

## Now Unto Him That is Able

Sermon Delivered on July 21st, 2024  
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

### Text:

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 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, 21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

### Introduction

In the passage we read, Paul lets the Ephesians know that he is praying for them that **God would strengthened them** with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that **Christ may dwell in their hearts** by faith; that they, being rooted and grounded in love, **may be able to comprehend** with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to **know the love of Christ**, which passes knowledge, and that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. These are huge requests. If you stop and think about these requests that Paul prays and teaches us to pray, you may wonder and ask, *“how could these prayers even be answered.”* In the words, of David, *“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it”* (Psalm 139:6).

These requests are beyond our ability to comprehend, and we may even be tempted to think that these prayers are too enormous that it cannot ever become a reality in our lives. I believe Paul was aware of that temptation and so, what does Paul do? What Paul does under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is to **close this prayer with a doxology**. As he closes this prayer, Paul bursts forth with **an expression of praise**. For that’s what a doxology is. A **doxology** is *“an expression of praise to God, especially a short hymn sung as part of a Christian worship service.”* A doxology is also **a short declaration of faith**. It is a declaration of what one believes about God.

Pastor Noel Ramsey writes, *“Paul lays out what he does in verses 20 and 21 because on the one hand, he doesn’t want the Ephesians to think that he’s asking too much of God; he doesn’t want them or us to have a small view of God... But on the other hand, he lays out what he does simply because he cannot help himself; at this point he has to praise God. His theology has given way to doxology. Which is exactly what it should do. What we know about God—about who He is, what He has done, and what He will do should lead us to praise Him and live for His glory. If we*

*truly know God, we should delight in God, and if we truly delight in Him, we won't be able to help but praise Him."*

This morning what I want us to do is to look at this doxology and see what we can learn from it. Three important truths we can learn from this doxology, namely, A **Declaration** of the Absolute Power of God, A **Motivation** to Ask Great Things from God, and An **Exhortation** to Ascribe Glory to God.

## **I - A Declaration of the Absolute Power of God**

Paul begins his doxology by saying, "Now unto him that is able ..." This is a **clear declaration of the great power and ability of God**. Essentially **verse 20** reads, "To Him who is powerful ..." We all know that the Bible teaches that God is powerful. God is omnipotent. He possesses absolute supreme power. **God is able, actually more than able**, as the song goes. By the way, there are at least **14 times** in Scripture where we read this phrase "**God is able ...**" Let me give you some of them.

### **1. Our God is able to save**

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore **he is able also to save** them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

### **2. Our God is able to sympathize with us**

Hebrews 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, **he is able to succour** [help] them that are tempted.

### **3. Our God is able to sustain us**

2 Corinthians 9:8 And **God is able to make all grace abound toward you**; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

### **4. Our God is able to settle us**

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that **he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day**.

What God begins; He always finishes.

### **5. Our God is able to subdue all things**

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby **he is able even to subdue all things unto himself**.

## 6. Our God is able to keep His promises

Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21: And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, **he was able also to perform.**

## 7. Our God is able to keep you from falling

Jude 24 Now **unto him that is able to keep you from falling**, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25: To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Then our text says, “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.” What a statement! You can tell that Paul is struggling here, because he is **trying to describe something that is indescribable**. God’s power is indescribable! Not only is God’s love great but also His power is great. In Job 26:12-14, we have Job describing the power this way, “He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but **the thunder of his power who can understand?**” “*Job implies that he has not enumerated one-half of God's great works - he has just hinted at them, just whispered of them. If they were all thundered out in the ears of mortal man, who could receive them or comprehend them?*” - Pulpit Commentary

According to our text what is God able to do? God is able to do far more than all we ask and think. Arthur T. Pierson commented that there is a **sevenfold measure of the power of God** in Paul's doxology. “**First**, God is able to do what we ask. **Second**, He is able to do all that we ask. **Third**, He is able to do what we think. **Fourth**, He is able to do all that we think. **Fifth**, He is able to do above all that we ask or think. **Sixth**, He is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think. And **seventh**, He is able to do exceeding, abundant above all that we could ask or think. Now what do we need? **Hallelujah and Amen is all that's left to say!**”

So, the first thing we see in this doxology of Paul is a declaration of the absolute and infinite power of God.

Now the second thing we see in this doxology is ...

## II - A Motivation to Ask Great Things from God

**What a great incentive to pray!** Even these huge prayers that the apostle Paul prays for the believers in Ephesus, we can pray for ourselves and for others with confidence. Why? Because God “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” We can ask for these things in our own lives and others because **the God to whom you and I pray is able** to do far and above anything you could ask or imagine.

