



Date: **2-24-2019**

Scripture: **Ephesians 3:14-21**

Everyone loves a good mystery and last week we looked at the greatest one of all – “that Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” While God’s redemptive plan centered on Israel for a long time, he didn’t intend for it to stay that way. With the coming of Christ, God’s unfolding plan would now center on the Church; a multiethnic, global body.

In Ephesians 3:14-21 Paul returns to praying for the Ephesian believers with a focus on the power of God in the life of believers and that they grow in their knowledge and experience of Christ’s love. As we have seen through Ephesians so far, this passage continues with a Trinitarian focus on how God as Father, Son, and Spirit bring these focuses of Paul’s prayer into reality in our lives.

Digging into the Passage:

- “For this reason” – For what reason? Where is vs. 14 connecting to and picking up from?
- How does God the Father have fatherhood over all families in heaven and earth?¹
- Can you find the 3 purpose statements of Paul’s prayer?
- **1st Purpose** - Paul prays for the Ephesians to have strength in their “inner being/self”. (vs. 16-17)
 - What others manifestations of God’s strength do we see in the Old Testament in his people?²
 - Why does Paul focus on inner strength?³
 - Since believer’s already have Christ in them, what is Paul praying for in vs. 17a?⁴

¹ This truth is expressed with a play on words between “Father” (Patera - πατέρα) and “families” (Patria - πατριὰ). This is connected to the theme of Eph. 3:1-13.

² See passages like 1 Sam. 23:16; 30:6, and 2 Sam. 1:23.

³ See also 2 Cor. 4:16.

⁴ The word translated as “dwell” here means to settle down and make at home.

See Wuest, Kenneth S. in *Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament: Volume 1; Ephesians and Colossians* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI 1953), pg. 89.

For example, the NTL says, “Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him.” Also, this phrase can be translated as “I pray that he may grant you to be strengthened and for Christ to dwell in your hearts” (so goes HCSB; NRSV; NAB; KJV) or

as “I pray the he may grant you to be strengthened with power so that Christ may dwell in your hearts”

(so goes ESV; NASB; TNIV; NIV; NLT) as suggested by Arnold, Clint E. in *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians* Ed. By Clinton E. Arnold (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 2010), pg. 210-11.



- **2nd Purpose** – Paul prays for strength to comprehend the surpassing love of Christ. (vs. 17b-19a)
 - What picture is Paul trying to paint through the phrase “rooted and grounded” in relation to love in vs. 17b?
 - In the phrase “may have the strength to comprehend”, what kind of strength is needed and why is it needed for comprehending Christ’s love?
 - What picture does the phrase “what is the breadth and length and height and depth”⁵ give you in relation to Christ’s love?
 - How does the “love of Christ surpass knowledge”?⁶

- **3rd Purpose** – Paul prays that the believer’s would be “filled with all the fullness of God.” (vs. 19b).
 - How does vs. 19b sum up this prayer of Paul?
 - Is there a connection between 3:19b and 1:22-23?

- **Closing Doxology** – Paul closes his prayer with praise to God. (vs. 20-21)
 - Out of what does God work his power?
 - Where does God show his glory in and how is it shown in them?

Reflecting on the Passage:

- How does Paul’s prayers so far differ from your prayers?
- What are the main themes to Paul’s prayer and how can they shape our prayers?
- What should be the main emphasis of our requests in our prayers?
- How does God as Father, Son, and Spirit shape his strength and power in us?
- What would this passage look like when carried out in your life?
- How would you describe what it would look like for someone else?
- How does this passage change you?
- Why is the church, and our connection to it, so important to Paul?⁷

⁵ Since Paul doesn’t define the meaning of these four words in relation to Christ’s love we need to be careful not to make too much out of them by themselves, but rather, focus on the bigger picture being painted.

⁶ Note, this should not be seen as Paul dismissing knowledge of Christ as if knowledge of Christ and love of Christ are in conflict.

⁷ Notice how Paul connects the believer’s “in Christ” position with the church throughout the book so far.