

## **That Christ May Dwell In Your Heart---Eph 3:16-17**

We are staring at the highest of the heights of the Christian. This is most glorious. If you climb a mountain, you will find that the higher you get, the harder it gets, but its worth it all for it is so exhilarating. We are at the mountaintop experience.

We are at a staggering statement and we must walk wisely in it. We are to be strengthened so that Christ can dwell in our hearts.

### **1. 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**

##### **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

When we are strengthened we shall be able to climb and reach this great height.

Where there is a strong inner man there is a result. And it says to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man with the result that, or in order that. And you have a purpose or a result. In this case both are true. In order that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. Or with the result that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. Or with the purpose that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. The indwelling Christ then is the second point. From inner strength to the indwelling Christ.

### **2. CHRIST DWELLING IN THE HEART 3:17**

#### A. SANCTIFICATION, NOT SALVATION

Paul is not praying that they become Christians, but that Christ dwell in their hearts

#### B. MEANING OF DWELLING

Katoikeo—be at home, settle down, to be comfortable with  
Genesis 18-19---Abraham---Lot

Rev 3:20, John 14:23

Col 1:27, Gal 2:20

Now he's saying, then, that when you have inner strength and you're really walking in the Spirit and Spirit-controlled and Spirit-energized the thing that's going to happen is Christ is really going to be at home in your heart. And I dare say, beloved, there are a lot of Christians where He dwells but is not that comfortable. Would you agree to that? Why I think all of us would agree there have been times in our lives when we have discomforted Christ greatly. You remember back in I Corinthians where he says - You Christians, you're going out and committing adultery, don't you realize that you are joining Jesus Christ to a harlot? Now wouldn't you think that would make him decidedly uncomfortable? Yes Any sin is a discomfiture to Christ. Anything that quenches the Spirit that grieves the Spirit. Anything that saddens the heart of Jesus. Any sin in your life makes Him uncomfortable

Now Christ is in my life but the question is this. Until the Spirit of God controls my life He is not comfortable there. He's not at home there. He can't settle down. He's always up cleaning up the place.

The question is not is Jesus there it's is He comfortable there? Is He really comfortable there? That's the issue. And in many lives He's not comfortable. He's distressed. In fact in some lives His process of cleaning even hurts a little bit, get a little chastening.

Let me give you an illustration. Back in, don't need to turn to it, Genesis 18 and 19 God was going to bless Abraham with a son . You remember that? Abraham and Sarah So the Lord was going to do this thing and it was a monumental thing, I mean, this child was going to be Isaac and this was going to be the first seed of the Abrahamic covenant, ultimately to resolve in Christ. This was going to be the first real Hebrew, if you want it in terms of what really happened. This was the first Jew in effect, first of the seed to be known as the nation Israel. Isaac. And it was a monumental time for this thing, it was a big deal. It was so important. The Messianic line was born And so God was going to make a special visit to the earth. Oh yes, the incarnation of Jesus Christ was not the first time God showed up here. In fact in Genesis 18 He arrived at Abraham's house with two angels, remember that? Just came walking down the path with two angels. You say - In what form was God? I don't know. Apparently, some kind of a visible form, not unlike a human form. But in fact He came there and Abraham said to Sarah - Sarah, we have got company like you won't believe, Sarah. You've heard of important company? God is here. And two angels. And then, of course, later in Hebrews 13 it says - You better be careful too, you might entertain angels unawares, and it's referring to that. So what happened, of course, is Sarah really went in there and whipped up a wonderful thing and God actually came into Abraham's house and had fellowship. And you know what that tells me about Abraham? And Sarah? That tells me they must have been righteous people or God wouldn't have been comfortable there. You know that? God wouldn't have been comfortable there if they were not righteous people. Even though they were in the plan. And the reason I believe that is because in the very next chapter you have a most interesting situation. In the very next chapter in the 19th chapter, Lot was living in the city of Sodom. And the Lord planned to destroy those cities. But the Lord wanted to warn Lot to get out of there. But have you ever noticed that the Lord sent the two angels and never went Himself? He was comfortable in Abraham's tent but for some reason or another He wasn't comfortable in Lot's house. Even though He had a relationship with Lot, and Abraham.

And the same thing is true of Christians. We have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ but that does not necessarily mean that at all times Jesus is comfortable in our lives. Would you agree to that? That's really an important thing. But when you are strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man then He's comfortable. When your life is resolved into the control of the Spirit of God, when you have yielded a moment by moment living pattern to the Holy Spirit Christ can settle down because as the Spirit controls your life He keeps it clean. He keeps it clean.

