

PRAYING THE UNIMAGINABLE

Friday, April 19

Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

Ephesians 3:16 *I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...*

Paul now returns to the prayer he began in verse 1 of this chapter. The normal posture of prayer in Paul's day was to stand, but Paul shows his humility and submission by kneeling before the Father. Though we can have boldness and confidence to approach God's throne, we must always have the proper attitude of humility and respect as we approach the Father. Paul makes three specific requests for the Christians in Ephesus.

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT (3:16). The word strengthen is the opposite of the word discouraged in verse 13. Instead of giving up, believers can rely on God's power provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit (see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

THE LOVE OF CHRIST (3:17-18). "That Christ may dwell in your hearts" is the idea that He can settle down and feel at home. Paul uses two images to express how Christ's love is established in our hearts. Like a tree, believers need to be rooted in love, letting it go down deep into their souls. Like a building, believers need to build on the solid foundation of God's love to have a strong life. This process never ends as we will never stop learning about the love of Christ.

THE FULLNESS OF GOD (3:19-21). As believers experience the power of the Spirit and the love of Christ, they will be filled with the fullness of God. There will be nothing lacking in their relationship with the Father. He can do far more than we can ever desire or imagine because the measuring standard is based on God's almighty power and not any human thoughts or imaginations. Therefore God alone deserves all the praise and glory. There will never be a time when God has received sufficient praise for who He is and all He has done.

LESSON ONE: "Together with All the Lord's People." It is difficult (if not impossible) to plumb the depths of God's power and love without the church family. God has designed us to grow together as we fellowship and worship as one in Christ. We not only 'do it better when we do it together'; we cannot do it on our own. How are you helping others grow in their walk with Christ? How are others helping you?

LESSON TWO: "Now to Him Who is Able." Paul has spent the first part of this letter describing the wonderful blessings God has poured out on us because we are in Christ. He has also spent time on his knees praying for the spiritual growth and well-being of God's people. Now he reminds us that God is not only able to do all this, but He will go beyond anything we can ask or imagine. Have you ever prayed for 'the impossible'? Have you opened up your life to God's amazing power and asked Him to use you for His glory? The greatest blessings come when we realize that the work that has been accomplished would be impossible without the Spirit's working in and through us. God loves using the things the world considers weak and inferior to do great things for Him (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Are you open for God to use you to do more than you can imagine according to His power working in you?