

Dear Church (Part 7)
"Paul on His Knees Again"
[Eph. 3:14-21]
Pastor Bill Bowers
June 11, 2017

Sermon Notes / Outline

"The saint who advances on his knees never retreats." Jim Elliot

"The greatest tragedy in life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer." FB Meyer

"A Christian's chief occupational hazards are depression and discouragement." John Stott

- You pray to God
- Through Christ
- In the Spirit

When we are discouraged...

1. *Physically* we lose energy. (Ephesians 3:16) Strength: the word means fortified, braced, invigorated,
2. *Emotionally* we lose touch with reality. (Ephesians 3:17-18)
3. *Mentally* we lose our memory (Ephesians 3:19)
4. *Spiritually* we lose intimacy. (Ephesians 3:19)

Three "Take Away's"

1. CLAIM HIS STRENGTH
2. REMEMBER YOU'RE LOVED
3. SEEK HIS FULLNESS

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HomeGroup and Personal Study Questions

- Once again, we witness Paul praying for those who read his letter. How do you approach or receive this prayer? Do you think it is only for the people who were the original recipients? Do you think Paul's words were written to make the recipients "feel" good? Do you think the words and sentiments behind the prayer were expected to be fully realized (come true)? Please explain your responses.
- Paul specifically prays that God would impart "his glorious riches" (unlimited resources), and empower the inner being of those who believe in Christ. His expectations are that Christ "may dwell in their hearts through faith" and help them to grow deep roots of understanding in the ways and practice of God's love (vss 16-17). Are you experiencing the reality of this prayer in your life? Provide examples. How might you experience this prayer in more ways?
- Why do you think the prayer specifically asks for "power to understand" the vastness of God's love (vs 18)? Do you find it interesting that immediately following the prayer to understand the vastness of God's love, Paul claims it is impossible to fully comprehend (vs 19)? Do you think these are contradictory statements? What do you think is the point behind these words?
- There is an interesting point near the end of verse nineteen; "...you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." (NIV) And/or "...you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God." (NLT). How do you feel about this prayer? Do you think it is possible? Do you believe you can be filled with the fullness of God? How might this be received? What does or might it "look like" in your daily life? Is there anything you can do to partner with God to realize His fullness dwelling within your inner being?
- The prayer ends with a well-known benediction (vss 20-21). You may have heard these words before being prayed over you in a congregational setting... Have you ever truly and fully received them as words from God to you? Why or why not? Do you think it appropriate to receive them personally? Do think it right to receive them as a group (congregation)? What might be the outcome if we "lived into" this prayer and benediction? Do you think it is worth trying?