

The Soldier's Prayer – Part 8

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AM Service**

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Text:

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Introduction

Someone has said that a prayerless Church is a powerless Church. If our church is to be used by God to do great things, we must be a church that prays and prays often. Great things happen when people pray and I believe with all my heart that great things will happen in this church when we begin pray for one another. But not just simply pray but to pray like the Apostle Paul prayed for his congregation.

This morning I want us to continue to look at the prayer that Paul prayed for the Ephesian church. By looking at these examples, my prayer is that we would see what it is we need to be praying for and that it would cause us to get on our knees just as Paul did and to plead on behalf of this congregation to our Heavenly Father.

In [Ephesians 1:15-19](#) we saw how and what Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus. Paul was the founding pastor of this church and he loved the church and earnestly prayed for it. So what was it that Paul prayed for, for this church?

I - Enlightenment

Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16: Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17: That

the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19: And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Paul without ceasing gave thanks for them and make mention of them in his prayers. Paul's consistent and constant prayer for them is that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that they may know Him better. Then he also prays that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened in order that they may know the hope to which He has called them, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for them who believe.

At the heart of his prayer was that they would have a deeper knowledge and understanding of **Who God is** and a deeper knowledge and understanding of **who they were** and **what they have** as believers **in Jesus Christ**.

II - Enablement

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

After he prayed without ceasing for their enlightenment, Paul prayed for their enablement. Paul bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He would grant them strength in their inner being and that Christ may dwell in their hearts - rooted and grounded in Christ and His love.

Paul dealt with the core of the matter. He dealt with the inner being; with the heart. He knew that the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

Now let us look at the next thing that Paul prayed for the Ephesians. The next thing that Paul prayed for them is that they may ...

3. Comprehend Christ's Love

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Paul said, *“I bow my knees, I get on my knees that God not only would grant you strength in the inner being, not only that you would be deeply rooted and grounded in Christ but also that you would comprehend the love of Christ.”*

Paul prays that they would grasp how wide, long, high, and deep is the love of Christ. He wants them to know and understand Christ’s love for them. A love that is so great, it surpasses knowledge. It goes beyond knowledge. Paul prays that they may know the unknowable. We can know something of His great love, but we never know it completely. Knowing Christ’s love is an ongoing and never-ending process. Throughout eternity we will never come to the place of saying that we know all that there is to know of Christ’s great love for us.

D. A. Carson puts it this way ...

“The remarkable thing about this prayer is that Paul “assumes that his readers, Christians though they are, do not adequately appreciate the love of Christ.” It’s not a prayer that we might love Christ more, although we should. Rather, Paul is praying that we might better grasp Christ’s immense love for us. While there is an intellectual side to this, it is not merely intellectual. Paul is praying that we who already know Christ’s great love might come to experience it at ever-deepening levels.”

What is the love of Christ? Paul uses four words to describe the love of Christ for us – breadth, length, depth, and height.

1. Breadth

How wide is the love of God? God's love is wide enough to reach the whole world.

[John 3:16](#) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. [17:](#) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Christ’s love encompasses a great multitude that is beyond number, consisting of people from every nation and tribe and people and tongue.

[Revelation 7:9](#) After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

There is no sinner beyond the reach of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's love is wide enough to include every race, nationality, age, gender, education, economic status, etc.

[John 4:42](#) And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

2. Length

How long and enduring is the love of God? God's love is long enough to endure through all eternity. It is an eternal love that will not let us go!

There is no love that is any longer and stretches any greater length than the love of Christ at the cross. It expands the eternity. This is the love of Christ for us. It is rooted in eternity past and it shall continue throughout all of the ages to come.

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an **everlasting love**: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is no end for the love of Christ.

3. Depth

How deep is the love of God? How deep is the love of Christ? How far has He reached down?

God's love is deep enough to reach down to the worst sinner.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

All the way down into the grave, where sinners are. That is where He found us. We were dead. We were foul, rotten, corrupting, stinking dead corpses. We had no life. We did not have a single heartbeat toward God.

*When the Savior reached down for me
When he reached way down for me
I was lost and undone without God or his Son
When he reached down his hand for me.*

No one is too deep down in sin but that the cross and the love of Christ is not able to reach. His love is so deep that it reaches all the way down to them and save them and deliver them.

“The depth of the love of Jesus! Consider it as stooping to look upon such an insignificant creature as man! View the depth of that love in receiving such sinful creatures into His embrace!

O sinner! you cannot have gone too deep for Christ's love to reach you. O backslider! you cannot have sinned too foully for forgiveness.” - C. H. Spurgeon

4. Height

How high is the love of God? It is high enough to raise both Gentiles and Jews to heavenly places in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

There is no higher place and honor than to be seated together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We will be exalted together with Christ.

The depth and height of God's love raises us from the lowest pit to the greatest height.

*The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.*

Refrain:

*Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
The saints' and angels' song.*

God's love is wide enough to reach every person. God's love is long enough to last through all eternity. God's love is deep enough to reach the worst sinner. God's love is high enough to take us to highest place.

The love of Christ, how wonderful, how marvelous, how great, how incomprehensible! It is high I cannot attain unto it!

Closing Thoughts

Paul was not asking that God would love them more but that they would comprehend the love of Christ for them. Paul understands that to comprehend Christ's love for them is **something that**

God grants to a person. He knows there is nothing he could do physically to make it happen. He knows that if they are to comprehend the love of Christ, **God must grant it to them.**

What does this mean to you and me? This means that if you are here this morning and do not love the Lord Jesus Christ and do not understand that Jesus Christ really loves you, **I cannot talk you into that.** This is something that God has to do. To comprehend Christ's love and to have a deeper experience of His love is something that is granted to us and **it happens through prayer.** This is why he bows his knees to the Father asking God to grant it to them.

I am convinced more and more that **preaching and listening to sermons alone about the love of God won't do it.** Don't get me wrong, preaching and hearing God's Word are important. But what I am saying is that preaching and hearing sermons are not enough. **There must be prayer both in the pulpit and in the pew. We have to pray this in our own life and for others.** May the Lord, grant us strength to understand His love for us. May we be committed to pray for others and ask God to empower us so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we would know and comprehend the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15: Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

May the Holy Ghost shed abroad the love of Christ into our hearts.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

AMEN!