

THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY

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Ephesians 3:14-21

1. What are you asking God for? What are your expectations and goals for the coming year?
2. J. Wilbur Chapman often shared the testimony given by a man in one of his meetings.
3. The man said, "I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, 'Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?' As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, 'Father, Father, do you know me?' Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, 'Oh my son, at last I've found you! I've found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours.' Think of it. I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had."
4. When we pray we need to remember that He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all will also with Christ give us all things. (Romans 8:32)
5. Paul prayed because he believed that God would supply all His children's needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)
6. He prayed great prayers because:
 - a. He knew that God was able to do far more abundantly beyond all that he could ask or think, according to the power that worked in him and in those he prayed for.
 - b. He desired that God would be glorified in His church and in Christ Jesus.
7. Paul knew that to him, the very least of all saints, grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ. (Ephesians 3:8)
8. Paul was motivated to bow his knees before the Father because he knew God's redemptive plan and the unfathomable riches available to believers in Christ, and he wanted the Ephesian Christians to receive all that was available to them in Christ.
9. Note the opening words of Paul's prayer: "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power **through His Spirit** in the inner man."
 - a. Do you bow your knees before the Father?
 - b. What are the reasons you do so?
 - c. Are your reasons self-centered or God-centered?
 - d. What is your relationship to the Holy Spirit?
 - e. Is He in you?
10. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit was resident in the Ephesian Christians, yet he felt compelled to pray that they would be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.
11. He prayed that prayer "so that" certain other things might follow.
NOTE: It is important for us to understand that there are things we will never know or experience unless we are strengthened with power through God's Spirit in the inner man, and that we will not be strengthened with power through God's Spirit in the inner man apart from prayer.
12. Notice the list of "so thats" that we find in Paul's prayer.
13. These are things we should be praying about as well, so I am going to apply them to us.

I. So that Christ may dwell in (our) hearts through faith.

A. A paraphrase of this passage could read, “So that Christ may actually settled down and be completely at home in our hearts.”

B. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to deal with everything in our lives that would make it difficult for Christ to feel at home there.

C. Have you ever been in a home where you were uncomfortable because of attitudes and actions you encountered there?

D. How can Christ settle down and be completely at home in our hearts if we are resisting, grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit?

E. Only those in whom Christ dwells can claim to be true followers of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 13:5-6

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test? 6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.”

II. So that (we) might be rooted and grounded in love.

A. I don’t know what caused the man in the illustration I shared earlier to leave home, but I suspect it had something to do with misunderstanding his father’s love.

B. As Christians you and I need to fully understand that in Christ Jesus we are rooted and grounded in the love of God.

C. Only then can we live with confidence before God.

III. So that (we) might be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of God’s love.

A. Being rooted and grounded in God’s love in one thing, but comprehending the greatness of God’s love is another thing.

B. Comprehension has to do with the mind, and you and I cannot know the things of Christ apart from the Spirit of Christ.

C. Many professing Christians have an inadequate view of God and His love.

D. That inadequate view of God and His love impacts every area of their lives including their ability to truly worship God.

IV. So that (we) would know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.

A. How can we know something that surpasses knowledge?

B. Paul’s prayer here could be stated this way: “so that (we) will know experientially the love of God because the love of God is greater than our capacity to know it based on intellect alone.”

C. We can know unconditional love only by being loved unconditionally.

D. Because of his experience Paul was able to write, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written,

"FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

V. So that (we) may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

A. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God.

B. In his commentary on Ephesians John MacArthur wrote, "To be filled up to all the fullness of God means to be totally dominated by Him, with nothing left of self or any part of the old man. By definition then, to be filled with God is to be emptied of self." It is not to have much of God and little of self, but all of God and none of self."

C. To be filled up to all the fullness of God is to be filled with the fullness of Christ.

Col 2:6-11

6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 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.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 **For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete**, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

D. Paul was not in the business of praying for things that were impossible.

E. The fact that he prayed that his readers would be filled up to all the fullness of God implies that God wants to fill us with His fullness.

APPLICATION

1. I began this message by asking, "What are you asking God for?"

2. As Paul wrote about our being filled up to all the fullness of God he penned this great doxology that we find in verses 20-21.

3. If you and I are filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, God is able to do in and through our lives far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.

4. Our constant, heartfelt desire needs be the same as Paul's was: "To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever."

5. In closing this is a great prayer to pray for yourself and others.

6. Note also Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23.

7. May God hear and answer each one of us.