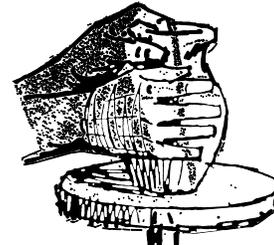


His Workmanship at Westside

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



Isaiah 64:8

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Paul's Second Prayer for the Ephesians, by Paul Deffinbaugh

For the last two weeks we have looked at the first of Paul's two prayers in Ephesians (Eph 1:17-23). Today we will look at the second prayer in Eph 3:14-21. His second prayer begins with the expression, "For this reason." By these words, Paul told us that his prayer was based upon good reason, and that reason is the purpose of God, as Paul previously described Ephesians 1-2. The purposes of God are the basis for Paul's prayers.

God's purposes. Paul's prayer does not sound very similar to many of the petitions which we address to the Father. The reason is that Paul's prayer was shaped by the purpose of God. Note the things that Paul didn't pray for, the very things for which we often pray. Paul did not pray for:

- The material prosperity of the Ephesian saints
- Their prevention, removal, or quick relief from pain
- Their physical health and well-being
- Their emotional or psychological well-being
- A transforming spiritual experience

Paul did not pray for these things be-

cause they are often inconsistent with God's purposes and with the way in which He works in the lives of His children, e.g. Rm 5:1-11; 2 Cor 4:5, 11; 2 Tim 3:10-12; Heb 11-12; 1 Pet 4. What he could pray for is what God has purposed and promised, things which He has assured us He will accomplish, to His glory and to our good. Paul prayed for the spiritual strengthening of the believers in the power of the Holy Spirit. We often pray for the "outer man," which is perishing; but Paul prayed for the "inner man," which is being renewed day by day. It is as the outer man perishes that the inner man gains strength, 2 Cor 4:16-18. Paul prayed also that as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ would dwell in the hearts of his readers by faith. Every Christian has been united with Christ by faith. Every believer is "in Christ," 2 Cor 5:17; Rm 6:1-11, and yet our Lord instructs His disciples to "abide in Him," Jn 15:1-11. Christ is in every baptized believer, but Paul prayed that His dwelling in us might be enhanced. Paul desired spiritual growth so that each day God is more evident in our lives, and that we are more aware of and devoted to Him.

God has purposed to redeem fallen men, both Jews and Gentiles, "for the praise of His glory" and grace, see Eph 1:6, 12, 14. Prompted by His kind intentions, God has provided redemption for sinners through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those whom He saves, He also seals with His Holy Spirit and gives the blessed hope of dwelling in His presence forever, holy and blameless.

God has purposed to save and to sanctify both Jews and Gentiles, and to reconcile them to Himself in one body, the church. He has purposed to "sum up all things in Christ," 1:10, Who dwells in His church, Who serves as its head, and Who fills it with all of His fullness, 1:22-23. Because God has purposed and provided for the salvation and sanctification of Gentiles, as well as Jews, and because God had called him to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, Paul prayed for the Ephesian saints. Paul's prayer is consistent with God's purpose.

God, the Father. The motivation and confidence of Paul's prayer is indicated by these words: "from
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"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)

Whom the whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name," v. 15. The paraphrase by J. B. Phillips conveys the thrust of Paul's choice of words: "From Whom all Fatherhood, earthly or heavenly, derives its name." It is not the family-hood that is in focus, but the supreme fatherhood of God that is emphasized. The earth knows of natural fathers, and of the families which they produce, but above and beyond every other father is the ultimate and supreme Father, God the Father. It is to this father that Paul prayed.

Why did Paul find assurance and confidence in praying to the "Father in heaven"? Because we have been instructed to address our prayers to Him: Jesus said, "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father, Who art in heaven'" Mt 6:9. In Mt 7, Jesus further encouraged His disciples to pray by reminding them about their heavenly Father: "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father Who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" Mt 7:7-11. No wonder Paul reminds us of the Fatherhood of God.

He is not just the Father of the Jews, but the Father of all who call upon Him through faith in the person and work of His Son.

Be strengthened with might/power in the inner man by the Holy Spirit.

