

Apostolic Prayers – Ephesians 3:16-19

(NASB), “16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

I. Book of Ephesians Context

- a. The book of Ephesians is a letter written by Paul to the saints who were in Ephesus. He wrote this letter in AD 60-63 while he was in prison. Paul was previously in Ephesus on his third missionary journey from about AD 54-57.
- b. Ephesus was a port city, which likely meant many were coming and going. The pagan god Artemis (Diana) was prominently worshiped (the temple of Artemis, which is one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, was located in Ephesus). There was a heavy influence on practicing magic and dealing with spirits in Ephesus and many of the newer believers were coming out of their pagan worship and magic practices and bringing some of that mixture into their walk with Christ.
- c. Acts 19 provides insight into Paul’s time in Ephesus during his third missionary journey. While Paul is in Ephesus He was baptizing people in the Holy Spirit, casting out demons, and doing great healing miracles. So many people were being converted that it greatly affected the pagan silver shrine business. In return, business owners (and followers of Artemis) threatened Paul and his companions and eventually a town clerk calmed everyone down. Shortly after Paul went on to Macedonia.

II. Basic Outline of the Apostolic Prayer

- a. That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory
 - i. To be strengthened with power Through His Spirit In the inner man
 - ii. So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith
- b. And that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints
 - i. What is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth
 - ii. And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge
- c. So that you may filled up to all the fullness of God

III. Verse 16

(NASB) – “16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,”

(NIV) – “16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,”

(AMP) – “16 May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened and spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self, [indwelling your innermost being and personality],”

(TPT) – “16 May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened and spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self, [indwelling your innermost being and personality],”

a. Key Words

- i. **Glory** – *Doxa* – a seeming; appearance; a notion imagination, opinion; the opinion which obtains respecting one; reputation; honor; dignity
 - ii. **Strengthened** – *krataioo* – to strengthen, render strong, corroborate, confirm.
 - iii. **Power** – *dynamis* - power; strength, ability, force, miraculous power (Translated 7 X in the bible as Miracle)
 - iv. **Spirit** – *Pneuma* – wind, air in motion, Jn 3:8; breath, 2 Thess. 2:8; the substance spirit
- b. That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory – Compare with Ephesians 1:18, the father of glory graciously extends His glory with the saints. The word “riches” denotes the idea of abundance meaning His Glory is available in way that is inexhaustible. It is through His mercy that God extends the riches of His glory.

(Colossians 1:11 NASB), “11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously”

(Romans 9:22-23 NASB), “22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,”

- c. To be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man – the inner man is used here to represent all faculties, intellectual, emotional, spiritual. He strengthens us by grace with His abundant power through fellowship with His Holy Spirit. The idea is that we would be renewed, strengthened, and changed into a new kind of life as the Holy Spirit resides in us. One of the most efficient ways for a believer to be strengthened is to pray in the spirit.

(2 Corinthians 4:16 NASB), “16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

(1 Corinthians 14:4 NASB), “4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.”

(Jude 20:21 NASB), “20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

- d. **Summary** - Through the abundant wealth of the Glory of God and by the Holy Spirit residing in us, He generously and provides empowering grace to strengthen every part of a believers inner man for the sake of endurance, ministry, and worship.

IV. Verse 17-18

(NASB), “17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,”

(NIV),” 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 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,”

(AMP),” 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through your faith. And may you, having been [deeply] rooted and [securely] grounded in love, 18 be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God’s people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love];

(TPT), “17 Then, by constantly using your faith, the life of Christ will be released deep inside you, and the resting place of his love will become the very source and root of your life. 18–19 Then you will be empowered to discover what every holy one experiences—the great magnitude of the astonishing love of Christ in all its dimensions. How deeply intimate and far-reaching is his love! How enduring and inclusive it is! Endless love beyond measurement that transcends our understanding—this extravagant love pours into you until you are filled to overflowing with the fullness of God!”

