

The Soldier's Prayer – Part 9

Sermon Delivered on September 24th, 2017
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text:

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

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

For the last four Sundays, we have been looking at Paul's prayer for the believers in Ephesian church, the church which Paul is the founding pastor. Among many other prayers, he prayed that they would comprehend the love of Christ for them. This prayer, by the way, is not an exclusive prayer for the Ephesian believers. A deep understanding and knowledge of Christ love for us is God's desire for every believer.

The Puritan Thomas Brooks (1608-1680) writes devotional thoughts on the love of Christ:

“Stand still and admire and wonder at the love of Jesus Christ to sinners—that Christ would rather die for us than for the angels. They were creatures of a more noble extract and in all probability might have brought greater revenues of glory to God; yet that Christ should pass by those golden vessels and make us vessels of glory—what amazing and astonishing love is this! This is the envy of devils and the admiration of angels and saints.

The angels were more honorable and excellent creatures than we. They were celestial spirits; we, earthly bodies, dust and ashes. They were immediate attendants on God; we, servants of His in the lower house of this world and remote from His glorious presence. Their work was to sing hallelujahs, songs of praise to God in the heavenly paradise; ours, to dress the Garden of Eden, which was only an earthly paradise. They sinned only once and only in thought, as is commonly

*thought, but Adam sinned in thought by lusting, in deed by tasting, and in word by excusing. Why didn't Christ suffer for their sins as well as for ours? Or, if for any, why not for theirs rather than ours? We move this question not as being curious to search Your secret counsels, **O Lord, but that we may more admire the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge.***

Oh, wonder of love! Love is submissive, it enables to suffer. So it was love that made our dear Lord Jesus lay down His life to save us from hell and to bring us to heaven. Oh, love unspeakable!

Christ's love is like His name, and that is Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6), so wonderful that it is above all creatures, beyond all measure, contrary to all nature. It is above all creatures, for it is above the angels and therefore above all others. It is beyond all measure, for time did not begin it, and time shall never end it; place does not bound it, sin does not exceed it, understandings cannot conceive it. And it is contrary to all nature, for what nature can love where it is hated? can forgive where it is provoked? can offer reconciliation where it receives wrong? What nature can heap up kindness on contempt, favor on ingratitude, mercy on sin? And yet Christ's love has led Him to all this, so that well may we spend all our days in admiring and adoring this wonderful love and be always captivated with the thoughts of it."

Stand still and admire and wonder at the love of Jesus Christ to sinners!

If you are given an opportunity to interview Paul and are to ask him, "What motivated you Paul to give up everything for Christ and the gospel? What made you endure all that you did for Christ? What made you keep going?" I believe the answer you will get from Paul are the following:

2 Corinthians 5:13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. 14: **For the love of Christ constraineth us;** because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, **who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

Live there and you will grow to spiritual maturity!

Today, let's look at the fourth and the last item that Paul prayed here in our text.

4. Fullness of God

Ephesians 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

The next thing that Paul prayed in our text is that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. What a prayer! How rich and glorious!

*“This is the end purpose of what he has been praying for them – filled with the fullness of God. In my opinion there is **no greater prayer** than this. Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be filled with God is a great thing; to be filled with the fullness of God is still greater; but to be filled with all the fullness of God, utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding.” - Clarke*

The ancient philosopher Aristotle observed that *“Nature abhors (dislikes, detests) a vacuum.”* Vacuum or empty spaces go against the laws of nature and physics. Nature requires every empty space to be filled with something. This explains why air or water will automatically flow into an empty place and fill it.

The same principle is at work in our spiritual lives. The divine nature abhors a vacuum. God’s plan for His people is not emptiness; nor hollowness but fullness.

[John 10:10](#) The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

What is it?

So what is being filled with all the fullness of God? What was Paul praying here? Negatively, Paul was not praying that we might become gods? No, that is not what Paul is praying. What he was praying was that the believers would be filled with all the fullness of God. Just like the love of Christ, the fullness of God surpasses knowledge. **Who can comprehend and then explain all that this prayer implies?** We can know something of this idea but never completely know it. And thankfully, we are not left without a clue, the Apostle Paul will help us understand what this prayer is about.

[Colossians 2:9](#) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

According to this verse who is filled with the fullness of God? Jesus Christ! In Him all the fullness of the Deity dwells in bodily form.

[Ephesians 4:13](#) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

And so Paul is praying that they may be conformed to the image of Christ in whom the fullness of Godhead dwells. He was praying that they may be Christ like; that they might be image bearer of Christ to reflect the beauty and the love of Christ.

Yes, this is an amazingly bold prayer for the Ephesian believers, but isn’t this what we are encouraged to do.

[Ephesian 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.](#)

This is a very important prayer because when we are filled with all the fullness of God, we will begin to love like Him, we will begin to give like Him, we will begin to reach out to the lost like

Him, etc. What a glorious way to live -- surely this is life abundant! Why are believers not praying this prayer in our churches and our families?

C. H. Spurgeon put it this way ...

“Give us a church that loves Jesus Christ much. You will have mighty prayer-meetings; you will have a holy membership; you will have liberal giving to the cause of Christ; you will have hearty praising of His name; you will have careful walking before the world; you will have earnest endeavors for the conversion of sinners. Missions at home and abroad will be set on foot when love is fervent. When the heart is right, everything is likely to be right; but when the heart goes wrong, oh, what a fatal thing it is! A disease of the heart is looked upon as the worst of mischiefs that can happen to a man. One old doctor of my acquaintance used to say, “We can do nothing with the heart.” God keeps us from a diseased heart: a fatty degeneration of the heart, or an ossification of the heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ.”

How do we obtain it?

How do we get filled with all the fullness of God? How do we find "more of God"? Where do we look?

Many church people make the mistake to look to the latest conference, latest seminar, the famous preacher or evangelist, the new worship CD, cool and trendy churches and experiences promising "encounters." Nothing necessarily wrong with some of these but they don't deliver. They may seem to work for a while but the result doesn't last. So they go from one conference to another; one worship CD to another; one church to another but nothing seems to last. But if we only look to the Bible for answer it will liberate us from wearisome and endless search.

You can have instant noodles, instant coffee but **you cannot have instant God**. There must be waiting on the LORD. You cannot be filled with the fullness of God magically by attending conferences and seminars or listening to the latest worship CD. This is granted by the Spirit of God through prayer and as we experience the love of Christ in an ever-deepening level.

[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.](#)

Notice there is a progression, one prayer that leads to another - That God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length

and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

This is a prayer I want to learn to pray for everyone in this church and for every church everywhere.

Closing Admonition

Oh, brethren—there is a treasure here for us. We have to pray through this progression in our own life and for others. The means of our fullness is the Holy Spirit, and the measure of our fullness is God Himself.

But you and I cannot be filled with all the fullness of God if we are full of other things. In the physical realm, air and water naturally flows and fills empty spaces but never on already filled places. The same principle is at work in our spiritual lives. The divine nature abhors a vacuum. God only fills those who are empty. This means that if you and I are to experience being filled with all the fullness of God we have to empty ourselves. Then and only then can we enjoy the fullness of God in our life. If we are full of ourselves; full of our wills and wants, plans and ambitions; full of our schedule, God cannot fill us, for there is no room for Him.

“You will never know the fullness of Christ until you know the emptiness of everything but Christ.” - C. H. Spurgeon

AMEN!