

Ephesians 3b Paul's Second Prayer
3:14-21

This is the second prayer in three chapters. Consider including prayers in the letters you write to friends. The first prayer, in chapter 1:15-23, asked for them to have wisdom and revelation to know Christ better. Then he prayed that the eyes of their hearts to be enlightened to know the hope of our calling, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding great power toward us.

14 "For this reason" go back and refresh your memory as to what reason he is referring to. He may be saying that because the church is displaying the manifold wisdom of God he prays, or (verse 12) in Jesus and through Him we can access God. I prefer the latter. 'Bows his knees' a posture of prayer for Jews of the first century. One commentator thought that this meant prostrate. Jews would stand with arms extended and palms up to pray. A more earnest position would be on the knees, but the humblest and most desperate prayers of all were face down on the ground, prostrate before God.

15 The Father give to all their names, their destiny, their allotted portions. He is sovereign over all.

16 – 17a The Father has all power. He is omnipotent. Paul is asking that God draw from His abundant resources to strengthen you spirit man. The reason He wants your spirit man strong is so Christ will be at home in your heart. See diagrams. Jesus is LORD. He is not at home when the old nature has the power, but when the inner man has the power, the soul and body become obedient to Christ as LORD. Remember that he is writing to believers. Christ should be at home in their hearts. Praying for their spirit to be empowered so He can live there implies that they are have trouble with the spirit man calling the shots. Don't we all? We need this same prayer. LORD strengthen our inner man!

17b-18 If the fruit of the Spirit 'love' is where we are anchored, where our roots sink down, what we are established in, then we have more power to grasp the love of God. Every Christian needs a greater revelation of the love of God. That is really the same thing Paul prayed for in chapter one, revelation to know Him better. To know Him is to know how great His love is for us. He begins to give a dimensional quality to it, wide, long, deep, and high. He saw himself engulfed in an ocean of love.

19 He says that you can never reach the shore of this ocean of love, you can never plumb its depths. There is always more. You will never grasp it fully, but the more you do, the more you are filled with all the fullness of God. We love

Him because He first loved us. The more we see His love by revelation, the more we love Him in return. Love begets love. "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." What an expression! How do you understand that?

20 He ends with a doxology (word of glory). It may have been a chorus that was sung by the early church. He can do immeasurably more than we ask or think, by that resurrection power at work within us. It is to this great God who can answer our wildest prayers, and then some, that we pray. To the God who has all the bases covered and knows the end from the beginning! Don't wonder if He can answer your prayer. Know that He can do much more than you ask or imagine! He prayed that resurrection power would work in us in chapter one and now he says it is working in us. He trusted that God was already answering the prayer prayed according to God's will.

21 To that great God be glory in the church (his body). Glory – the outshining of His perfect attributes expressed through the church. And in Christ Jesus (the head) through every generation to come – through every life that is born until He comes again – and on into eternity. Glory be to God! It is to Him we sing. It is to Him we live. All glory is His forever and ever. His power is at work changing us and the world around us. Are you letting it change you?

Do you sense how important prayer was to Paul? Was this part of the reason for the great success of the early church? Shouldn't we pray these same things for one another? Will you?

This ends the doctrine and prayer portion of Ephesians. In the next three chapters we will be looking at practical application in our lives.