

## Prayer for strength

### Thank you for those who helped

- Cycle through the four slides
- Partnered with House of prayer
- Set up and distributed food
- Met, talked with and prayed for those who came
- **Thank you:** Tom and Missy, Jessie, Grace

### Introduction

- Studying and preaching though some passages from Ephesians over the last few weeks
- Paying particular attention to the prayers Paul prayed for those believers
- Want to look at another one: a *Prayer for strength*

### Text

**Eph 3:14-19 (ESV)** *(14) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, (15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, (16) that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, (17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (19) and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

### Exegesis

### **For this reason (v14)**

- (14) *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father*
- See previous section
- Paul has been made minister of the Gospel and the mystery of God's reconciliation offered to the gentiles.
- Paul was shown grace - see **Eph 3:8 (ESV)** (8) *To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,* and ministered that grace to the gentiles - and God blessed that work abundantly
- Now he was in prison - cut off - not from grace but from the ministry he once knew
- And in v13 **Eph 3:13 (ESV)** (13) *So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.*
- **Point:** What causes us to pray? What do we pray for? Paul saw the struggle of these believers, and he bows down to pray.

### **Riches of His glory (v16)**

- **Eph 3:16a (ESV)** (16) *that according to the riches of his glory...*
- Paul is going to ask that these believers be strengthened. Specifically he asks that God supplies from the **riches of his glory**
- this morning I want to remind you of the power/depth/supply - in "*The riches of His glory*"
- There is no limit or finiteness to God's ability to give and bless
- Remember **2 Cor 1:20 (ESV)** (20) *For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.*
- At the opening of the book (preached a few weeks ago) we read **Eph 1:3 (ESV)** (3) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,*
- There is no limit to God's ability to give. He's given us Jesus - He will give us everything. See **Rom 8:31-32 (ESV)** (31) *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*
- So Paul's request for them - flows from Paul's understanding of God's heart and source and provision for them.
- **Point:** Do you understand the supply of God's glory? The riches of His grace? God gave us Jesus, and he will give us everything we need

## Strength (16)

- **Eph 3:16b** *he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*
- Paul asks for their strength - he knew they needed God's strength - that the current situation required more than they had
- This strength is given through His Spirit... When we are weak - we need His Spirit!
- Paul prays for these believers - asking God to strengthen them with His Spirit
- Note "*grant you*" - This is a gift from God - not something we earn or deserve. Not something we work up to. Paul prayed that God would give them this!
- This strength is for our inner being. My heart will lead and my body follow. My thoughts will dictate the actions of my body!
- He will come back and focus the request in a moment

## That Christ may dwell in our hearts (v17)

- **Eph 3:17a (ESV)** *(17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...*
- Paul prays that they might have strength so that *Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*
- Paul gets wordy and it's sometimes easy to get lost in the argument he makes but...
  - Because of the struggle these believers have
  - He appeals (on the basis of God's abundance)
  - For their strength
  - So Christ can dwell in them!
- We know that Christ dwells in us. See **Rev 3:20 (ESV)** *(20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*
- See also **John 14:23 (ESV)** *(23) Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*
- So we have the promise of Jesus in us, but Paul prays for strength for them so Christ may continue to dwell in their hearts
- **Strength for what?** That our faith will "hold on" to Christ. We need His strength to keep our faith
- This is where the enemy attacks us - he causes our faith to erode
- Church - we are living in the last days
- The enemy has worked overtime to steal our faith - the very foundation of everything!

- We need God's strength to hold to Him. To stand by faith!
- This is the battle we face right now!
- This prayer is so timely for us now. God give us strength to hold on to our faith - not wander away

### **Knowing his love**

- So we need strength to hold on to our faith - so that Christ dwells in our hearts.
- Here is the key: **Eph 3:17b-19 (ESV)** ... *that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (19) and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge...*
- First, we are **Rooted and grounded in love**. Our salvation began as we believed and received God's love for us.
- Until we receive by faith God's love, we will never receive His gift of Jesus
- So let's return for a moment: God loves you. Has loved you. Does love you. Will love you! Let that soak in
- We need this reminder (thus the prayer). This is the faith the enemy is trying to steal from us!
- He's working overtime! So Paul prays for them that Christ may continue to dwell in their hearts by faith.
- But he asks that our understanding of God's love grows! See **3:18-19a** *may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, ...*
- This is what He asks God to give them - strength to know His love
- To grasp it's breadth, length, height and depth
- To understand God's love - this is his prayer.
- **Note:** See the impossibility of this in the natural
- *It surpasses knowledge* - it is beyond our ability to understand

### **We will be filled with all God's fullness!**

- See **Eph 3:19b (ESV)** (19) ... *that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*
- He prays that the will be filled with strength and supernaturally able to receive and understand the enormity of God's love.
- Here then is the result - the "fruit" - will be a people filled with the fullness of God!
- When we know his love - we will be filled with God's fullness!

## **Response**

- Play crowder *God really loves us*
- This is our call! To know his love!!
- Have you *received* His love?
- Have you forgotten or limited His love?