

EPHESIANS 3:14-16 STRENGTHENED WITH POWER

You are really rich in the spiritual dimension, inconceivably rich. Unfortunately we function only on one tenth of one percent of that of those riches. The power of God is amassed in our behalf, unsearchable riches are ours.

Now, on the basis of this Paul prays his prayer

To have it all and not to use it is pretty sad. God has been so generous in making us rich we ought to be able to use those riches. We ought to be able to function on those riches. We ought to be able to daily use them in the living ... the process of living.

In the city of Downey named Mr. Stamps. He owned the city of Downey. For all intents and purposes the whole city had to buy all of their land from him. As the city expanded they kept buying more of his land. He was extremely wealthy man. He owned the Country Club but he used to dress so tacky. And he used to look so skuzzy all the time, unshaven and everything. You didn't know that word? It's a Greek word for ragged. (laughter) Anyway,...anyway, he was a terrible looking old guy. And one day while he was out on his own Country Club Golf Course, the police arrested him for vagrancy. They didn't know who he was and they heard about it ... believe me. I think they put in a new police chief after that. But anyway he ran the show. But he didn't look like...he ... he didn't seem to appropriate his riches.

Julian Ellis Morris was a very, very wealthy man. He ... however, used to love to dress like a tramp. In fact that was the style of life that he chose. He dressed like a tramp. Sold razor blades, shampoo and soap on the west coast of England in the English resort city of Blackpool. And he sold it door to door, dressed in an old tattered, beaten-up Army coat and some tattered ragged canvas shoes he went from house to house selling razor blades, soap and shampoo. When he was done at night he would return to his mansion where he had three television sets, two cars and he would have his chauffeur-driven Daimler limousine with his chauffeur take him to dinner. Or else he would catch a flight to Paris where he would lavish gifts on the two girls that he kept there. He died at 75 and left a fortune.

Obviously this is a rich, profound, far-reaching, powerful section of Scripture and we're going to do our best to find our way through it and touch the main thrust. What a prayer. The heart of the prayer is not that we would know but that we would do. The goal of the prayer is that we might experience verse 20, that we might come to the place where the power of God within us is doing things that exceed our imagination. That's the point. He prays here that a series of great truths, great spiritual realities will take place in our lives that will cause us to exude the power of God which ultimately in verse 21 will redound to the glory of God.

When you get to chapter four it is a road map that says now with all this power here's where you go. Here's the behavior, here's where you drive that machine. But, folks, you can know all about the engine, chapter 1 to 3 through verse 13, you can know all about where you're to go but you're never going to do it until you turn the key on and that's chapter 3 verses 14 to 21. I call it the Christian's ignition. This is where you get turned

on. And unfortunately it is very possible for some of the sanctified saints to soak it up constantly. To understand their engine, to have a tank loaded with fuel, to understand the map, to know what the race requires, to see the whole route but never move the will to turn it on. To me that is the greatest anxiety of the ministry. People who know it all but they never really function according to the power of Ephesians 3:20

Now, it is a progression that is involved in starting the engine. There is a progression here moving all the way to where Paul begins his prayer to where he climaxes it--by the time you get to 3:20 you are really moving. In fact, this race has a running start. You'll hit chapter four going full blast if you get turned on at the end of chapter 3. And so the fantastic truth of how the Christian flips his will to get the ignition rolling is right here. And I really believe that God is going to do some dramatic things in our lives as we study this.

John MacArthur

1. PRAYING TO THE FATHER 3:14-15

A. INTERCESSORY PRAYER

B. PRAYER IS AS NECESSARY AS DOCTRINE

C. THE POSTURE OF PRAYER

D. THE FATHER

1. Creator of all Acts 17:29

2. Family of the redeemed Heb 12:22-24

You may be unknown by the world, but if you belong to Christ, you are in His family and your Father has His eye upon you.

you've got to storm heaven, continue in prayer, with strong endurance and perseverance. That was Paul. He prayed. He bowed his knee and he prayed. And he prayed about spiritual things. And he went busting right into God's presence because he knew God was a loving Father who was just waiting for him to come and embraced him when he arrived.

2. STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT 3:16

Unfortunately, many Christians stop at the entry into the Kingdom of God and are satisfied with forgiveness, not going to hell and going to heaven. They just are concerned with that. They never grow. But the power God gives to His people is possible for all. It is meant for the ordinary believer. As a matter of fact it is the duty of all Christians to grow and be strengthened.