Some of you have read the little booklet called "My Heart Christ's Home." If you haven't you ought to get it and read it. That's a good little booklet. I read it many, many years ago when I was just a kid. And it's ... it makes a person's heart, does a kind of allegory to where a person's heart and life is like a house. And Jesus comes to the house and starts it out. The fact that Jesus is there

indicates the person is a Christian. And Robert Munger who wrote the book describes it this way. First Jesus went into the library which is the control room of the house. Right? What you read. Which is like the brain. Where all the information is stored. And Jesus goes into the room that is the mind, the brain, and he finds on the shelves all kinds of trash and garbage and junk and evil and bad thinking and bad human philosophy and useless stuff, stuff that is not going to help you. A lot of neutral things and He just takes it all off the shelves, throws it away and puts the Word up there. See. The control room. Then He goes to the dining room. And the dining room is the room of the appetite. Right? And the room of the desires. What do you really feast on? What do you really hunger for? What do you really want? And he finds a worldly menu. A menu of riches, a menu that includes prestige, a menu that includes things, materialism, lust of the flesh and He takes it all out, everything out of there, and puts a new menu in and it is the food that really satisfies the will of the Father. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. So the library is cleaned up and the Word is there. And the dining room is cleaned up and the only thing on the menu is the will of God. And you can get it in any different shape and form you want it but it's all the will of God. And so the will of God becomes that for which you hunger, not your own fleshly desires.

Then Jesus goes to the living room because the living room is where you share and you fellowship and He goes in there and He finds that that's where He's neglected. There's a lot of activity going on but nobody pays any attention to Him. He's just there. And all the fellowship and all the action that is going on, He's just there. I mean, you imagine that. Just think of it this way. Imagine the best friend you have, spend an entire day with you from dawn till midnight. The whole day. At your side the whole time. And all the while loving you, and all the while wanting to say to you you know, here's a good thing to do...oh, I don't think you should do that ... I'd like to encourage you to do this. Well, all day long you never bother to even acknowledge the presence of your friend. You never even said hello. You just went about your business, some times giving an elbow, stepping on a toe. Just complete ... how long do you think that person would be your friend? About one day. Probably be pretty disillusioned. Jesus is the same kind of a friend only in a greater way. And it's very likely as near as one day last week He spent an entire day with you through which you never one time bothered to acknowledge His presence. Never one time. And yet He's your friend forever. It's a good thing it's based on Him and not you. Right?

And so the living room is a place of fellowship. But you've got to have the right fellowship. And so this is where you need to spend time with Christ. And you can clear out a lot of those worldly acquaintances. And a lot of that wasted activity, and a lot of that stuff that doesn't have any redeeming virtue at all and spend your time with Christ and... listen to this, spend your time with people who have Christ living in them. See. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as a manner of some is and much the more as you see the day approaching because this is necessary to provoke yourselves to love and good works." Spend time with Jesus and spend time with people that Jesus lives in. Very important.

Well, then He goes to the workshop. And He goes to the workshop and He finds fantastic tools, beautiful work bench. And the guy is in there making toys. Just toys. And Jesus says you've-got all this ability and you can't produce anything more than a toy? Jesus wants to take all your abilities, all your capacities, all your capabilities and cause them to produce things for the

Kingdom. Cause them to lay up treasure in heaven, cause them to make things that have eternal value. So He changes the whole format in the workshop. He gets all done. I mean, the library's all fixed; it's got the right kind of stuff up there to control everything. The dining room is great, we've got the appetites all set on the will of God. The living room is settled, we're in there fellowshiping with Christ and people Christ lives in. And the workshop is ready; we're down there using our tools and our abilities to make things for the kingdom. But there's a strange odor coming from someplace. Nice and clean but something stinks. You know, like when the meat leaked under the ice box, or whatever. And the Lord isn't too happy. There's something dead in here, He says. And the guy says - Look, You come into my house. You clean up everything. I mean, leave me one closet, will You? That's all I ask. You can have the dining room and all this stuff, just ... that's my closet. The Lord says No, I want that closet. That's the closet full of personal sins, the hidden things, the dead things. And the man became very angry because Jesus had every other room but Jesus gave him a command - Open it! And he opened it and it was full of evil things. Those little secret things that nobody knows about, those things that go on in your mind. Those things that you do when nobody sees you do them. And Jesus cleaned that out. And when He got all that done-then He was at home. See?

#### C. HEART

The very center of the personality—mind, emotions, will  
The question would be, Is Christ at the center of my life?  
Christ dominates the life, rules over the whole of our activities,  
He is Lord in our lives in a practical sense.

#### D. BY FAITH

Faith reveals it as a reality.

Now that's what it means in verse 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. And that's the key to it, people; we can't see that He's at home we have to believe that He is when we know our lives are pure. By faith we accept that Christ is at home. If somebody says to you - Well how do you know Jesus is at home in your life?! You say - Well I ... I believe it by faith. I believe by faith that He came into my life, I believe by faith that I confess my sins and He cleanses them and purifies me and I believe by faith that if I'm being pure and confessing my sin and dealing with my sin and repenting of it and turning from it and endeavoring to keep my life as pure as possible in His power, I believe by His promise that He is at home in me.

