

SERMON: To The Glory of God's Grace- Power in the Inner Man

GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House

Today, we will continue in the Book of Ephesians, written by the Apostle Paul, and as all churches that are part of Jesus' Bride believe, as the Holy Spirit inspired him. Last week we saw how Paul instructed the Ephesians, therefore all Christians, we saw how one special result of Paul's anointing by the Holy Spirit was to enable him to teach what was, in ages past, the mystery. That mystery was about Christ creating Unity between the Jews and the Gentiles.

This week we read further in The Book of Ephesians Chapter 3:

(Ephesians 3.13) *I ask you, **therefore**, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.* The preachers and teachers who work at correctly dividing the Word of God always ask themselves the old play on words: *What is the **therefore**, There For?*

The answer, I believe is: **(Ephesians 3.11-12)** *according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. **12** In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.* As I ended last week's Message: "Here we have two of the most powerful words for Jesus-followers on how *we may approach God, **with freedom and confidence.*** God is on His Glorious Throne and we can always at anytime or anyplace, sitting, or standing, or kneeling, or falling on our face,***we may approach God*** with Jesus, the *Lamb* who took away **our sins** at His side, ***with freedom and confidence!***

That is a "*therefore, not to be discouraged.*" This glorious fact also applies to Paul's imprisonment.

First, because ***we***, Paul and the Ephesians and all Christians, ***may approach God with freedom and confidence!*** In one sense, What Paul really means is, as if he said: I am suffering for you but ***you can approach the Throne of God with freedom and confidence to pray for me, Paul!***

Second, *my sufferings for you, which are your glory.* Paul had accepted Jesus' call on his life which included much suffering to bring the Gospel of Jesus and the Power of the Holy Spirit to yet un-reached people in the world. For he says of himself and his missionary team in **(2 Corinthians 4.7-12)**, *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. **8** We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;*

9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. Thus, in my {Paul's} sufferings for you, which are your glory. Their glory is the powerful presence of Christ now, and of course, complete glory of God in Heaven. God responds to Paul's suffering to fulfill his calling by Jesus and sends from Heaven more Power and Glory to those to whom Paul was ministering in Jesus' name.

The phrase, *death is at work in us*, in **(2 Corinthian 4.12)** means that by God's action this death creates the result, *life is at work in you*. "You" being the Corinthians, and of course, any of those who were served by Paul's Mission Team for Jesus. We know that all Christians have a certain amount of sufferings planned in God's will for their life. As Paul taught some young disciples in **(Acts 14.22/AMPC)** *Establishing and strengthening the souls and the hearts of the disciples, urging and warning and encouraging them to stand firm in the faith, and [telling them] that it is through many hardships and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.* Paul wanted these young believers to expect sufferings in following Jesus. But, he makes a clear distinction, here in **(Ephesians 3.13)** for Apostles, which includes missionaries today and all Christians called to full time Christian Ministry. Full time Ministers will have some unique sufferings that will be for the Salvation of others. Yet all Christians, not just those called to the Ministry, are called as God's servants to share in Christ's suffering for the sake of others. **Not Paul, nor missionaries nor ministers, ever suffer for their own Salvation, for Jesus paid it all!** But, it pleases God to have those called to the Ministry to be graced to be Christlike in suffering for those whom He has chosen for them to Serve. As Jesus said to His disciples:**(John 15.20-21/AMPC)** *Remember that I told you, A servant is not greater than his master [is not superior to him]. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word and obeyed My teachings, they will also keep and obey yours. 21 But they will do all this to you [inflict all this suffering on you] because of [your bearing] My name and on My account, for they do not know or understand the One Who sent Me.* The Bible makes it clear that persecution is a series of visible attacks by Satan through people, but, the Bible also says in **(Ephesians 6.12)** *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.* The devil has many more subtle strategies against God's servants than open persecution. It seems likely that Satan refrained from subtleties against Jesus after His victory over the Tempter in the Desert. Satan's next plan was to eliminate Jesus as heir of the Throne of Israel by His death by crucifixion. We, who have much flammable tinder or wood to catch fire in our sinful hearts than Jesus, who had none! We must be ready as soldiers to note and resist the more subtler battles as I will exegete in **the 6th Chapter of Ephesians.**

TAKEAWAY#1

***Freedom and Confidence* in prayer to God always leads to joy! Or, at least, a real expectation or a solid hope of joy after our current trial ends.**

Now we begin the verses of Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Church. This will cover (Ephesians 3.14-21). Try to remember that this theology and meaning I attempt to explain is a prayer to God for Jesus' Sheep.

