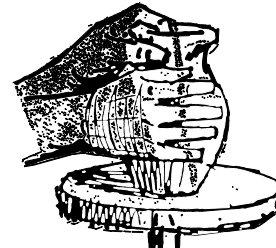


His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

Paul's Second Prayer for the Ephesians, part 3, by Paul Deffinbaugh

We have looked at Paul's prayers for the Ephesians in Eph 1 and 3. In the second prayer, we saw that Paul asked the Father to grant five purposes for the church, that:

- they would be strengthened with might in the inner man by the Holy Spirit
- Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith
- they would be rooted and grounded in love
- they would know the limitless love of Christ which surpasses knowledge
- they would be filled with the fullness of God.

Are you praying these purposes for your brothers and sisters in Christ?

A. Strengthened through His Spirit in the inner man. Paul prayed for our empowerment. God's strength is given to the inner man by His Holy Spirit. This is strength of inner character, or virtue. Christians need strength to resist the temptations to give up, be lazy, boast, argue, criticize, retaliate, be bitter, indulge and pity ourselves, be greedy, and be worldly. This strength God gives is the same power which raised Christ from the dead—all power has been given to Him as a result of His sacrifi-

cial death and resurrection. God's power is in us to fulfill His purposes, so we must use His resources to access this power: prayer and Bible study, given by the Holy Spirit.

B. Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. The strength to live like Christ comes because He dwells in us. To overcome the temptations listed above, we need Christ's love, self-discipline, cheerfulness, joy, self-control, humility, generosity, gentleness, patience, perseverance, peace, and endurance. If Christ dwells in our hearts, those characteristics also dwell in us. The Greek word used here, *katoikeo*, means permanent, deep, intense dwelling. The idea behind it is of domination and control. To dwell is to be at home.

Paul prayed that we might let Jesus control us and have first place in our affections by faith. When Paul said "by faith," he was talking about the only way in which we can know spiritual things. Christ dwells in us by faith, because it is by faith that we perceive His presence. It is by faith that we know Him for Who He is. It is by faith that we understand what He does for us. It is by faith we appropriate all the blessings of the spiritual

life. If our faith grows, then He will be the One we love the most, and we will become like Him. As we dwell in Him by faith, Jn 15:1-8, so He dwells in us. How does He dwell in us by faith? "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rm 10:17. Study of the Scriptures is like a blind man who had surgery and is beginning to see more and more in recovery. The way we come to understand spiritual things is through study of the Scriptures. The more we study, the more the cataracts are removed from our eyes, and we can perceive Jesus in our lives.

C. To be rooted and grounded in love. Christ wants love to be the deep foundation of our lives. Rooted brings to mind trees. A tree must have its roots deep in good soil and be watered in order to be healthy and strong, cf. Ps 1 and Jer 17:5-8. From what or whom are your roots getting nourishment? Just like a tree needs to have good roots, a house needs to have good ground. Remember the parable of the wise and foolish builder in Matthew 7? Architects all know the value of a good foundation. If you have ever noticed

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"I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." —Ephesians 3:14-21 (good to memorize, use in prayer)

skyscrapers, it seems like builders spend the most time on their foundation. One architect said, "If you don't go deep, you can't go high." That's true of our spiritual life as well. What are you grounded upon? What are you building your life upon? Jesus wants to root and ground our lives on what will last, on what is eternal, on what will not fade away nor be destroyed—love. He wants to do this because He loves us. He's not out to ruin our fun or destroy our lives or take our joy. He wants His love to be the basis of our lives. Love is the root of our knowledge of Christ, of our growth in Christ, of our very lives in Him.

D. To comprehend and know the surpassing love of Christ. Paul prayed that the Ephesian Christians might know the extent of Christ's surpassing love because then the church will be the fullest expression of what God is. If we know Christ's love, if we live and experience His love, if we are dependent upon it, humbled by it, and grateful for it; if we exhibit Christ's love practically by serving others as he served us and display generosity, benevolence, and forgiveness; if we do this collectively, all using our gifts for the benefit of one another and the wider community—then the church will be a powerful testament to God's wisdom, love and power.

