's love and like a building they need to be built on the solid foundation of His love. This will affect the way they suffer, serve and see themselves.
- ***A Staggering Description (18-19)*** – he wants them to have a firm grip on this love and describes its magnitude. It is...
 - ***Wide*** – it covers time and space to save sinners.
 - ***Long*** – it is from eternity past to eternity future (1:4; 2:7).
 - ***High*** – it brings us into possession of every spiritual blessing (2:6).
 - ***Deep*** – it is as deep as Calvary (Philippians 2:5-11).
- Having said all this he tells them that this love is beyond full comprehension for mere mortals! (19)
- It can only be known in the fellowship of other Christians.

D. Petition 3 – Be Filled (19)

- The prayer has worked up to this stunning petition – that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. The God who is infinite and eternal comes to live within us – mere children of dust.
- This has a variety of interpretations:
 - ***To be controlled by God*** – a passion for His will.
 - ***To be transformed by God*** – this will affect every part of our lives – church (4:1-16), world (4:17-5:20), home (5:21-6:4) and workplace (6:5-9).
 - ***To be satisfied with God*** – that they would be overwhelmed by the love of God and long to know Him more deeply.

E. Conclusion (20-21)

- Such a prayer might seem impossibly great and overwhelming. That is why Paul ends by reminding them that God can do whatever they ask.
- When these prayers are answered God will be glorified.