“*For this reason*” in the next verse in Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. Likewise, Paul approaches the Throne of God *with freedom and confidence* to pray for them. As he next writes in (Ephesians 3.14): *For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.*

Don't think that God only listens to us when we are in a humble physical position. He sees our heart, FIRST! And, at the same time, God sees us In Christ, His Beloved Son! However, I recall that C.S. Lewis spoke wisely when he said, “it is very important that we Christians at least on occasion, get on our knees before God to keep reminding ourselves that He is the Creator, and we are His Creation.”

This confidence that Paul had, and, wanted the Ephesians to also have, is expressed in an intimate way in other verses in the New Testament including in (Romans 8.15),

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’

“Abba” was what a Jewish child just learning to talk would call out to his father. This is similar to “Daddy” in English, and “ChiChi” in Japanese. We often forget that God wants us to feel and act that way toward Him. There is no lack of respect or reverence when we Christians approach God with childlike faith and confidence in His love for us.

Our human inability to stay focused on many things at the same time has us baffled at our God who multi-tasks the Universe! Because God is Almighty, Omnipotent, Ever-present, Eternal and more, He multi-tasks like no one else can.. What He also does is to listen to our every prayer and feel our every sorrow. We limited human Christian fathers have obvious restrictions on not only being willing for our child to interrupt us, but also simply being available when needed.

Full-time Ministers especially can sometimes misplace God's priority for Ministers' families. Obviously, the Ministry will often limit time available for the family. Accepting interruptions is

often vital and important for children to know that their Dad, although a Minister, still loves them more than his “job.” This heart prioritizing applies to all Christian Dads. Christians should start to show a real resemblance and likeness to their Heavenly Father here on Earth.

Billy Graham, the famous evangelist from America, was often called Christ's Ambassador to the World. I read some years ago in his autobiography how he “never” turned away one of his children when they knocked on his study door. If he was in a business meeting with owners of the major television Networks, or, preparing his next sermon for a Worldwide Crusade; it made no difference. He set the business executive and his work aside long enough to *hear the heart* of his child's request.

(Ephesians 3.15) *from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.* That is the name “Family.” God invented “Family.” The preciousness of Family is in God's very Holy Nature as God said in **(Genesis 1.26)** *Then God said, ‘Let us make **mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.**’*

Family is an extension of God Himself in that God said **our image**. Thus Family resulted from Man as Male and Female being united in marriage and procreating more of what God created in His image and with His own hands from the dirt of the ground, and Adam's rib. Note: **our image** also reveals God is Trinity, Father-Son-Holy Spirit but not until Jesus revealed God fully, was this clear. In the Older Testament God's plurality of persons is as Man, the Two becoming One in Marriage. **(Genesis 2.24)** *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.* This word “One” in the original Hebrew is *echad*, which means a complex unity, as Male and Female married.

Now I will quote from one of my favorite Bible Commentaries, **Expositors Bible Commentary** about **(Genesis 1.26-27)** *...the creation of humankind is specifically noted as a creation of "male and female." Previously gender was not considered to be an important feature of the creation of the other forms of life, but for humanity it takes on importance. Thus the fact that God created "man" as "male and female" is stressed....* This in **(Genesis's 1.27)** *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

TAKEAWAY #2

God made it clear in the Bible that the plurality of Mankind is the glorious creation of Male and Female which is “Man.” This is God's image, plural in Three Persons and One God.

So beware of this wicked world that scoffs at both a Holy Trinity and Holy Marriage and the Glory of God in Family!