From the first prayer for the Ephesians we learned that the strength, power, and authority of Jesus Christ includes His headship over the church, which is His body, Eph 1:22-23. Christ, our Head, is "Head" over all things. The One who is "Head" over the church is also "Head" over everything else. This means that what the "Head" of the church desires, He gets. If the president of the local PTA is also the president of the United States, you can be assured that His power as US president will benefit the PTA as well. As the Head of the church, Jesus Christ directs His power to and through the church, to accomplish His purposes for it and for the saints. The power of God in Christ is not directed toward men in general, but toward the saints. God has brought about the blessing of the saints in Christ (1:3-14). His power is directed toward the benefit and the blessing of His own. This power is not a "blank check" which the saints may draw upon any way they choose, but it is governed by the purposes of God for the saints. Paul's prayer in verses 15-18 is placed between the purposes of God (verses 3-14) and the power of God (verses 19-23) for good reason. Our prayers should be based upon God's infinite power, and defined by

God's revealed purposes. The power and authority of Jesus Christ which was granted to Him at His ascension was being poured out on the New Testament church in various ways, in the spiritual gifts bestowed for the building up and ministry of the church, Eph 4:7-13. As Christ's fullness fills the church, so the church is the fullness of Christ. As Head of the church, the fullness of Christ is directed toward the church. As the body of Christ, the church fills up or fills out that which Christ continues to do in and through His church. The church continues the work of Christ. What Jesus "began to do and to teach," in Ax 1:1-2, the church continues to do and to teach. Those who are members of His body, the church, must see themselves as "filling up" the work of our Lord as a part of His body, which He empowers, Col 1:24-29.

Paul believed that an understanding of the power of Jesus Christ was essential to the believer's spiritual walk. Because of this, he not only describes this power, but he prayed that the Holy Spirit would give each of his readers (and the church) a deeper grasp of this power. What practical difference should this knowledge make? How would a better understanding of the power and authority of Jesus Christ change us? Paul linked this power to the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. When we look at the ways in which the resurrection and ascension of Christ impacted the

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Psalm 133:1



**Fill your can-
teen in 2013**

“May you be filled
with all the full-
ness of God.”

—Ephesians 3:19

Prayer for Ephesians, from p. 2 early church, we will begin to see how these truths also affect us. In Jn 3:12-15 the lifting up of Jesus on the cross was only the “first floor,” so to speak. His death and burial led to his further elevation, by His resurrection. This led to His ascension, to the top floor (so to speak), thus bringing about salvation for those who would believe in Him. The ascension of our Lord is thus linked to His saving work. Have you ever thought of the ascension of Jesus as God bringing the saving work of Christ full circle? In the incarnation, the second Person of the Godhead added perfect humanity to His undiminished deity. In His incarnation, the Lord Jesus laid aside the use of some of His glory and power. In His resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus took perfect humanity to heaven, where He was given immeasurable power and authority. Now, in heaven we have a mediator between us and God, the *man* Christ Jesus, 1 Tim 2:5. **Christ received all power in His ascension, gives power, strength to us.** In Jn 6:60-63 Jesus taught the crowds who flocked to Him after His feeding of the 5,000. He urged them to think of Him as greater than Moses, and His bread as greater than manna which God provided through Moses. He taught them that He was the “bread from heaven,” and spoke of His sacrificial death on behalf of sinners. He told them that they must eat

Discipleship Here At Home

His flesh and drink His blood. They were horrified at His words, taking them in their literal sense as cannibalism. Jesus responded to them in the same way He had with Nicodemus. He spoke of the spiritual meaning which lay behind His words, but they could not grasp it. He told them that if the words of His death as the “Lamb of God” puzzled them, His ascension back into the presence of His Father, from which He had come, would be even more difficult for them to grasp. And so it was.

