

Paul's Prayer

3:14-21

EPH 3:14 For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,

1. "For this reason" - "charin" [**kah** rin].
 - a. This prayer began in 3:1, and after the digression in verses 2-13, he comes back to the prayer.
 - b. This is a reference to God's eternal plan to built together both Jews and Gentiles into His holy temple. See notes Eph. 3:1.
 - c. Paul is grateful and humbled by the greatness of God's plan and he was privileged to have a part in it.
2. "I bow my knees" - This could be figurative here, but kneeling is not always figurative. Paul is actually writing or dictating this prayer.
 - a. "I bow" is from "kampto" [**kamp** toh] - "to bend, inflex the knees, kneel, bow" - Rom. 11:4, 11; Phil. 2:10.
 - b. McCord - "I bend my knees to the Father." Marshall also has "I bend." NIV "I kneel before the Father."
 - c. It is very scriptural to kneel in prayer.
 - 1) This is something Jesus did. (Lk. 22:41).

LUK 22:41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

- 2) This is something Paul did. (Acts 20:36; 21:5).

ACT 20:36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

ACT 21:5 And when it came about that our days there were ended, we departed and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. And after kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.

- 3) This is something many others have done in praying to God.
- 4) Here are some other examples.

- **Stephen** (Acts 7:60)

ACT 7:60 And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.

- **Daniel** (Dan. 6:10)

DAN 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving

thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

- **Peter** (Acts 9:40).

ACT 9:40 But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

- **Solomon** (1 Kgs. 8:54).

1KI 8:54 And it came about that when Solomon had finished praying this entire prayer and supplication to the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven.

d. It is not, however, the exclusive posture of prayer.

1) Lying down on bed (Psa. 4:4; 63:6).

PSA 4:4 Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

PSA 63:6 When I remember Thee on my bed, I meditate on Thee in the night watches,

2) Standing (Lk. 18:11-13; Mk. 11:25; 1 Kgs. 8:54; 1 Sam. 1:26; Job 30:20).

LUK 18:11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.

LUK 18:12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

LUK 18:13 "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

MAR 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.

1SA 1:26 And she said, "Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord.

JOB 30:20 "I cry out to Thee for help, but Thou dost not answer me; I stand up, and Thou dost turn Thy attention against me.

3) Falling on face (Mk. 14:35).

MAR 14:35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.

4) Rarely sitting down (2 Sam. 7:18).

2SA 7:18 Then David the king went in and sat before the Lord, and he said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me this far?"

5) Lifting the eyes to heaven (Lk. 18:13; Jn. 17:1).

LUK 18:13 "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

JOH 17:1 These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee,

3. "before the Father" - He is addressing this prayer to God the Father.
 - a. Most prayers are addressed to the Father in heaven. (Matt. 6:9; Eph. 2:18).
 - b. Prayer can also be directed to Jesus. (Acts 7:60; Rev. 22:20). See note following Eph. 3:12.

EPH 3:15 from whom every family [angels, Jews and Gentiles] in heaven and on earth derives its name,

1. "from whom every family in heaven and on earth"
 - a. "from" is "ex" [eks] literally is "of, out of"
 - b. "family" is from "patria" [pah tree **ah**] - "family, fatherhood, paternal descent, lineage, kindred, clan, nation, people." It is a form of the word "pater" [pah **tayr**] meaning "father."
 - c. "all" is from "pas" [pahs] meaning "all, every."
 - d. Some believe it has the idea of "whole" in this verse.

God's Word uses the word "all" with the idea of "whole." "from whom **all** the family in heaven and on earth receives its name."

NIV "from whom his **whole** family in heaven and earth derives its name"

- e. Paul may be affirming every being, man or angel, derives its origin from God who is the Father of all.
- f. This is true even if this is not what Paul had in mind. The word "patria" is only used 2 other times in the New Testament. (Lk. 2:4; Acts 3:25).

LUK 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and **family** [lineage, kindred] of David,

ACT 3:25 "It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the **families** of the earth shall be blessed.'

2. "derives its name" - lit. "is named"
 - a. Men and angels derive their origin from God.
 - b. Angels are God's family in heaven, and the saved are God's family on earth. It is likely that those in "Abraham's bosom" are counted as God's family in heaven. Heaven is their eternal home.
 - c. God created both men and angels. (Gen. 1:26, 27; Psa. 148:2,5; Col. 1:16).
 - d. Both redeemed men and the sinless angels make up the family of God "in heaven and on earth."

