

## GLEANINGS FROM EPHESIANS PART 14

From George Wood

Ephesians 3:13-21

In Ephesians 3:13 we learn that Paul has a concern for the church in Ephesus...they are beginning to lose heart. The leader of the Christian Church (Paul) had been imprisoned and they were in danger of a paralyzing discouragement as a result.

Losing heart was not exclusive to the Ephesians. We all can lose heart. Our circumstances, our failures, our unanswered prayer all can wear us down...smother our joy and implant doubt and discouragement in our hearts. The present state of our world and of our nation has brought a growing sense of despair and pessimism to Christian and non-Christian alike. What's the answer?

Paul tell us in verse 14..."For this reason (ie because they are in danger of losing heart) I bow my knee before the Father." He saw prayer as the answer. Only God could restore hope and joy to the church.

So what did he pray for? It is instructive to compare this prayer with the prayer in Chapter 1:15-19. The Chapter 1 prayer is essentially a prayer for understanding. The prayer in Chapter 3 is a prayer for power. What does that tell us? While we need light and understanding to BEGIN our journey with Christ, we need power to KEEP GOING...TO KEEP US FROM LOSING HEART.

In verse 16 we see Paul praying that the Ephesian believers would be "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man". Note who it is that strengthens...GOD. It is His power, not our own.

And what will this strengthening produce? A CHRIST FILLED HEART! (v17). As our spirit is infused with divine strength, our faith is awakened and Christ's presence in our lives becomes more real. Sometimes when we begin to lose heart it's because we have grown weak in faith. Prayer strengthens our faith and places our focus where it should be...on the love of Christ.

Note Paul's emphasis on the immensity of Christ's love. He says that it is so big that it even surpasses knowledge. (v19). But it is this indescribable love that grounds us and roots us in our faith. (v 17).

Paul prays that God will give us an understanding and comprehension of Christ's love. And with that understanding will come a full heart...that we might be "filled up to all the fullness of God". (v 19).

In other words, our faith grows as we are strengthened with power and with an understanding and knowledge of His great love for us. How can we lose heart knowing that we are personally loved by Christ in such a limitless way? The more we comprehend the immensity of His love, the more we will be overwhelmed by His presence...the more we will be filled with Christ Himself...the more solid and enduring our faith will become.

What a great prayer! My suggestion is that we adopt this prayer and make it our own. Make it a part of our daily conversations with Him.