Thus the name “Family” is as holy and sacred as God as we see in **(Ephesians 3.15)**, *from whom every **family** in heaven and on earth derives its name.* God has so connected Himself to “Family” that Paul feels free to pray in a humble kneeling position while thinking about “Family!” Quoting from **(Ephesians 3.14)**, *For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.*

Next reading on in Paul's Letter in **(Ephesians 3.16-17)**, *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

The adjectives amplifying these words seem enlightening for the true meaning or exegesis in **(Ephesians 3.16 /AMPC)** *May He grant you out of **the rich treasury of His glory** to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [**Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality**].* Paul's prayer is asking God to grant or give the Ephesians what they need, His very power from His Being, His Glory. The Ephesians, and all God's Children, need *to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man.*

What is the Source of our strength? In the Older Testament in **(Psalm 18.1)** it was simply and truthfully said by David as he was fleeing from King Saul in: *I love you, Lord, **my strength**.* In the Newer Testament Jesus revealed God to His Disciples. He once said while talking with His Father in **(John 17.6-7)**: *I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. **7** Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.*

And besides Jesus' anointing by the Third Person of the Trinity, Jesus stated clearly that God is complex unity as Trinity in His Commandment to Go and Make disciples. We see this in **(Matthew 28.19)** *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* And here in **(Ephesians 3.16)** Paul declares the Christians source of strength in the Lord is not only “*out of **the rich treasury of His {God's} glory**”* but also, the Third Person of the Trinity, “*the [Holy] Spirit [**Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality**].”*

Therefore, we have more knowledge of our personal relationship with the Triune God through the Lord Jesus than David had.

TAKEAWAY #3

Jesus has given our minds understanding of “ *the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality]* .” But, knowing in our minds must lead to praying from our hearts to receive the blessing to *strengthen you with power through his Spirit out of the rich treasury of His {God's} glory.*

Sinners don't realize that they even have an *inner man*. They may believe some mental analysis of a sub-conscious mind, but the Biblical description by the One who made Man is much more than a man's mental or brain influence within him. The Bible talks often of *in the inner man*. King David understood this as he wrote in his psalm of repentance, in **(Psalm 51.6/AMPC)** *Behold, You desire truth in the inner being; make me therefore to know wisdom in my inmost heart.* In a world of superficial communications and impressions, this is not *natural but supernatural*. I don't want to pick on or fault find the wonderful Japanese people who I love. But the society in Japan has developed and practiced for many, many years an intentional *tatemai* and *hondei* attitude of protecting the inner or *hondei* thoughts. Protecting some inner thoughts from people may be wise. From God....Not Wise! But all sinners in all societies without Christ experience only a limited mental or brain functioning of Man.

What Paul wrote in **(Ephesians 3.16)**, *strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man*, and what King David wrote in **(Psalm 51.6/AMPC)** *truth in the inner being*, are both declaring the inner being or inner heart. I heard one Bible teacher call this your *heart of hearts*. The changes in this part of **Man** is only possible *by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality]* as in **(Ephesians 3.16/AMPC)**. **Therefore, only Spirit-anointed Men of God in the Old Testament times or all Christians since Christ came are privy or allowed this glory of God working inside them.**

Also take note, that Holy Spirit's inner work brings Jesus inside a Man and changes a sinner's heart to be holy; but He also greatly affects the Man's mind in whom He indwells. Some Christians think that deeper experiences, such as being Baptised in Holy Spirit, only affects emotions. **Not so!** More of the Spirit equals more of Jesus. Then Christians who have received Holy Spirit Baptism more often might be saying with the Apostle Paul in **(1 Corinthians 2.16)**, *'Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?'* But we have the **mind of Christ**.

TAKEAWAY #4

Therefore, only Spirit anointed Men of God in the Old Testament times or all Christians are privy or allowed this glory of God working inside them. The Bible teaches clearly that more of the Holy Spirit means more of Jesus.

The phrase *indwelling your innermost being and personality* in **(Ephesians 3.16/AMPC)** is an interesting and relevant exegesis. When a sinner is cleansed by the Blood of Jesus he becomes a **new creation in Christ**. In **(2 Corinthians 5.17)** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!* A born again Christian's personality is changed, however not necessary totally different from the type of personality he already had. Holy character replaces foul corruption! But I think that the personality is sanctified but not usually totally different. The Apostle Paul was a volatile man who lived for **“his Pharisaical cause,”** that is to destroy the Christian Church. Once he met Jesus and was Born-Again, he was still a man who lived **energetically** for **“Jesus' cause”**, spread the Gospel and Church to the whole world. Yet Paul's prayer includes the continuing of God's perfecting the whole Man. Man who has been Born-Again into God's Image is now without sin. And this Man is being continuously conformed into the image of Jesus!

