

Pastor Paul's Prayer
Ephesians Part 15

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

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

Ephesians 3: 14-21

Paul starts his prayer off by saying that it is “for this reason that I kneel before the Father from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.” As Paul begins to pray he has a specific reason (in the Greek “reason” is translated “cause”) for which he is seeking the Father’s blessing. Paul is very desirous of seeing the gospel preached to the Gentiles and the mystery of God’s plan being revealed to them, but he has an even greater cause. In this world of chaos and discord he wants to see the power of the cross break down the dividing walls of hostility (see 2: 14-16) and that as one new man, the church would reveal the manifold wisdom of God in heavenly and earthly realms (3:10-11).

Today we see nation against nation, man against man, man against woman, children against parents; division is everywhere. Paul sees what Jesus came to do: bring unity to a people who he calls the church. God’s design is that all of the things that are falling apart and being ruined by the selfish nature be made new and whole through His son Jesus Christ (see 4:1-5). In order for this unity to happen there must be a powerful impartation of the Holy Spirit and the transformation of the inner man (verses 16-17a). This cause is also going to need the full revelation of God’s love (verses 17b-18). These three things will bring believers to what Paul calls, “being filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (v 19). That is some kind of prayer and expectation! I think that is why Paul closes the prayer off in verse 20 by declaring, “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine...”

This whole prayer has certainly stirred me. I’ve prayed it many times but not always from the context of God’s plan to bring unity to and through the church by the death of His Son on the cross. Jesus’ death bought us all freedom and access to the Father, the One and Only Father, our Father. We are all one family with one Father. Heaven is not divided. God is not divided. His family is not divided. “There is only one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all” (4:4-6).

The most destructive thing in the church is division. I can hear James saying, “This should not be” (James 3:10). Speaking of James, he points to the friendship with the world as the cause of division (4:4). Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters (Mt 6:24). Every one of us has the potential of being the answer to this prayer and being a part of God’s wonderful plan. We all have a responsibility to forget the world and unify in His love for His cause. As I was writing this devotional, Mary Lou called and we prayed for each other and for our children. Wherever there is unity the power of God goes forth. Even if it’s only two or three (read Matt 18). “Oh Lord, bring us all to unity as one family and may the immeasurable blessings of heaven be revealed in and through us today, Amen!”