

“Rooted”

Ephesians 3:14-21

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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Ephesians 3:14 – 21 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from 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 through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you,

being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 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, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.



3:14-15

The last time we were together, Paul spoke concerning the “mystery” of God’s salvation, and in it, the uniting of Jew and Gentile...the unifying of every believer, into the corporate body of the church. He passionately told us that the delivery of this message was his calling and duty. Elsewhere he says he was “compelled” to serve Christ in the ministry to which he was called.

He told us of the design and the purpose of the church of which we are all called by God to be a part of. Within it, lies the power and the plan of God. It is the ‘vehicle’ for his message and his manifestation. It would be this instrument of the church that God would work through throughout history. Each one of us that is truly born again is a “building block”...an organic part of that living body, serving the kingdom and one another with the gifts that have been bestowed upon us through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. This does not include the mere religious church goer...for that individual is at best just a searcher and at worst a case of false advertisement ...the latter being just dead weight that true believers seem obligated to carry.

The Ephesian believers...like many of us yet today...had a great bounty of treasure available to them. All the gifts that are present in a fellowship endowed with the Holy Spirit’s presence. And yet despite such access they still remained spiritual children...void of the power and success in their lives that God so wanted them to have! Many of us too still struggle and strive to try to live out the Christian dynamic without ever seeking and embracing the Holy Spirit and the giftings that He have been set aside for us. It is a quintessential case of dysfunctional life. It’s like praying for and receiving the gift of living in the ocean and then never picking up your required gills! You may “get it done” but it will never be fruitful or pleasant!

So now, in verse 14, Paul begins with “*for this reason*”...or, “because of all that I had been speaking of,” he ‘*bows his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*’ The language of the original text implies a ‘face to face communication.’ It seems that Paul knew from where **his** power came from! ‘Bowing the knee’ speaks of humility, submission, and acknowledgment of his place before God. This was clearly not a “gimme” prayer, but rather a conversation...a continual “surrender” to the will and plan of God. A prayer that says “Lord, you’re in charge...I am yours...fulfill your plan in me.”

From what I gather, Paul knew what it meant to be a man: *a real man*. And he lived out that lifestyle on his knees before His Creator! Paul prayed for the furthering of God's great practical sanctification in himself as well as the church...the building of the body of believers...the maturing of the saints...individually and corporately. In this text today, we find Paul praying that the believers would "grow up." A prayer that is offered up by every pastor that is worth his salt. To see such a reality, he didn't speak to a "power" or an "entity." He spoke to a *person*...the **person** of Jehovah God. Furthermore, he spoke directly to Him. For Christ had opened that particular door, and the Holy Spirit had essentially ushered Paul into the room.

The same is true for us! Paul refers to God as "the father." That format of prayer began with Jesus in the gospels: when asked how to pray, He began with "*Our Father*..." Such a personal 'up close' familiarity was unheard of in the Old Testament! Once again, it was Christ who changed our relationship with the Father from 'distant and strained,' to 'close and intimate.' He changed our relationship from stranger to "family"...and our name from "religious" to "Christian."

3:16

This verse's literal reading is "*that he may give to you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power.*" Paul is asking what we need to be asking! *Lord, make us strong and mature!* To what degree? *How strong and mature?* "According to"... or *to the level of* ..."*the riches of His glory.*" Just how rich is His glory? Without end...without measure! And how is this practically to take place? How is this supposed to happen? Our answer is twofold.

Firstly...through the Holy Spirit of God dwelling within us. One may go to church every Sunday of their lives...read the Bible daily and scholarly scrutinize every theological book that can be found. But that will only tell you what you need to ***do*** and what you need to ***be***. It will never actually give you the ability or the power to do it!

We must take note of the careful use of language here. For there is a difference between the expressions "***out of*** the riches" and "***according to*** the riches." A wealthy person might give a small amount, "out of his riches", but such would not be in proportion to the totality of what he has! Paul asks that God would give strength "*according to the riches*" of His glory. Since the glory of the Lord is bountiful...*limitless even*, what Paul was actually asking for was an overwhelming supply!

Once someone asked a great favor of Napoleon which he immediately granted, because, said Napoleon, "He honored me by the magnitude of his request." God is not insulted by such a request. However, one should just be sure that he really wants what he is asking for! Because with the supply of such comes equivalent responsibility and accountability! Everyone wants the blessing, but few are willing to embrace its baggage!

This "strengthened life" comes through the presence of the Holy Spirit living inside of us. Jesus preached this same idea, telling his listeners that they had to "eat of His flesh and drink of His blood." We know that the result of that statement was less than stellar in that nearly everyone was offended and walked away! But Jesus understood that God had to literally **live inside a man** in order for him to live a fruitful spiritual life. And while a great number of us want salvation, far less are willing to go that far...few are desirous to have that Savior take up residence inside of us 24-7!

This change...this growth and maturation, is to occur in the "inner man." Religion is worn on the outside, but relationship and communion is worn within. It is only there that His Spirit can take control of us to change a man (from the inside out!)

What Paul wants for us...*what God wants for us*, is not the “flash”...the “bling.” Not the power to perform spectacular miracles, but the spiritual power needed to stand strong...to be mature, stable, intelligent and productive Christians. It’s funny how we can so easily lose track of this basic concept! Being endowed with the power of God is not for glitter and status, but stability and spiritual fruit. It is the “inner man” that bears the truth of who we are...whether we are spiritual adults or still only children.

