

Gods Power Strengthens
October 10, 2010
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If you're a believer and are not praying for supernatural power for you and those you love...you're shortchanging yourself.

We're in Ephesians 3:14-21

- Any fans of the Varsity?
- When you walk up to the counter at the Varsity what do you immediately hear?
- Are you one of those people who always knows what you want or do you struggle to decide?
- Susan...stick to what you know you want. Me, you might miss your new favorite food.
- Ron's question at Juniors in Brooklyn..."If I were only going to eat here once in my life, what should I order?"
- My dining companions ordered the pastrami and corned beef combo..I got the cobb salad.
- I WANTED what they ordered, I NEEDED what I ordered.

Sometimes we don't know what we want, much less what we NEED, or how to ask for it.

What every believer in Christ needs is GREATER SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND POWER...but to get it we have to ASK!

This morning: Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in the second half of chapter three. This is his second prayer in this letter. The first was in 1:17-19

Ephesians 1:17-19 (New International Version)

17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[a] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

- In this second prayer Paul prays for the Ephesians and teaches US about:
- What we need (3:14-16)
- What we receive (3:17-19) and
- Whom we ask (3:20-21)

What we need

Ephesians 3:14-16

14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom his whole family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

- Paul answers several questions in verse 14: Why? How? And Who?
- Why? For this reason...what reason? Last week's lesson from 3:1-13 and 2:11-22.
- The Gospel is for ALL the Jews and the Gentiles...no matter who you are, where you come from, or your station in life, you have a place in the family of God. So, for this reason Paul is praying.
- How is Paul praying in verse 14? Kneeling
- Why is it important that he tell us that? Intensity...humility...this is serious business!
- To whom is he praying? The Father
- Look at verse 15: What do you think Paul means in verse 15?
- We pray to the one true God. The same God Jesus prayed to. The Creator of the universe...the Father of all believers in Christ.
- Verse 16: Paul talks about THE SOURCE; THE METHOD; and THE OBJECT of this POWER we need.
- What is the source? God's riches
- "according to" vs "out of"

Bernie Marcus to give away nearly all of his \$1.5 billion
7:02 am October 4, 2010, by Henry Unger

Bernie Marcus plans to give away nearly all of his money — not just half of it.

Two months ago, Marcus, 81, became one of about 40 wealthy individuals who pledged to give away at least half of their fortunes to charity, as part of a campaign by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

In an interview last week, Marcus said the lion's share will be donated. He's not leaving anywhere close to half of his money to his family. They will be taken care of, but not excessively, he said.

"My kids are not going to end up with my money. They're OK," Marcus said. "I've been giving away money for 25 years. ... The vast majority will go to charity — in my life and after."

Marcus said he's had "long conversations" with Buffett about charitable giving. Buffett also is giving away nearly all of his money.

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- Marcus or the Gates or Buffet could give \$10,000 or 100,000 "out of" and not miss it
 - "according to" speaks of PROPORTION to what is there.
 - Example: "according to" his 1.5 billion, Marcus gave 250 million to start Ga Aquarium

The strength available to believers is limitless ACCORDING TO God's limitless resources. Our Heavenly Father doesn't throw us a "tip"... He opens the vault!

- The Method: How does God deliver this power to us according to V. 16? His Spirit.

Acts 1:8 (New International Version)

8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

J.I. Packer wrote...

All who are realistic about themselves are from time to time overwhelmed with a sense of inadequacy...the spirit's power, alone gives victory, while self-reliance leads only to the discovery of one's impotence and the experience of defeat.

- Did you get that? Without the Spirit's power we'll only experience defeat
- You and I received the Spirit when we became a believer in Christ
- The Object: Where does Paul say God places this POWER we need? The inner man or inner being
- God plants His power in the deepest part of our heart and soul

Warren Wiersbe says...

It is only when we yield to the spirit and let him control the inner man that we succeed in living to the glory of God. This means feeding the inner man the word of God, praying and worshiping, keeping clean, and exercising the senses by loving obedience.

