

## Ephesians 3

### Read Ephesians 3

As with the previous two chapters, there is so much to enjoy in this passage we could be here a long time! Rather than be rather sketchy, I have chosen to concentrate on verse 14 – 21. If you want some thoughts on the first 13 verses , read the online sermon from 20<sup>th</sup>, March 2011 at [duckphil.co.uk](http://duckphil.co.uk).

<http://duckphil.co.uk/Sermon/Ephesians/Ephmysteries.htm>

So today we are concentrating on a prayer.

Verse 14 says two things to us. First we can't skip what was written previously -“ For this reason” - and secondly that prayer is about kneeling before the Father. So what is the reason for us to pray? Just this , when you reflect on the glorious salvation that God through Jesus Christ our Saviour has poured out into our lives, you want to pray! You were dead but now in Christ you are alive, so you can talk to the Father.

So lets enjoy some of chapters 1 and 2.

Read Ephesians 1:3-10

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

Our primary reason for prayer is because we have received grace through faith.

Secondly, prayer is about kneeling before the Father. When the disciples asked how they should pray, what did Jesus say? “Our father in heaven hallowed be your name” Prayer comes from remembering what we have received in Christ and recognising the fatherhood and holiness of God.

That is not to say, you have to go through some ritual before you can pray. Nehemiah prayed in the middle of a high risk exchange in the court of Persia. The point is, when you call out to God are you aware that you are speaking to the almighty creator of heaven and earth? Or do you see God as a cash machine, just there to press the buttons and get what you want? In your times of private worship, it is good to meditate on who God is and what he has done. It will change the way that you think about what matters in life. It will change your prayer life.

So prayer begins recognising that we are the recipients of grace and that he is the Father.

The next question is what should we pray? I am suggesting that this passage is a good guide to how to pray for your fellow Christians. I have already referred to the example prayer that Jesus taught his disciples but there are many samples on prayer in both the Old and New Testaments.

So what does this prayer teach us about what to pray?

For the sake of structure I have identified four interconnected prayers:

- 1. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*
- 2. that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*
- 3. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,<sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,<sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge*
- 4. that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

In the words of John McEnroe, “You can’t be serious!” Does Paul really pray that for the church in Ephesus? Well, yes, he does. And I am suggesting that you should pray that big for South Ruislip Christian Fellowship and for individuals in the fellowship.

So let's spend a little time thinking about what we are asking.

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

There are some key issues here for faith. First **The source of the power is God.** We are not asking for the church to struggle on alone, making the best we can. We believe that God has a plan to use us for his praise and glory and to do that he will spend his resources on us. And he has unlimited resources! Do you believe that? God can!

**The delivery in the Holy Spirit.** What transforms us as a church is the Holy Spirit. Not good preaching, not good worship, not the exercise of spiritual gifts all of which are good in themselves and healthy for the church. But what transforms the church is the inner working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and minds.

**The destination of the resources** is your inner being.

Which brings us to the second prayer:  
*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

Christians , on the whole, are the poor of this world, the downtrodden, the marginalised. But while it is legitimate to seek relief for the saints from sickness, unemployment and persecution, what matters most is what happens in the inner being. Here we discover an amazing fact. God chooses to dwell in our inner being. You may think you ain't much, but God says you are a palace fit for the king of kings!

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to take up residence in your life. Not flit in and out on Sundays mornings but every moment of every day. Paul describes us as having treasures in earthen vessels. Jesus discussed this at length in John 15 Listen to our Lord and master:

Read John 15: 1-8

If you want to know more, come on 7<sup>th</sup> November when I am speaking on this very passage!

So you aren't much to look at but inside you have.... well so much we have already read from chapters 1 & 2. You feel undervalued. Get this straight, God wants to share eternity with you! So we are invited to pray for one another in these terms.

*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

Notice the through faith. You have to believe God's word and trust his promises. It's no good looking for some feel-good feeling, this is an act of faith. When you wake up in the morning feeling tired and miserable or even alert and cheerful, remember Jesus wants to stay all day. So it's a good idea to stop for a moment to remind yourself of who he is and what he has done for you and that he is right here! And then remind yourself during the day that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and needs to be holy, and responsive to the Father's will at all times.

Thirdly,

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,<sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how*

*wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,<sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge*

You can hear Jesus talking about being the vine in this, can't you!

So we pray for one another in these terms. This is what God wants for his people so it is entirely appropriate to pray this prayer for each and every church member. To know the love of God, not in an intellectual way but experimentally as you seek his forgiveness, receive his salvation, open your heart to the Holy Spirit and allow him to permeate your life. Love is the first of the fruits of the Holy Spirit but we all know there are more. Galatians 5:22 lists these:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

And the final bit of this prayer says: *that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

That is what God wants to do for us collectively and individually. He wants the church to be the expression of himself in the world we live in. So when we pray this, we are asking for God to reveal himself not just to us alone but through us to the community of South Ruislip, Eastcote,

the Manor, Northolt, Hayes, Hanwell, -  
wherever you live.

Moses was a man who met with God and his face glowed so much he had to wear a mask. You can read about that in Exodus 34:29-35. You see, when you spend time with God, you reflect his glory and that is the heart of this prayer, that we reflect the glory of God to reach other and to the community we live in. To be filled with the fullness of God is to be like our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. That is what God wants for his people, so pray that it happens in each and every member of the church. That is praying "Your will be done"

So, lets just review the main points again.

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,<sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep*

*is the love of Christ,<sup>19</sup> and to know this love  
that surpasses knowledge*

*that you may be filled to the measure of all  
the fullness of God.*

Can this happen? YES!

*<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do immeasurably  
more than all we ask or imagine, according to  
his power that is at work within us,<sup>21</sup> to him be  
glory in the church and in Christ Jesus  
throughout all generations, for ever and ever!  
Amen.*