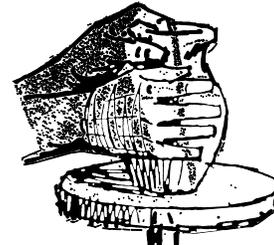


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

Paul's Prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21, part 4, by Paul Deffinbaugh

We have seen Paul's prayers for the church in Eph 1 and 3. In his second prayer, we noted that Paul asked the Father to grant five purposes for the Ephesian church, that:

- they would be strengthened with might in the inner man by the Holy Spirit
- Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith
- they would be rooted and grounded in love
- they would know the limitless love of Christ which surpasses knowledge
- they would be filled with the fullness of God.

Marcus Maxwell, in his Ephesians commentary, said, "[God] has called the church into being to offer Him worship and service. Therefore Paul prayed that the church would be granted strength to fulfill its role." Do we think of the church this way? Many Christians think of the church as an organization to provide them with a service. They want it to supply them with an emotional lift, a lot of interesting activities, friends, and a safety net in times of trouble. So Christians shop around like consumers for the church that suits them best. Do you pray that the Westside

church will reach spiritual maturity? That the church worldwide will be granted this God-given power and love?

I. The Requests

A. Strengthened through His Spirit in the inner man. Paul prayed that the church would be "*strengthened with might.*" This strength is "*according to the riches of His glory.*" Paul had mentioned God's power "*toward us who believe,*" in Eph 1:19. His might is administered "*through His Spirit in [lit. "into"] the inner man.*"

B. Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Paul had just written in 2:22, "*in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place [habitation] of God in the Spirit.*" Believers, having been baptized, are built/constructed by the Holy Spirit into the church, the "*household of God...in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,*" 2:19, 21. The word *dwell* in 3:17 is the same root as *habitation* in 2:22. It means a more permanent dwelling place. God has made a more permanent dwelling for His Presence in the New Covenant than any tabernacle under the Old Covenant. When Christ

dwells in our hearts, He intends to stay. He will stay if we do not evict Him from our lives. He will stay in our thoughts. He is comfortably at home with us. Have I made a permanent place in my heart for Him? He dwells in our hearts by faith, Jn 15:1-8, so as our faith grows, Christ becomes more and more at home with us. Thus Paul prayed that we would experience the Presence of Christ daily; see 2 Cor 6:16; cf. Ax 7:48; 17:24; Col 3:16; Rev 7:15; 21:3.

C. To be rooted and grounded in love. Paul encouraged us to know God's love. We must know a truth by experience before we can exhibit that truth to the world; therefore, we must know God's love, receive it, and be rooted and grounded in it, before we can show it to others. We experience God's truths by obedience to them. It's the one who has experienced the vital reality of the presence of God, by obedience and through devotion to the Scriptures, who can exhibit the life of God or do the things set forth in Scripture. An experience of what the Bible teaches is vital to carrying out its commands. We live the life in Christ; we walk in His way.
continued on p. 2

"I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." —Ephesians 3:14-21 (good to memorize, use in prayer)

So Paul prayed that we might realize in our experience the love of God.

D. To comprehend and know the surpassing love of Christ. Paul had spoken of a building in 2:19-22. Here, he spoke of the dimensions of love as if it were the dimensions of a building. Why is that? Could it be that understanding all the spiritual facts about the church, bought by the love of Christ, is the beginning of understanding about love? The breadth of God's love goes from Jew to Gentile, to encompass all mankind—from the nation who first hoped in Christ to all the nations. The length? Being chosen by God from the foundation of the world, 1:4, to the ages to come, 2:7. The height? By the love of Christ we are seated with Him in the heavenly places, 2:6. The depth? We came from death in trespasses and sins. In order to experience the love of Christ truly, we must understand the church.

When we talk of comprehending the surpassing love of God, of course, we are speaking of understanding something too great to comprehend. Just as Peter exhorted husbands to husbands to dwell with their wives "*with understanding*," the task of men understanding women is too great! A good husband knows his wife better than any other person. But she's still incomprehensible. There is an element of her that he cannot possibly ever know, and yet he knows her intimately. So is the incomprehensibility of God. We know God, and we may know Him intimately, but yet He is

incomprehensible. You know me, but you don't know everything about me. I really know you, but there is an element of incomprehensibility.