- When we yield to the Spirit and feed the inner man like that, what happens?
- Verse 17: 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
- That brings us to What We Receive

Ephesians 3:17-19

17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- Warren Wiersbe also teaches us about three words Paul used in verse 17:
- Dwell...Rooted...and Grounded
- Dwell - Allowing Christ to dwell...literally to settle down and feel at home

Revelation 3:20 (American Standard Version)

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

- He wants to move in and LIVE in the house of our hearts
- Here's a question for you and me. Does Christ have just a room in our hearts or the run of the house?
- If giving a tour...
- Christ dwells and we are to be "rooted" and "grounded" in His love
- Rooted - What picture does "rooted" paint?
- What do roots do for a tree? Why do we lose so many pine trees in storms? No deep roots.
- Established or better in the KJV, "grounded" - architectural...the foundation of a building.
- If we are rooted like an oak, or grounded like the foundation of a great sky scraper, in the love of Christ, the storms of life can howl and blow but they cannot pull us down!

Quoting Wiersbe again...

What Paul was praying for 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 then ever-deepening fellowship.

- If Christ dwells in our hearts and we are rooted and grounded in His love, what does verse 18 say we will have? Power
- The power to grasp...to comprehend with the mind
- how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ
- Question: Have you ever stood beside something and were overwhelmed at it's size?
- What are some examples of something so big you almost cannot take it in?
- What about the Grand Canyon? Niagara Falls? How about an ocean?
- Some things are so big we feel they are almost beyond measurement
- Irving Berlin wrote a love song that Sinatra made popular, called How Deep Is The Ocean?

"How Deep Is the Ocean?"

How much do I love you?
I'll tell you no lie
How deep is the ocean?
How high is the sky?

How many times a day do I think of you?
How many roses are sprinkled with dew?

How far would I travel
To be where you are?
How far is the journey
From here to a star?

And if I ever lost you
How much would I cry?

How deep is the ocean?
How high is the sky?

- Human love cannot compare to the love of Christ
- That great old hymn simply titled "The Love of God" says it well in the third verse of the song:

Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,

Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade,

To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry.

Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.

- But Paul prayed that we would have power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ
- This knowledge that seems beyond measure is possible to those who are believers in Christ

John Calvin wrote:

...that the Ephesians should perceive the greatness of Christ's love to men. Such an apprehension or knowledge springs from faith. By desiring that they should comprehend it with all saints, he shows that it is the most excellent blessing which they can obtain in the present life; that it is the highest wisdom, to which all the children of God aspire.

- The highest wisdom we can attain is grasping how big the love of Christ is!
- Verse 19: We should seek to be filled with His presence and power to the extent that we can contain no more
- Our lesson commentary gives a good illustration...like a teacup being plunged into the waters of a vast ocean until it is filled to overflowing.
- Daily we can ask the Holy Spirit to fill every aspect of our life to the fullest! (Life Application Study Bible)

- So let's review...
- What we need is POWER
- What we receive is the knowledge of His boundless love
- Now to whom do we ask for all this?
- Paul closes his prayer with a benediction

Ephesians 3:20

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

- Paul gives the credit and the praise where they belong...to Him

- Verse 20: What does this verse tell us about Him?
- ...able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us

John MacArthur says we should...

Just dissect that verse 20, it's just amazing.

To Him who is able...

to Him who is able to do...

to Him who is able to do what we ask...

to Him who is able to do what we ask or think...

to Him who is able to do all that we ask or think...

no, above all that we ask or think...

no, abundantly above all that we ask or think...

no, exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think. And now we're way out there in the stratosphere somewhere.

- No matter how much we might ask of or desire...God always has a BIGGER, BETTER plan
- In fact, in my own life, over and over again, if God had given me what thought I should have I would have been short-changed...His plans were always better!
- Why would God lavish us with this limitless love and abundant power?
- Look at verse 21:

21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

- We get the blessings and God gets the GLORY!

So, what's the Takeaway?

- What every believer in Christ needs is GREATER SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND POWER...but to get it we have to ASK!
- God is not only able, be willing to grant us His strength and power.
- The strength available to believers is limitless ACCORDING TO God's limitless resources. Our Heavenly Father doesn't throw us a "tip"... He opens the vault!
- The more He strengthens us, the more we grow our relationship with Him, the deeper our experiences of His love and fullness we'll experience.
- All we have to do...is ask.