Jesus spoke of His ascension also in Jn 16:7-11. In Jn 14-16 Jesus had told His disciples that He must leave them and return to the Father in heaven. There, He would prepare a place for them. From there, He would send His Holy Spirit to manifest His presence in their midst. The Holy Spirit would not only bring Jesus’s words to the disciples’ remembrance, He would also empower the words and the work of the church. He would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, 16:8. In Jn 16:10 Jesus said, “*And concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me.*” The Holy Spirit would convince the world concerning righteousness by our Lord’s absence and the apostles’ inability to see Him physically. After His ascension, the apostles (and His church) would see Jesus no more. But with His Holy Spirit, they would continue to live as though He were alive and present with them—for He is! Their lives would be transformed. They would cease to cower and hide for fear of persecution. They would bear powerful testimony to His resurrection and ascension. In so doing, they would be living testimonies to and examples of the righteousness of Christ. People are convinced that Jesus is still alive because the Father raised Him, the Man Who was righteous, from the dead, Rm 1:3-4; 4:25. Christians have been given the power and strength from the One Who raised Christ.

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

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

Judy Sartin—possible torn meniscus knee

Judy’s grandson Tristen—autism

Eric Perry—tennis elbow

Rod Green’s mother, Shirley—recovery from broken wrist surgery

Valerie Greenwalt—successful tumor surgery Fri; Tues to Mina Gonzalez’s to recover

Remember **Megan Aki** and the girls; the

Andrew Tope family; the **Reames** family

Larry Campbell—to AR this pm to care

for **Pat’s** father, **Delmar Hice**, after carpal tunnel surgery on one hand Tues 8/27

Reingrovers’ friend **Charles Hartwigsen**—infection and Myasthenia Gravis diagnosis

Wes Nichols—stage 4 cancer in tongue, lymph nodes, no insurance, young family in Parker. Donate at nickels4nichols.com

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

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Traveling

Job concerns **Megan Aki, Lorenzo**

Gonzalez, Linda Szymanski, DeWayne

Howell, Frank Savarese, Andrew Tope,

and **Rod Green** are seeking jobs.

Rejoice **Andy** and **Amy Vander Kooi**

have a baby boy, **Take James Vander**

Kooi, born 4 pm, 8/18, at 7#, 9 oz, 19 ¾"



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Feds Say Atheism Is Religion, by Dave Jolly

Christians have long argued that atheism is a religion (since it is a belief in no God) and that removing mention of God from schools established atheism as the official religion of the public school system. It is impossible to have a vacuum of religious belief, so when one religion is forcibly removed from a system, another religious belief will automatically replace it. Religious activists have been unsuccessful in convincing courts of this fact, but now, thanks to government lawyers, Christians may be able to argue this in court. The change started in 2009 when Laurie Gaylor, co-founder of the atheist Freedom From Religion Foundation, filed suit in CA to remove the "parsonage" tax break from clergy (preachers are allowed to take a percentage of their income as a tax-free housing allowance); Gaylor thought this was unfair. That suit was dropped, but later re-filed in US District Court, Wisconsin, in 2012. However, Gaylor did not expect the results she got—federal government lawyers are now saying that leaders of atheist groups can function as clergy since atheism can be considered a religion. This rankled Gaylor, who said, "We are not ministers. We are having to tell the government the obvious—we are not a church." This started when Gaylor's own board of directors voted to give her and her husband, Dan Barker, also co-founder of FFRF, a housing allowance. Gaylor and Barker said they could not claim the allowance as tax-free income because they were not clergy. To everyone's surprise, federal lawyers filed a brief with the Justice Department that argued that Buddhism and Taoism do not include a belief in God but are recognized as religions and their leaders qualify for the tax-free housing allowance—and therefore, so should atheism and its leaders Gaylor and Barker.

Gaylor says she'll continue to fight to remove the exemption, as she believes religious groups don't deserve special treatment. She likely realizes that if she accepted the tax break, she would be admitting that atheism is indeed a religion, and she cannot allow that to happen.

If the federal government argues that atheism is a religion, then how can it justify public schools teaching that there is no God—that is, atheism, a religion? Science classes all across the US prevent teaching creationism because it is a religious view. Instead, they push evolution, as a fact, not a theory (even though the theory is discredited by reputable scientists). Evolution says there is no God, and thus, according to the government's argument, it is a religion and therefore shouldn't be taught. Christians should jump on this precedent and fight to remove evolution teaching from the public schools or to allow teaching creationism alongside evolution.

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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: "Is It Service or Serve Us?" by Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

Paul's Prison Epistles Series
Ephesians 3, Jim Reingrover