

I Love My Church

Prayer

Sunday, January 31, 2016

Ephesians 3:14-21

I. Introduction

There are three “thats” that are important in Paul's prayer. The little conjunction “that” (hina - 2443) which introduces a purpose clause or at least the substance of the petition.

Each one of these conjunctions is expressive of the purposes of Paul's prayer. Now you'll notice also that the whole Trinity is involved.

Main Pt: “Prayer is a conversation that leads to an encounter with God.”

We must not settle for an informed mind without an engaged heart!

II. That #1 (v.16)

“That according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...”

“riches” – bountiful supply

In other words this divine empowering will be effected through God's Spirit.

“inner being” - it is "the interior of our being, the seat of personal consciousness, and of our moral being". *Gordon Fee*

Heart - that part of them which is not accessible to sight but which is open to his energizing influence.

“There are two words typically used for the concept of indwelling. The first, paroikeo = to abide or to inhabit, but not necessarily permanently. The second, the one used here, is katoikeo = "a settling in or colonizing tenancy" (Best, 341); i.e., to live permanently (cf. Col 2:9). Christ doesn't sojourn in our hearts. He is no divine nomad! He is, reverently speaking, a squatter. He is a permanent, abiding resident... It would seem that he is praying for the emotional increase or experiential expansion of what is already a theological fact. His desire is that the Lord Jesus, through the Spirit, might exert an ever-increasing and progressively more powerful influence on our lives and in our hearts. It is what I like to call, the incessant spiritual reinforcement in the human heart of the strength of Jesus and His love.” *Sam Storms*

“Faith” - means a firm persuasion, conviction, or belief in the truth. It is not just mental assent but firm conviction, surrender to that truth and conduct emanating from that surrender. This faith shows itself genuine by a changed life.

III. That #2 (v.18)

“...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge...”

“rooted and grounded in love” - To be rooted and grounded in love is to be established in love as a way of life. The life of love is a life of kindness, selflessness, brokenness, and meekness. It is the life of Christ finding expression in the believer.

“comprehend” - Our English word comprehend carries the idea of mentally grasping something, while apprehend suggests laying hold of it for yourself. In other words, it is possible to understand something but not really make it your own. Paul's concern is that we lay hold of the vast expanses of the love of God. He wants us to live supernaturally in four dimensions.

“know” - conveys the basic meaning of taking in knowledge in regard to something or someone and speaks of knowledge that goes beyond the merely factual and into the realm of the experiential.

IV. That #3 (v.19)

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

“...that you may be filled” - means to be filled to the brim. It means to make complete in every particular and so to cause to abound.

“Fullness of God” - the grand, glorious sum total of all that God is. There is nothing conceivable beyond the fullness of God. It is all the divine perfections of the Godhead as expressed in Christ.

What is your life filled with? It is filled with fear, jealousy, frustration, worry, etc? Or is it filled with the fullness of God!

V. Conclusion (v.20,21)

When does He manifest that ability? When does He move in and do those things that are exceeding abundantly beyond what we ask or think?

I'll tell you when. When the Holy Spirit has empowered us, when Christ has indwelt us, when His love has mastered us and when His fullness has filled us.

Look out. Here come the exceeding abundantly great things of God's ability that begin to be manifest in our life.

Challenge: Pray this prayer for 30 days for yourself!