Vs 17

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts.” There is a big difference in “visiting God” on Sunday mornings, and Him living in you all week long. Maybe you are saying... *“but I thought that the Holy Spirit comes to all believers?”* That is correct! But that does not mean that He is in control. That is up to us...every step of the way. This is the difference between being in the ***presence*** of the Holy Spirit and being ***baptized*** in the Holy Spirit: **Immersed, overwhelmed and under the control of.**

2Co 6:16 ... *“For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”*

John 15:5... *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, (dwells in me) and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*

He seeks to “dwell in our hearts” through the open door of our faith. The bottom line is; is He actually on the throne of your life? Is He in control? Is He a guest or the owner?

Secondly...how this is to happen on the practical side: We must be both rooted and grounded in God’s love. Not in religious motion or moral standing. We generally understand that we have to ask for such, but often we simultaneously reject what we are verbally asking for! One has to ***actually*** step up to the plate. The language throughout this section of scripture speaks of commitment. Selling out. After all, a rooted tree doesn’t just decide one day to walk away! It’s vested! It made a commitment. It’s permanent.

Let’s face it. Untold multitudes of believers today are fluttering around in the breeze...every little draft and they are off course. It’s not that they have no feelings toward God or that they are without a desire to know their Redeemer. But they are not hunkered down. They are not committed. And as we approach the last days, that “I shall not be moved” attitude has never been more critical, because Satan is pulling out all the stops in an effort to destroy all that God said was “good.” Sexuality, created identity, family, fellowship and community of the church, even the basic public manifest of the Christian faith.

Many of us still have our ‘foot in the door’ where we can retreat when the battle gets intense! So essentially we are running to and fro...back and forth...close to Him and away from Him. Paul tells us that our “root” must be in the love of Christ. There is nothing complicated about that issue. When we fail to commit, it is simply because we do not love Jesus enough. Perhaps because we never really come to the understanding of the level of His love for us...we do not understand the magnitude of what He has done, and the extent of what we are being given.

Throughout the book of Ephesians, the issue of ‘heart’ comes up again and again. Because of the modern vernacular use, we again lose the impact of what God is trying to communicate to us. This issue is not about confession or even belief; ***it’s about living***. Our attitudes and our very actions speak louder than our words. Any real “heart” issue is immediately and dramatically communicated to our hands and feet!

Pastor Wayne Barber: “If you are not being strengthened in the inner man with power by the Spirit of God, it is very obvious that you are not making Christ at home in your hearts. Why? Because Christ is His Spirit that lives

there. If you are living a lifestyle that is not pleasing to Him, if you are grieving Him, then no wonder you're discouraged, defeated and generally a "mess" spiritually speaking. No wonder your life is falling apart. There is a very basic truth in Scripture and when you come to grips with it, it becomes very understandable what victory is all about." Let's step back and survey the field of play. You have already received Jesus into your life. You say, "I want to walk in the fullness of what He has to offer. Where do I start?" It starts when you realize how weak you are and how desperate we all are to tap into His strength. You see, weakness is an absolutely necessary if you are going to be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God. God will bring people and circumstances into your life that will cause you to get down on your face and say, "Oh, God, I can't." He says, "That's right. I never said you could. But I can. I always said I would. Now tap into Me. Appropriate what is already yours to access."

3:18-19

Paul's prayer, again should be ours: That we would be able to grasp the magnitude of God's love. That we would be able to understand and embrace what is in the hand of Christ today as he reaches out to each of us! God wants to literally fill us with all that He is. The prayer here is that we not just understand it intellectually, but that that we actually **apprehend** that fullness! That we take hold of it and be rooted unmovable.

Verse 19 goes on to say that we might come to know...the original language is the word "gnosko"...*the 'coming to an understanding through experience'*... the love of Christ that surpasses anything we can imagine. Can you grasp what Paul is asking? What he is saying? That we are filled...**filled**, with all that God is, has, and does. How can I be "filled" with God? Through the Holy Spirit.

Please note once again, that Paul not only desires this for each of us personally, but **corporately as a church**. His prayer seeks this "gnosko" experience "with all the saints." Again, this comes from being "rooted and grounded" in the love of Christ. Where are your roots today?

3:20-21

We need to hear those first words "**He is able...**" He **can**. Do we get that? He **can**. There is no question about this. All that is left is, do we want Him to? The text says He is able to do "*exceedingly above all that we could ask...even beyond anything we could dream up.*"

You might be wondering why this life sounds so different than the one that you know and experience. Well, note those words of verse 20... "*according to the power that works in us...*" All that is available to us as children of God is accessible according to the power that works in us. Ahhhh...but what if there is no power in us? Well, therein lies the trouble! No spirit in us, then no fruit from us.

The gifts that we are promised in scripture come from the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and if there is no Holy Spirit in the driver's seat, all those riches and promises of God will never be realized in our lives...and if He is not in control in our church, then the same will occur here amongst us. But when we surrender to God...fully cognizant of our inability to do anything ourselves, the Holy Spirit...upon invitation, will come into us and we can begin the wild journey of things beyond what we can ask or think. THAT is the life rooted and grounded in His love...

In the last century, when Napoleon's armies opened a prison that had been used by the Spanish Inquisition they found the remains of a prisoner who had been incarcerated for his faith. The dungeon was underground. The body had long since decayed. Only a chain fastened around an anklebone cried out his confinement. But this prisoner, long since dead, had left a witness. On the wall of his small, dismal cell this faithful soldier of Christ had scratched a rough cross with four words surrounding it in Spanish. Above the cross was the Spanish word

for “height.” Below it was the word for “depth.” To the left the word “width.” To the right, the word “length.” Clearly this prisoner wanted to testify to the surpassing greatness of the love of Christ, perceived even in his suffering.