1. His love is beyond comprehension, yet He wants us to comprehend it. God's decision to let fallen men live on despite the total wickedness, pain, and misery this produced,

His glorious plan of redemption, the awful ordeal He prescribed for His Son—all this mystery was revealed and reaches its fullness when the church is infused with the love of Jesus. To *"be able to comprehend"* means to have full strength (thus the prayer for strength) to understand or grasp, *"to comprehend,"* as *"to know"* God's love. Paul wanted us strong to grasp the "love of Christ." He wanted us to know everything about this wonderful love, the vast extent of it, side to side, top to bottom (its *"width and length and depth and height"*). How is it possible for us to "know" the love of Christ, if it "passes knowledge"? Only in the sense that no matter how much we learn about Christ's love, even with the strength God's Spirit provides, His love is so great that there is always much more to grasp! *"...there is a real knowledge of Christ's love possible to us, a knowledge that is capable of increase as we are the more strengthened by power in the inner man, while a complete or exhaustive knowledge must ever remain beyond our capacity,"* *The Expositor's Greek Testament* W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, vol. 3, p. 316.

2. God reveals the mystery of His love. This surpassing love will remain a partial mystery to us (until heaven), just as the gospel had been a mystery before God revealed it in Christ, see Eph 1:9; 3:1-13; 5:32; 6:19; Rm 11, esp. v. 25; 16:25-27; Col 1:24-29; 2:2; 4:3; Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10; 1 Cor 4:1; 1 Tim 3:9, 16. Some spiritual truth may be too great for us because God's ways

are not our ways Is 55:8-13. One of the doctrines of theology in the incomprehensibility of God. God is infinitely wiser than we. He is all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful. God is unknowable, yet He has revealed Himself so we can know Him. Some might say, "Well, if God is unknowable, then I'll not even try to know Him or His love. I no longer have any responsibility to find Him. I'll live as I please and rely on His incomprehensibility." He often employs things which are paradoxical or even incompatible to us. He can use sinful men to achieve His purposes and to demonstrate His power and majesty, Rm 9:17. He chooses the weak and foolish things to confound the wisdom of the wise, 1 Cor 1:18-2:13; cf. Rm 11:33-36. His surpassing love will often be revealed to us bit by bit as we experience His love. The term "progressive revelation" is often used with reference to the Bible. God does not reveal His plans and purposes immediately, but bit by bit. And so we find the first promise of Messiah in Gen 3:15 and throughout the rest of the Old and New Testament more and more is revealed about God's purposes for Messiah. What we may fail to see is that God's revelation is still partial and incomplete, 1 Cor 13:8-13; 1 Jn 3:1-2, especially to each individual. The life of a Christian is mysterious because there is much going on of which we are ignorant, which is beyond the scope of our knowledge and under-

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Psalm 133:1



Fill your canteen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”

—Ephesians 3:19

Prayer for Ephesians, from p. 2 standing. Job did not know that God was teaching Satan through his sufferings, Job 1 and 2. Elisha’s servant was not aware of the involvement of the angelic hosts in the affairs of men, 2 Kg 6. Finite men are not naturally aware of those things beyond our own understanding and frame of reference. We think in terms of time, and not in terms of God’s eternal purposes. We think in terms of what is seen, but there is much that is going on that is unseen, see Heb 11:1. And so it is in Ephesians that Paul spoke of God’s plans and purposes, established before the foundation of the world, Eph 1:3-14. He spoke of their fulfillment, which is being fulfilled and is also yet to reach its fullness at Christ’s second coming, Eph 1:10-14, 18. He spoke of the instruction of the angelic hosts, which are unseen to us, and of the spiritual war which is currently going on and in which we are engaged, Eph 2:7; 3:10; 6:10-20.

The faith of Christians must therefore rest on divine revelation. Men will not find God on their own because they do not seek Him. There is none who understands God’s ways, Rm 3:9-18. We would not know God apart from His revelation of Himself in nature and in His Word, see Ps 19; Rm 1-3; Heb 1:1-3; 2:1-3; 4:12-13.