E. To be filled with all the fullness of God. Paul's prayer for enrichment concludes with his petition in 3:19. In many versions the word *unto* is used in place of *with*: "*that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God*," ASV. This means completeness with God's own standard of completeness. This is what Jesus asked in the sermon on the mount, Mt 5:48. But how can we put an ocean in a teacup? We cannot be filled with all the fullness of God or be complete as He is complete. But that is the goal that lies before us forever. Has there ever been a bigger request than this prayer for empowerment, for enablement, for enrichment to all the fullness of the Godhead? What a prayer this is! Jouett said, "What I have asked for is nothing compared to the ability of my God to give. I've asked for a cupful, and the ocean remains. I've asked for a sunbeam, and the sun abides. My best asking falls immeasurably short of my Father's giving. It's beyond all that we can ask." That is what Paul said! We may have thought, when Paul asked that we might be empowered with God's strength, rooted in His love, living with Christ in us, enabled to know the unknowable love of Christ, filled unto the fullness of God, that his requests were not for regular men like us—it must be only for apostles, especially since it comes by the Holy Spirit.

That's not for me. NOT! These riches are for every Christian. We begin to be filled with "all the fullness of God" as we are strengthened by God (the Father), as Christ (the Son) dwells in our hearts through His Holy Spirit. With the power of all the members of the Godhead, then, we are "filled" the more we begin to comprehend the wonderful "love of Christ." ("For in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," Col 2:9.)

II. The Accolade.

A. Glory to God for what He is able to do (an acknowledgement), v. 20.

Is God "able" to fulfill this wondrous petition? There was no doubt in Paul's mind, as we see how he closed the prayer. Paul ascribed praise to God for what he was confident God is able to do. Arthur T. Pearson said there is a sevenfold measure of the power of God here. First of all, God is able to do what we ask. Second, He's able to do all that we ask. Third, He's able to do what we think. Fourth, He's able to do all that we think. Fifth, He's able to do above all that we ask or think. Sixth, He's able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think. And seventh, He's able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we could ask or think. Now what do we need? That's what God is able to do. That's the measure of the power for the realization of these great petitions Paul recorded for us.

As expressed by Paul, God's "ability" *continued on p. 3*



Psalm 133:1



Fill your candle in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”
—Ephesians 3:19

Prayer for Ephesians, from p. 2 to do" is a) "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (far beyond our imagination!) and b) "according to the power that works in us," cf. 1:19; 3:16. What is the power that works within us? It is the mighty power of continuing cleansing at work in the believer's heart, and God will accomplish His work! See Jn 17:17; Phil 1:6. My dear brethren, do you know that right at this moment, when you feel lethargic, when you say the word of God doesn't move you and is downright boring, and when you berate yourself for not being as responsive as you ought to be, the Holy Spirit is working constantly in your heart? He is at work in every believer, and He works toward the sanctification of every one of us, and He will accomplish his work. You're going to be like Christ, 1 Jn 3:2. It may be a great earth-shaking transformation for some of us when it occurs, but it's going to happen. We are going to be like Him.

Paul acknowledged all the amazing things God can do through his church. It is not difficult to illustrate this truth. What is the secret of the success of both individual Christians and Christians acting collectively?

Sometimes I expect my electric kettle to have boiled but find the water still cold. What has happened? I have forgotten to switch it on! On other occasions I put bread in the toaster and after five minutes no progress has

been made. The toaster is not plugged in! There is a sense in which we must be both switched on and plugged in to do the great work God has given us. One woman was switched on by circumstances—the experience she had of loved ones dying of cancer. But as she prepared to serve them, she plugged into God's power by faith. She deliberately took Ps 37:5 as her inspiration: "Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and he shall bring it to pass."