And so the Lordship of Christ is to extend to every room in your life, He wants it all. Now after you are yielding to the Holy Spirit, and you are strengthened with power in the inner man and the Spirit controls your life, the result is you become Christ centered. And you I become clean. And Christ settles down into every dimension of your life and He is at home in you.

Hebrews 11:13

1. Must recognize this

Noah saw the message, then did something about it.

2. Persuaded

3. Embraced the promises

Pray that you may be strengthened with power in the inner man, so that Christ would dwell in your heart.

You'll never be able to confess sin, repent from sin, turn from sin, keep the rooms clean in your house, you'll never be able to do that until the Spirit of God has granted you inner strength and that will never happen until you give Him control of your life. Never happen. So all the while

you don't have that inner strength, Christ will never settle down and be at home in your life. You'll be a constant source of anxiety to Him and chastening to yourself. You will begin to mortify the flesh. You will get rid of the rubbish and be purified.

### **3. ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE 3:17**

Now there's a third thing and we'll probably stop with this one. Verse 17; first thing is inner strength, the result of that is Christ dwells in your hearts by faith now here's another hinapurpose clause -- "In order that" or with the purpose that, or with the result that, "Ye being rooted and grounded in love." Now stop right there for a minute. This is fabulous. Everybody wants love. Everybody wants to know love and experience love and give love and receive love and enjoy love. And here's the key--a strong inner man leads to Christ being at home which leads to being rooted and grounded in love. Now you'll never know love in your life until you follow the first two steps, the third one is incomprehensible love. Inner strength leads to the indwelling Christ which leads to incomprehensible love. Another one of the purpose clauses in the Greek here. The result of Christ, now watch this one, the result of Christ's unrestricted access to the Christian's heart is love. You see, when Christ settles down in your life He will begin to exude His personality. You see, if He controls the library, the thinking, if He controls the dining room, the appetite, if He controls the living room, the fellowship, the discussions, the sharing, the conversation, the entertainment, if He controls the workshop, what is being done, the use of abilities and gifts and functions. If He's got the closet clean then His nature dominates and His nature is what? Love, love. The result of Christ's unrestricted access to the believer's heart is love. That's when you become rooted and grounded in love. That's when you really experience it.

You'll never know that love until you have inner strength and the indwelling Christ, until you have come to the place where you've yielded to the Holy Spirit, Christ settles down home in your life, and He begins to exude His love. Then it dominates you, it roots you, it grounds you. And this is his prayer for you that you know His love. Jesus said, "The new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you that ye also love one another." In [I Peter 1:21](#) and following he talks about this, verse 22 says; "Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart fervently." This is God's desire. Chapter 4 verse 8 he talks about love covering a multitude of sins. You know as well as I do that love is a vital part of the Christian's experience. We are to manifest the fruit of the Spirit, the first one is the... the fruit of the Spirit is love and then somebody says joy, peace, gentleness, faith, goodness, meekness and self control are simply subcategories of love. Love is an attitudes of selflessness. Love is an attitude of unsac ... unselfish sacrifice, love is service. I don't think we should keep defining love as an emotion, we've gone through that in I Cor. 13, love is not an emotion in the Bible, never. Love is an act of selflessness. God so loved the world that He felt emotional about it. No. God so loved the world that He did what? He gave the best that He had. If any man loves Me he will keep My words. If you don't meet your brothers need, [I John 3:16](#), how dwells the love of God in you. You see, love is not an emotion, people, it is selflessness. It is sacrifice. It is meeting someone's need. It is serving somebody. It is dying for somebody. "Greater love has no man than this that a man feel really emotional about his friends." No. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man," what? "Lay down his life for his friend." It's always sacrifice, it's always selflessness, it's always giving something, it's always serving something.

And if we're ever going to know what it is to serve and to sacrifice and to give with unlimited generosity, it will only be when we know the incomprehensible love of Christ. And we'll never know that until He is the indwelling Christ who is at home in us and that will never happen until we've experienced the inner strengthening of the Spirit of God. And this is the turn on, people; this is what is going to make the difference.

O Once the Spirit of God takes over, Christ settles down and is at home, and we become rooted and grounded in the love that is His nature that permeates us. You know, I find that that is exactly what happens in my own love. That when I realize my own sinfulness, when I deal with my own weakness and when I really walk in the Spirit, Christ is at home in my life and things are right in my life, I just feel love, I just have a desire to serve, I just have a desire to meet needs. I find myself doing things that I normally wouldn't even do.

Rooted and grounded in love. And then it says not only will we experience it, we'll be rooted and grounded in it,

A. THE PICTURE OF A TREE

1 Cor 3:9

B. THE PICTURE OF A BUILDING

1 Cor 3:10

Mark 12:30, 1 Jn 4:18, Mt 5:44

Ps 119:97,127, 165, Ps 19:10, Jn 5:3