(Ephesians 3.17-19) *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, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

As we realize that Paul is a Born Again Jew, the rich words of an agricultural nation that was *planted by God* in the Oriental Lands of Canaan seem very natural. As we saw in **(Romans 11.17-18)** *If some of the branches { Jews } have been broken off, and you { Gentiles }, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, { The Faith of Father Abraham and the patriarchs of Israel } do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*

The phrase in **(Ephesians 3.17)**, *“being rooted and established in love,”* and simply the phrase **in love**, “reminds me of some years ago when I often watched Billy Graham on television Crusades. His evangelistic sermons were wonderful and I took notes of his methods and prayed my **Impossible Dream**, that I may someday preach. But more than my notes, I recall some simple words Billy Graham said on one of his Crusades in America as broadcast on a television (TV) network. At the close of the broadcast, he looked directly in the camera, not at the crusade audience. After he had spoken to the TV audience about follow up to the mailing address on the TV screen he said (I know now personally to me and thousand of others by the Holy Spirit)

“Remember, God loves you!” It seemed too simple to me then many years ago. But Billy knew the battle against the Devil and how knowing that you know **“God loves me!”** is a powerful weapon in that warfare.

The phrase in **(Ephesians 3.18)** *“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,*” This simple phrase **“may have power”** has much meaning to it. The same verse in **(Ephesians 3.18/Williams)** *so that you with all of God’s people will be strong enough to grasp the idea...of the Love of Christ.* Paul was obviously a *genius* in mental abilities. Being allowed to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, the top teacher of the Pharisees in the world, meant zealous commitment and very high intelligence. His letters are full of difficult and educated vocabulary as we all know especially in the Book of Romans. Yet, he never allowed anyone to make Christianity only a religion of the intellect. It is not religion, except in text books. It is a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Thus, Paul prayed for power by the Holy Spirit inside the Ephesians to allow them **to grasp the Love of Christ.**

In regards to when a Christian passes away from planet Earth and the closeness of their walk with Jesus at that time, it is the direction they have been moving in not their level of maturity that is important. I like to encourage us all to live with the *impossible Dream* of a **Glorious Entrance.** Because God’s grace is so awesome and sufficient for me and for you, it is not impossible at all.
Graduation Day should be the Best Day of our Eternal Life!

To be sure, grasping the **Love of Christ** is a vital maturity level to encourage a Believer to anticipate that **Glorious Entrance.** **It is important to note and not forget that Paul’s phrases here: (Ephesians 3.17&.18), “being rooted and established in love” and “power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,” are part of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians and not his evaluation of their maturity.**

This verse also reminds us that we, the Church, are the Body of Christ. Paul, who knew the need for leadership to be able to be at times alone, or we say in America “a Lone Ranger Christian.’ But we must note that he had an evangelist team on his Missionary Journeys. Yet, Jesus revelations were often to Paul alone as the leader. Here he is praying his and God’s preference for most Christians’ maturity and increasing experiences with Jesus as in **(Ephesians 3.18/Williams)** *so that you with all of God’s people will be strong enough to grasp the idea...of the Love of Christ.* Growing together with all of God’s people in your local Congregation is the best road to **be strong enough to grasp the idea...of the Love of Christ.**

Paul also wrote about the Local Church Family to the Corinthians in **(1 Corinthians 12.26)**
If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. It

is very important to Jesus that we all share the power of God and the sufferings He allows among each other, *the Lord's holy people*.