a. Key Words

- i. **Heart**– *Kardia* – The heart, regarded as the seat of feeling, impulse, affection, desire
- ii. **Faith** – *Pistis* – belief, firm persuasion, assurance, full conviction
- iii. **Grounded** – *themelioo* – To found, lay the foundation of
- iv. **Comprehend** – *katalambano* – to lay hold of, grasp; to obtain, attain
- v. **Breadth** – *platos* – breadth
- vi. **Length** – *mekos* – length
- vii. **Height** – *hypsos* – (Eph. 3:18; Rev. 21:16 as exaltation, dignity, eminence)

viii. **Depth- bathos** – depth, deep water (Lk. 5:4; Mt 13:5 as fullness, abundance, immensity)

- b. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – Faith in this instance is the action of opening the door to let Him inhabit the depths of our being. Remember Paul is writing to believers who were already saved, so this prayer likely isn't about salvation but about surrendering their motives to God for the sake of being strengthened (from glory to glory).

(Colossians 1:27 NASB), “27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

- c. And that you being rooted and grounded in love – Both rooted like a tree and grounded like a building. Love is the condition under which the growth of a believer is able to take place. If love is the soil He plants us in our roots should sink deeper and spread wider in that soil.

(Colossians 2:7 NASB), “7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”

(1 Corinthians 8:1 NASB), “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

(Ephesians 4:16 NASB), “16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

- d. May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth
- i. It should be noted that comprehension is place AFTER love just as in Philippians 1:9 denoting that the spiritual order of revelation differs from that of the wisdom of the world.

(Phillipians 1:9 NASB), “9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,”

- ii. “May be able” is the idea of a wide grasp (a mighty stretch of thought and faith) only to be made by someone perfectly assured of their footing.
- iii. The breadth, length, height, and depth are the spiritual dimensions of God and His love that we are being strengthen to apprehend.
- Breadth – of the fullness and the love of Christ is signified, and that too in respect of all men and all peoples (*Its extent to all nations*)
 - Length – extending through all ages (*from everlasting to everlasting*)

- Depth – which no creature can fathom (*The saving of those deep in sin and misery*)
 - Height – such as no enemy can reach (*the heavenly happiness and glory for those in Christ*)
- e. **Summary - The believer is strengthened by the Holy Spirit so that through faith Christ may dwell in our hearts causing us to let our spiritual roots sink deeper and spread wider into the soil of His love, that we might be able to comprehend the endless and limitless nature of God and His affection toward us.**

V. Verse 19

(NASB), “19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

(NIV), “19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

(AMP), “19 and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God’s presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself].”

(TPT), “18–19 Then you will be empowered to discover what every holy one experiences—the great magnitude of the astonishing love of Christ in all its dimensions. How deeply intimate and far-reaching is his love! How enduring and inclusive it is! Endless love beyond measurement that transcends our understanding—this extravagant love pours into you until you are filled to overflowing with the fullness of God!

a. Key words

- i. **Love** – *agape* – love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness
 - ii. **Surpasses** – *hyperballo* – to cast or throw over or beyond, to overshoot; to surpass
 - iii. **Filled** – *pleroo* – to fill, make full, fill up (Mt. 13:48; 23:32; Lk. 3:5; to fill up a deficiency)
 - iv. **Fullness** – *pleroma* – that which fills up; full measure, entire content
- b. To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge – Paul prays for a life of intimate experience with the immeasurable and limitless love of God that would further develop our spiritual and intellectual knowledge of God. The love of God surpasses the human ability to comprehend it apart from genuine experience.

- c. That you may be filled up to all the fullness of God - The consequence of this whole prayer is that we would be filled up to the fullness of God not that we exhaust who He is, but that our capacity to encounter and know Him would be ever full. Because of this statement the prayer never ends and requires one to pray it again and again.

(Ephesians 4:13 NASB), “13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

(2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB),” 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

- d. **Summary - The intention of God dwelling inside of a believer is unto us continually experiencing his endless and limitless love in a manner that transcends our limited ability to intellectually comprehend it. The consequence of this prayer is that we would be filled to our capacity of knowing God.**