I love what William Carey once said, “*Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.*” God gives generously. He gives liberally. The One to whom we are called to pray to, gives

richly and lavishly. This is not an exaggeration, for He gives like Himself, not grudgingly or in tiny portions. He will not run out of riches, for all the riches in Heaven and on earth are His! I believe, when we recognize and acknowledge God's riches and that He gives graciously and generously, **it not only benefits us, but it also strengthens our faith.** But not only that, when we recognize and acknowledge God's riches and that He gives graciously and generously **it also glorifies God.**

A story was told about someone who came to Napoleon and asked from him a big great favor, Napoleon immediately granted the request. And listen to what Napoleon said regarding his quick response to the request, *"He honored me by the magnitude of his request."* In other words, Napoleon understood that the person who requested a great favor from him, essentially has honored him by the greatness of his request. **When you and I come to God in prayer, come with large requests, God is pleased, and God is glorified.**

John Newton wrote that speaks about this truth ...

*Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much.*

God is not stingy. When God gives, He gives liberally. **He does not give just a portion but a proportion!**

Now, someone might asks, *"If God is able to work with such exceeding abundant limitless power, why does He not do it? Why do we see so few Christians who seem to have drunk of the fountain of the fulness of God?"* Many times, we hear **this verse misquoted or quoted out of context.** Don't misunderstand this verse. This verse doesn't mean that God will just give us whatever we want, or even beyond what we want. It is true that God delights in blessing His children above and beyond what we could ever ask or imagine, but we need to remember that **God is not a genie.** We need to ask the question, *"When does God manifest this ability? When does He move in and do those things that are exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think?"*

The answer is in ...

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, **to be strengthened** with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: **That Christ may dwell** in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: **May be able to comprehend** with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled** with all the fulness of God.

God will manifest His ability to do those things that are exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, when the Holy Spirit has empowered us, when Christ has indwelt us, when His love has mastered us and when His fullness has filled us. When we take these prayer and truths seriously, God will graciously manifest His unlimited power in and through our lives.

Now, note the words, “According to,” **not** “out of.” There is a big difference! “According to” means **in proportion**, while “out of” is a **portion of!** Imagine Elon Musk, the richest man in the world whose Net Worth is \$245 billion, imagine if he gives you **one hundred dollars**, he has given you a **portion, a very small portion** out of his wealth. But if he gives you **one billion dollars**, he has given to you **according to** or **more proportionate** to his true wealth.

**God does not give just a portion of His wealth;** He gives a proportion of His wealth. He grants according to the riches of His glory! **What a God we have!** Do you see how this doxology gives us incentive to pray? When you pray to God, you are praying to the God of all power. So, don’t give up. Don’t lose hope. Because you have a God who **“is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”**

### **III – An Exhortation to Ascribe Glory to God**

This brings us to **verse 21**, where we read, **“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”** The apostle Paul in this doxology, just declared the fact that God possesses exceeding great power that He is able to do far more than we could ever think or ask him for. And so, the apostle Paul ends this chapter by making a **grand statement about the glory of God**. Notice what he says about God and His glory.

First, he underscores **the place of God’s glory—in the church**. Oh, what a reminder to us that the church exists to glorify God. Remember back in **verse 10**, we are told that the manifold wisdom of God is made known **“unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church.”** **The church has a special and unique place in displaying God’s glory.** What an amazing and humbling truth! This teaches us an important lesson—as believers **we should never have a low view of the church** of Jesus Christ. The church is precious to Jesus Christ. He loved the church and gave Himself for it. He established the church for His glory—**to display His manifold wisdom, to display His glory.**

God’s glory is displayed when sinners like you and me, who were dead in trespasses and sins; who in time past walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, who had conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, are quickened by the Spirit of God.

God’s glory is displayed when sinners like you and me are raised from spiritual death and given spiritual life, made new creatures in Christ, and strengthened with might by God’s Spirit in the inner man, and Christ dwells in our hearts by faith; and become rooted and grounded in love, and

able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and become filled with all the fulness of God.

God's glory is displayed when people with different educational, religious, ethnic, cultural, family background are brought together in one body and **dwel and work together in unity and in love** for the sake of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. God's glory is displayed when people with different personalities, weaknesses, and strengths come together and **become laborers together with God, striving together for the faith of the Gospel** in reconciling the world to God. What a unique place the church has in displaying the glory of God! So, don't despise the church. May we never again have a low view of the church!

But notice what Paul says, "[Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus ...](#)"

This important place that the church has to display God's glory is all because of the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has accomplished on the cross for undeserving sinners like you and me. To which I say with the apostle Paul, "**AMEN!**"

### **Closing Exhortations**

[Ephesians 3:20](#) 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, [21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.](#)

Some may say, that's wonderful, that may be true for Paul and the Ephesian believers and the early Christians, but that could not happen to me. Please don't limit God. The God we confess, believe, and love is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. **The same omnipotent God that Paul and the early church worshiped is the same God we worship today.** If we don't experience these things that the apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers, it's not because God is not able nor is He unwilling to do this for us. It's because we are unwilling to bow before Him. We limit His power which has been offered to us. We limit His divine ability to "[do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.](#)" So, don't limit God by your unbelief. Instead, "[Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength](#)" (Isaiah 26:4).

**AMEN!**