For several months now my Wednesday night Bible Study series is titled "Know Your Calling." I am currently outlining the major points of my personal pilgrim walk with Jesus toward Glory to help people hear from God for their Pilgrim Walk to Glory. Personal Bible Reading and Study with fellow Christians at your Local Church is a vital part of maturing in Christ as Paul wrote in **(Ephesians 3.18/Williams)**, *so that you with all of God's people will be strong enough to grasp the idea...of the Love of Christ*

I mention this as I recall many years ago how it seemed I would never *grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,*" in **(Ephesians 3.17-18)**. As the Apostle Peter wrote in **(2 Peter 3.15)** *Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. I suggest, as I say to personalize this Bible Verse: our Lord's patience means My salvation.* Years of walking, crawling, sometimes running, sometimes stumbling.....in my Pilgrim Walk---Yes, while aware of many of my weaknesses, I can say with confidence as Paul said in **(Philippians 3.12)** *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

TAKEAWAY #5

Dear OIC Saints, if you feel like you will never have the power to *grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,*" in (Ephesians 3.17-18) then remember another Bible Verse and personalize it. As the Apostle Peter wrote in (1 Peter 2.15) *Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means MY salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him.*

Now Paul continues in the sense of not only how "large" or the "size" of *the Love of Christ*, but also, in **(Ephesians 3.19)**, *and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.* We cannot actually measure the "size" of *the Love of Christ*. These words are spiritual and take a material concept to emphasize how great is Jesus' love for us Christians.

As we have seen throughout the Newer Testament, God sent His Son to reveal His Love for Man. As the Apostle John wrote in **(John 1.18)** *No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.* Making a person known implies giving out new knowledge. Making God known includes new knowledge and much more for *to know this love that surpasses knowledge as* in **(Ephesians 3.19)**. It

requires a deep communication in the *inner man* or *heart of hearts* that this Jesus is the Son of God and God in a human body. This is still true today as people read the truth of Jesus in the Bible and they meet Jesus by the Holy Spirit, who is now God on Earth.

Paul's prayer covering (**Ephesians 3.14-21**) now includes the Apostle's asking God to fill Jesus' Sheep with God Himself. The Amplified adjectives, adverbs, and phrases seem to capture this in (**Ephesians 3.19/AMPC**) [*That you may really come*] to know [*practically, through experience for yourselves*] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [*without experience*]; that you may be filled [*through all your being*] unto all the fullness of God [*may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself!*]

This is obviously Paul asking God to give Jesus-followers experiential Christianity, if you please. Paul is trusting God to cause that to happen not only to the whole church in Ephesus, but also in a personal way to each individual Christian.

In (**Ephesians 3.20-21**) we read, *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,*

The phrase, *who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine* reminds me of my quote last week in my Message Titled “**To The Glory of God's Grace- The Two Mysteries of Christ & Bold Prayer at The Throne of God.**” That is my quote from *MORNING & EVENING, A devotional classic for daily encouragement* by Charles Spurgeon. For the Evening of August 22 for (**Ephesians 3.8**) he wrote: “My Master has riches beyond the count of arithmetic, the measurement of reason, the dream of imagination, or the eloquence of words. They are *unsearchable....*My Lord is more ready to pardon than you to sin, more able to forgive than you to transgress.”

Now Paul repeats the same idea or knowledge about our wonderful God as in *the unsearchable riches of Christ* in (**Ephesians 3.8/ KJ21**) and now the *immeasurably more* in (**Ephesians 3.20**) *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.* Both Bible verses try to tell us how great { *unsearchable and immeasurable* } is God's Love for us Christians. This also reminds me of a Christian song in the 1980's: *God's Grace is Greater than Believers Believe.*

But Pastor Bruce, God does not give me many things I ask for? Yes, as we mature we know that God often says no to many of our requests. That is the wisdom of our Loving Heavenly Father. He is guiding us, as gently as possible, all the way to a Glorious Entrance into Heaven. He sees the path that we only rarely get a glimpse of. If we take some moments to line up His many “YES-ES,” and noting some of our hearts desires that He gave us that we never asked for...then these verses in Ephesians become more clear.

When we find ourselves doubting the immeasurable love God has for us who believe, and even the short but power filled statement by Billy Graham “**Remember, God loves you!**” then take a look at Jesus bleeding and dying for you on the Cross. Then we can with all our heart, from deep within our inner being say (Ephesians 3.21) as Paul exclaimed:

21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Let Us Pray,

REFERENCES

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