3. We should not expect to understand everything. If we expect to

understand all that God is doing, we are self-deceived. We do not need to understand why God has commanded us to act in a certain way, but only to know that He has commanded it and that we are to obey. We should not focus our attention on the things which God has chosen to conceal, but rather try to understand and obey what He has clearly revealed to us in His Word, Deut 29:29; 1 Tim 4:6-7; 2 Tim 2:14-15, 23; 3:14-17. We should expect to live by faith, not by sight, in obedience to the Word of God, as illuminated by the Spirit of God. Think of all the times in the Bible when the people of God were called upon to act, solely on the basis of God’s Word and God’s faithfulness. Abraham was directed to leave his homeland and family and was not even told where he was going, Gen 12:1. He was promised a son through Sarah, when this couple was “as good as dead” with respect to child-bearing, Rm 4:17-22. By faith, Abraham was ready to take the life of this child, when all God’s promises rested on him, Heb 11:17-19. All the Old Testament saints lived as though God’s promises were true even though they did not receive them in their own lifetime, Heb 11:13-16. You and I are called upon to live in time in the light of eternity. We are to live on earth in the light of heaven. We are commanded not to lay up treasures on earth, but to lay up treasure in heaven. We are to leave justice to God. We are to walk by faith, and not by sight. More and more we see that Christians are too self-centered. They want to know “God’s will for their life,” and they ignore God’s plan and purposes for creation. Paul sought to understand God’s plan—the big picture—and then strove to live his life consistent with the big plan. Let us take heed, then, to the exhortation of Paul and seek to practice it as he did, to be wise and make the most of our time,

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Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Mark Campbell—at Rocky Mtn Brain Injury Svc in CO Springs; cards to Mark at 2535 Brady Dr, CO Springs 80917

Judy Sartin’s grandson **Tristen**—autism
Valerie Greenwalt—at Mina Gonzalez’s for recovery after successful tumor surgery
Forrest Corray, Jordan’s brother—meth addiction has estranged him from family
Eric Perry’s co-worker, **Tony Ortega**—stroke

Remember **Megan Aki** and the girls; the **Andrew Tope** family; the **Reames** family

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Rod Green—thyroid trouble
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house
Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;
Virginia, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes
Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Traveling DeWayne Howell will be in CA this wk for work. The **Wilkeses** are in Napa, CA, this wk. **Kaysha & Kim Howell** are in Tampa, FL, this weekend for a bridal shower. Others: _____

Job concerns **Megan Aki, Lorenzo Gonzalez, Rod Green, Linda Szymanski,** and **Andrew Tope** are seeking jobs.

Rejoice **Frank Savarese** has a new job. **Patricia Ward** and **Frankie Savarese** began new jobs recently.

Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Paul's Second Prayer for the Ephesians, *from p. 3*

Eph 5:15-17. Men cannot understand each other, except insofar as they have the radical elements of the same experience. I understand what I mean when I say "hot," and you understand what I mean when I say "hot," because we've had experience of heat. But if I say to a little child, "That's hot, don't touch it," and if he's my child, he'll touch it. And then we will have common knowledge. Paul wanted us to understand the love that God has set forth in scripture. If we are going to understand the love of Christ, we must understand the scriptures. Then we will be rooted and grounded in love. The grounding of love is set forth in God's word.

4. How can you measure the love of God? John said, "*He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another,*" 1 Jn 4:8-11. Charles Hodge said, "*That God should love the good, the righteous, the pure, the godly is what we can understand. But that the infinitely holy should love the unholy and give His son for their redemption is the wonder of all wonders. Herein is love: not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*"

If He loved us because we loved Him, He would love us only as long as we loved Him—and on that condition. Then our salvation would depend on the constancy of our treacherous hearts. But because God loved us as sinners, and Christ died for us as ungodly, our salvation depends not on our lovability, but on the constancy of God's love. Isn't that great?

The love He gives does not depend on our love of Him. He loves us because He loves, and His own nature is the measure of the love that we have received. He is utterly faithful in His constant love for us.

Do you have trouble loving in this way? Of course you do. This is huge! But God has given you the strength to love, the Spirit enables you to use this power to love, and Christ directs you where, when, and how to use His mighty love. Together, all three want you to love those whom you would hate. The power of God helps us love the unlovable. You know the person in church or in your family that you find hard to love? Come to God the Father this week and ask Him to give you His love for that person. That's a seemingly impossible prayer request. But we can pray it with boldness, because Scripture is full of commands to love one another as God in Christ has loved us. We can pray that God will help us love the unlovable and know with confidence that our prayer will be answered.

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Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This afternoon:

Paul's Prison Epistles Series

Ephesians 5:22-6:24, Larry Campbell

Next week's bulletin—Last section on Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3: that you will be filled with the fullness of God and Paul's "accolade" to the praise of God's power, enablement, and glory. Are you praying this prayer for yourself, for your brethren, and for the church?