

The Soldier's Prayer – Part 7

Sermon Delivered on September 10th, 2017
AM Service

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Text:

[Ephesians 6:18-20](#)

[Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

Introduction

Apostle Paul is a man of prayer. He preached and practiced prayer. Many of the prayers he prayed are recorded in the Scripture. Last Sunday, we looked at one of the two recorded prayers in the book of Ephesians. In the first prayer, we discovered that **Paul did not ask God to give them what they did not have**, but rather prayed that **God would reveal to them what they already had**. At the heart of this prayer for other believers is a prayer for enlightenment.

Paul prays for the Spirit of wisdom to enlighten them to know what their **calling** was, what their **inheritance**, and what the mighty **power** of God working in them. Spiritual enlightenment and knowledge was their great need and **it is to be obtained for them by prayer**. Paul does not want them just to know it. He wants them to live in it, in the reality of what he has just taught them.

Paul does not want these believers to be like Chief Crowfoot. As the story goes Crowfoot, the chief of the Blackfoot nation in southern Alberta, gave the Canadian Pacific Railway permission to lay track from Medicine Hat to Calgary. In exchange to this, he was given a lifetime railroad pass. But it was reported that Crowfoot put the pass in a leather pouch and wore it around his neck for the rest of his life. He never once availed himself of the rights and privileges it spelled out. What a sad reality when believers do the same thing with the riches they possess in Christ, failing to really possess their possessions!

There is a great need to pray for one another that we would have a deeper knowledge and understanding of **Who God is**. There is also a great need to pray for one another that we would have a deeper knowledge and understating of **who we are** and **what we have** in Christ.

Today, we will look at Paul's second recorded prayer in the book of Ephesians and it is found in [Ephesians 3:14-21](#). After prayer for enlightenment, Paul now prays for enablement.

II - Enablement

[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;

Whatever Paul was asking for the believers, he was asking that God would grant it according to the riches of His glory. In prayer, we need to remember that we are coming to the One who is infinitely rich in glory.

One of my favorite promises in the Bible is found in Paul's letter to the Philippians. It contains the same phrase:

[Philippians 4:19](#) But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Here Paul reminds us that God is able meet all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. And **to recognize God's riches** and that He gives lavishly is both **useful** to us and **glorifying** to God.

When someone 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."*

When you and I come to God in prayer come with large requests, **God is pleased** and **God is glorified**.

I love what 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!** If President Donald J. Trump who is a billionaire gives you ten dollars, he has given you a portion, a very small portion out of his wealth. But if he gives you hundred million 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!

[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,

"Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." - William Carey

Let's look now at the contents of Paul's prayer here in [Ephesians 3:16-19](#). Some commentators see three requests here, but I agree with Warren Wiersbe, there are four requests here.

Wiersbe summarizes Paul's prayer noting that...

"There are four requests in Paul's prayer, but they must not be looked on as isolated, individual petitions. These four requests are more like four parts to a telescope. One request leads into the

next one, and so on. He prays that the inner man might have spiritual strength, which will, in turn, lead to a deeper experience with Christ. This deeper experience will enable them to “apprehend” (get hold of) God’s great love, which will result in their being “filled unto all the fullness of God.” So, then, Paul is praying for strength, depth, apprehension, and fullness.”

1. Strength

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Paul has been talking about suffering ([Ephesians 3:13](#)), and so he begins his prayer with a request that the believers at Ephesus might be strengthened with might in the inner man by God’s Spirit. Paul has already prayed that they might know the exceeding greatness of God’s power available to them as believers. Now he asks for divine power more directly that God may strengthen them inwardly through His Spirit. He prayed that God would strengthen them, that they might not faint in tribulations. Paul realizes that believers need great supplies of strength to enable them to endure their cross and to undergo afflictions cheerfully.

In 1934, when Adolf Hitler summoned German church leaders to his Berlin office to berate them for insufficiently supporting his programs, he was surprised when Pastor Martin Niemoller stood up to him. That evening his Gestapo raided Niemoller’s rectory, and a few days later a bomb exploded in his church. He was later arrested and placed in solitary confinement. Dr. Niemoller’s trial began on February 7, 1938. That morning, a green-uniformed guard escorted the minister from his prison cell and through a series of underground passages toward the courtroom. Niemoller was overcome with terror and loneliness. What would become of him? Of his family? His church? The guard’s face was impassive, but as they exited a tunnel to ascend a final flight of stairs, Niemoller heard a whisper. At first he didn’t know where it came from, for the voice was soft as a sigh. Then he realized that the officer was breathing into his ear the words of . . .

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Niemoller’s fear went away, and the power of that verse sustained him through his trial and his years in Nazi concentration camps.

This is what we need to pray as we pray for one another. Let’s ask the Lord to develop our inner strength so that when life’s trials and temptations press upon us, we will not cave in.

Pray that God would remind us of what someone said, *“The power of Christ in you is greater than the pressure of troubles around you.”*

2. Depth

Paul used three words to convey the idea of spiritual depth: “dwell,” “rooted,” and “grounded.”

Dwell

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may **dwell** in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Actually the moment a person is saved, the Lord Jesus comes to live in the heart and life of the believer. He has come to permanently dwell in our hearts by means of His Spirit.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.**

But Jesus Christ did not come as a temporary guest or visitor; **He came as a permanent Resident.**

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

But even though He dwells in every believer's heart and life, in some believers He is still like a house-guest not a rightful owner. This does not satisfy Christ's heart, nor fulfill God's purpose.

So, what Paul was praying is that Christ might settle down in their hearts and control them as the rightful owner. His prayer was a deeper experience between Christ and His people. He yearned for Christ to settle down and feel at home in their hearts—**not a surface relationship, but an ever-deepening fellowship.**

Rooted

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being **rooted** and grounded in love,

“Being rooted” literally means to cause to take root or to strengthen with roots. It means to become stable, to be firmly fixed, to be solidly established. A tree must get its roots deep into the soil if it is to have both nourishment and stability, and the Christian must have his spiritual roots deep into the love of God. If there is to be power in the Christian life, then there must be depth. The roots must go deeper and deeper into the love of Christ.

Paul wrote ...

Colossians 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Grounded

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and **grounded** in love,

The picture conveyed by the word “grounded” is that of a house which is so firmly fixed on a foundation so that when the storm blows, that it is not moved or shaken.

Jesus told the story about the two builders, one of whom did not go deep enough for his foundation

Matthew 7: Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

The most important part of a building is the foundation. **A weak foundation means a weak building.** On the other hand, **a strong foundation means a strong building.** For a building to withstand strong storm it must be deeply grounded on a solid foundation.

Paul prayed that the believers might have a deeper experience with Christ, because only a deep experience could sustain them during the severe trials of life.

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Closing Admonition

Paul prays for the Ephesian believers. He prays for them because he wants the best for them. His heart goes out to them. Now remember when he wrote this letter, Paul was in prison, chained to a Roman soldiers waiting for his execution. In spite of his dark unsettling condition, Paul remembers to pray for the believers in Ephesus. Here in this epistle he tells them what he prays for them. He prays a life-changing, life-transforming prayer. He prays that they may be strengthened in the inner being and that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. Paul knew that the only way these believers will be able to weather the storms of life is to be strengthened in the inner man and to be deeply rooted and grounded in Christ and His love.

May we not just fill our minds with these truths and information, but may we build our lives through this prayer - this life changing and life transforming prayer, for Jesus' sake and His glory.

AMEN!