CH Spurgeon—"There is a point in grace as much above the ordinary Christian as the ordinary Christian is above the worldling." The Christian is on a higher level than a non-Christian. There are higher reaches in the Christian life which are as much above this ordinary Christian level as the Christian is above the non-Christian.

A. GRANT

B. ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY

Eph 1:3,4, 7, 9,11

May God open our eyes to the privileges that are ours through the Name that is on us.

The glory is the sum of all His attributes. Might, majesty, holiness, righteousness, justice, the totality—the glory of God. It is according to that God is able to strengthen us.

C. STRENGTHENED WITH POWER

1. WHY?

New Christians

A babe in Christ has just started to live and has to be protected just like parents would be protecting their baby. They don't know of the ugliness of sin and as they grow they begin to understand. They are not aware of the dangers of the Christian life. Difficulties and problems arise and he is bewildered and he sometimes falls.

Existence of the devil

A real problem is the struggle with principalities and powers as in Eph 6 Satan can confront you with an appearance of truth which sounds right and true but is false and can lead you astray and into snares which will trap you. We need strengthening because of the devil. He targets the inner man. We can take care of the outward man but ignore the inner man and be attacked.

The greatness of what is offered to us. We need the fullness of God. It is overwhelming.

2. WHAT?

Mind

We can be assailed by doubts, depression. We can be dull, slow, and unable to think. Our thoughts can wander. Sometimes we can read the Bible but the mind can wander in all directions and we lose our concentration.

Ephesians is some of the profoundest truth in the world. You can't understand it in a casual manner and without effort. You just can't gallop through it. The mind needs to be strengthened. Intellectual understanding of the scripture is necessary. Laziness as not growing in knowledge is a sin.

Christians need to climb the mountain tops and breathe the pure air of God's truth.

Heart

We are subject to being discouraged. The heart can conjure up all possibilities that are against us. What if that happens? We imagine things in the future.

Will

Our wills are feeble and prone to sin. We desire to do things that can be sinful. the will can be paralysed.

When you analyze the inner man, you realize he is weak, feeble, and needs to be strengthened. How often we have failed in the mind, heart and will. But God will strengthen us.

D. BY HIS SPIRIT

1 Cor 2:10-12, Acts 1:8, Gal 5:16

3. THE INNER MAN

3:16

A. WHAT PAUL DOES NOT PRAY FOR

He does not pray for a change in circumstances or that he would be freed from prison so he could return to the Ephesians.

He doesn't put up a general prayer that is vague.

He didn't just pray for a blessing upon the people.

B. WHAT PAUL'S PRAYER IS

1. Spiritual

We are not to start our prayer about the material
Matthew 6:33

Paul was preoccupied with people's spiritual lives. You see, Paul knew that the major issue is not the outer man. The outer man is dying all the time, he said. But what do we care, for the inner man is renewed every day. And Paul's prayer was directed at the inner man.

2. Specific

He singled out certain matters

3. Not making us happy

We should be concerned about spiritual growth, knowledge of God, and enjoying Him.

There will be tribulation—Jn 16:33, Acts 14:22, Phil 1:29

2 Tim 3:12

While there is sin left in this world there will be troubles.

C. BUILDING UP THE RESISTANCE

Our bodies are filled with germs which can become lethal and destroy us.

How does the body deal with this? It has a mechanism to resist the attacks.

There can be infection, but there can be resistance. Food and exercise are ways to fight. There are drugs that can deal directly with invading germs. It however does not build up resistance.

The matter that Paul is interested with is building up the resistance.

Luke 18:1, 2 Cor 4:17-18

Prayer fills the lungs of the soul with the oxygen of the Holy Spirit and His power. Fill yourself with the life of God.

Don't spend your time thinking about the things that defeat us, but rather, build yourself up on the most holy faith.

D. THE MEANING OF INNER MAN

It's one thing to understand your riches in Christ. It's something else to get the ignition on. It's one thing to read the owner's manual and know what you've got. It's something else to turn it on and move it. And to get all this power and all this resource and all this riches turned on and moving, you start by being strong in the inner man which means you are controlled by the Word and the Spirit.

The inner man is the opposite of the body and all its functions

2 Cor 4:16, Rom 7:22, 1 Pet 1:3

E. RETREATING TO THE INNER MAN

When you realize what is happening to the outer perishing body, as it is fainting, you see the inner man is renewed every day.

We are not to be dependant on circumstances and controlled by them.

We don't want to be in one dimension. We will become depressed and hopeless. We have a new man with the divine nature implanted into us.

But the devil wants to discourage us and make us feel discouraged