B. Glory to God in the church by Christ Jesus forever (a heartfelt desire), v. 21. Paul (and Jesus) saw the church as the means by which glory can be given to God, cf. Jn 15:8. Certainly if Paul's prayer is answered (see the five requests), then the church will have the potential to bring glory to God, cf. 2 Thes 1:11-12. Of course, such potential will come only "by Christ Jesus"; but if it is realized, then its work will be "throughout all ages, world without end"! What does the devotee—like a football fan—want for his team? Glory! He wants to see his team triumphing in all aspects of the game. What does a loving wife desire for her husband, a father for his son, a mother for her daughter? Each desires that the loved one will get his just rewards in his chosen walk in life. A father is hugely gratified that his beloved son is being recognized as an artist and is selling her pictures. Likewise, the children of God long to see God glorified in His church. If He is glorified in the church, then He will be glorified in the Son, because the church belongs to the Son. God's glory will be fully displayed and His joy completed at the marriage feast of the Lamb when Christ takes possession of His bride, the church, see Rev 21:2.

*The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace,*

continued on p. 4

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Delmar Hice, Pat Campbell's father—released from hospital after heart attack; in rehab at Legacy Heights Nursing & Rehabilitation, 900 W 12th St, Russellville, AR 72801, with bronchitis.

Mark Campbell—in group home with Rocky Mtn Brain Injury Svc in CO Springs; cards to 2535 Brady Dr, CO Springs 80917

Forrest Corray, Jordan's brother—meth addiction has estranged him from family
Eric Perry's co-worker, Tony Ortega—stroke

Remember **Megan Aki** and the girls; the **Andrew Tope** family; the **Reames** family

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain

Rod Green—thyroid trouble

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak; **Virginia**, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis

Judy Sartin's grandson Tristen—autism

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Traveling The **Reingrovers** will leave this evening for a week in MI. **Jim** will be back from vacation 10/2.

Job concerns **Megan Aki, Lorenzo Gonzalez, Rod Green, Linda Szymanski,** and **Andrew Tope** are seeking jobs. The **Lorenzo Gonzalez family** is moving to WI Thursday; last time with us this week

Rejoice **Frank Savarese** has a new job. **Patricia Ward** and **Frankie Savarese** began new jobs recently.

Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April



Exposing current thoughts & trends

"In recent decades, marriage has been weakened by a revisionist view that it is more about adults' desires than children's needs. This view reduces marriage primarily to intense emotional bonds. If marriage were just intense emotional regard, marital norms would make no sense as a principled matter. There is no reason of principle that requires an emotional union to be permanent—or limited to two persons—or sexual, much less sexually exclusive (as opposed to 'open')—or inherently oriented to family life and shaped by its demands. Redefining marriage would further distance marriage from the needs of children and deny the importance of mothers and fathers. It would deny, as a matter of policy, the ideal that children need a mother and a father. ... It would be very difficult for the law to send a message that *fathers matter* once it had redefined marriage to make *fathers optional*."

--Heritage Foundation's Ryan T. Anderson

Paul's Second Prayer for the Ephesians, from p. 3

*Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand.
The Lamb is all the glory
Of our Immanuel's land.*

And the Father will be there—rejoicing in the glory of His Son and in the glory of His bride.

There is a story about Paganini, the great violinist. While he was playing his violin in a concert, one of his strings broke. He kept playing; another string broke. He played on, and another string broke. He had one string, but he played nevertheless, and he played beautifully. Of course, when he finished, the audience gave him a tremendous applause. Well, God doesn't have much when he works with us—one string at best. But He is better than Paganini. He can produce His music—the music of God—in the life of every one of us. Paul concluded, "*unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever,*" v. 21. He is going to lead his flock from pasture to pasture, from fountain to fountain, to the glory of our great God in heaven. Paul praised God's power, enablement, and glory. Are we praying this prayer for our own spiritual fullness, for our brethren, and for the church? Do we desire to give God glory throughout all ages, world without end? May God help us to respond to the encouragement that Paul gives us. Father, we are so grateful the You for this magnificent prayer. We give You thanks for it. O Lord, continue to work in us, through the Spirit, to study and believe Your word.

Westside church of Christ

meets at
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Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: "Four Lessons
From the Feeding of the 5000,"

Jim Reingrover

The miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand is the only miracle recorded by all four gospel writers. But that is not the only unique quality of this event—Jesus taught us four important life-changing lessons here!

This afternoon:

Paul's Prison Epistles Series

Philippians intro and chapter 1,

Jim Reingrover