EPH 3:16 that He [God] would grant you, according to the riches [unlimited wealth, infinite] of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;

1. “that He would grant you” - This refers to God the Father.
2. “according to the riches [unlimited, infinite wealth] of His glory” - “glory” refers to God’s perfect character and unlimited power and resources.
3. “to be strengthened with power” - God wants His children to be inwardly strong and firm in faith. (1 Cor. 16:13).
 - a. Paul prays his readers would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) As all Christians they had received the Holy Spirit at baptism. (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9; 1 Jn. 3:24).
 - 2) Paul earlier stressed the presence of the Holy Spirit was an earnest [pledge] of their salvation. (Eph. 1:13, 14).
 - b. He is now praying here for “the inner man.”
 - 1) It is vital that the inner man be strengthened to bear trials, to overcome temptations, to perform duties, to daily glorify God.
 - 2) The inner man can never do these things without the help of God.
 - 3) It is vital that one take refuge in God. (Deut. 33:27; Psalms 46:1; James 4:8).
4. “though His [Holy] Spirit in the inner man”
 - a. Paul here is praying for “the inner man.” Gr. “eso” [eh soh] - “inside, inner.”
 - 1) It is scriptural to pray for the outward man - food, clothing, shelter, health, etc.
 - 2) The prayer here is for “the inner man,” that is the heart and soul of a person.
 - b. He prays that this strengthening power will be done “through His [Holy] Spirit.”
 - 1) The Spirit strengthens us when we let Christ’s word richly dwell in our hearts. (Col. 3:16). See James 1:21
 - 2) He strengthens and protects us when we use His sword - the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. (Eph. 6:17).
 - 3) He strengthens and protects us when we store up [treasure] His word into our hearts. (Psalms 119:11).
 - 4) It is vital that one put on the full armor of God.” (Eph. 6:10-18).
 - 5) There is no evidence the Spirit strengthens the inner man apart from His word.
 - 6) There is no evidence the Spirit gives us some miraculous strength to overcome the evil one.
 - a) This false doctrine suggests the Holy Spirit fails us when we sin.
 - b) One might say, “I sinned because the Holy Spirit did not give me enough strength or power.”
 - c) We sin when we yield to our sinful lusts (James 1:14, 15) - not because the Holy Spirit has failed us.
 - d) We sin when we turn away from God and do what is right in our own eyes - not because the Holy Spirit did not help us. We are strengthened when we draw near to God. (James 4:7).

EPH 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded [well founded, established] in love,

1. “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts” - “Dwell” is from “kataoikeo” [kah tah oi **keh** oh]

a. Christ dwells in the heart of the Christian. (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; 2 Cor. 13:5; Jn. 14:23; Rev. 3:20).

<p>GAL 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. JOH 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.</p>	<p>COL 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 2CO 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test? REV 3:20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.</p>
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b. God dwells in us. (1 Jn. 4:12; 2 Cor. 6:16).

<p>1JO 4:12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.</p>	<p>2CO 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.</p>
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c. The Holy Spirit dwells in us. (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; 1 Jn. 3:24).

2. “through the faith” - The Greek has the definite article “tes” [tays] before the word “faith.”

a. “dia” [dee **ah**] - “by or through”

b. “faith” is from “pistis” [**pis** tis] - It is not subjective faith that varies from person to person, but faith in God’s word, the truth, the gospel. (Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3).

c. Paul says it is “through the faith” that Christ dwells in the hearts of believers.

1) He affirms the indwelling of Christ, but does not give the mode, that is, how Christ exactly dwells in us.

2) The Bible never gives us the mode of His indwelling.

3) We do not have to know the mode to believe He dwells in our hearts.

4) The words “through the faith” do not mean that “faith” and “the indwelling of Christ” are one in the same.

5) It is “through the faith” that Christ dwells in us, but we do not know the mode.

3. “and that you, being rooted and grounded in love” - This is the result of both the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23), and Christ dwelling in the Christian. (Col. 1:27). It is also the result of God abiding in the Christian. (1 Jn. 4:12).

• “hrizoo” [hree **zah** oh] - “to root, to become stable”

- “themelioo” [teh meh lee **ah** oh] - “to ground, to settle.” NIV “and established in love”
- McCord “and since you have been rooted and grounded in love” – ASV “to the end that ye”
- Lit. “That Christ may dwell through the faith in the hearts of you, in love having been rooted and having been founded.”
- The idea is he wants them to continue to be deeply rooted and established in God’s marvelous love.
 - a. This would be love for God. (Matt. 22:37). See 1 Jn. 5:3.
 - b. This would be love for Christians and all men. (Jn. 13:34,35; Matt. 22:38,39; 5:43-48).

EPH 3:18 may be able to comprehend [understand] with all the saints [holy ones] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of God’s love, wisdom and blessings]

1. “may be able to comprehend with all the saints”
 - a. This petition is for them and all believers.
 - b. Believers are called “saints” [holy ones] from the Greek “hagios” [**hah** gee ahs]. See notes Eph. 1:1.
2. “What is the breadth and length and height and depth” - What these words refer to is very uncertain.
 - a. It would seem to refer to God’s love, wisdom and blessings that have been discussed in this letter.
 - b. We will never know for certain, in this life, exactly what Paul had in mind.
 - c. NIV “to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” - This may be correct, but is based on the translators interpretation of the text - not the text.

EPH 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.

1. “and to know the love of Christ” - This is a reference to His great love for us. (Jn. 10:11,18;15:13; Heb. 2:9).
2. “which surpasses knowledge” - “huperballo” [hoo pehr bahl loh] - “to throw beyond, excel, surpass.”
 - a. As humans, it is incomprehensible that Jesus would give up so much, even His life, for us.
 - b. It is incomprehensible that Jesus would suffer so much for us. (Isa. 53:4-6; Psa. 22:1,16, 18).
 - c. It is incomprehensible that Jesus keeps on working as our Advocate with the Father when we sin time and time again. (1 Jn. 2:1,2).
 - d. We can know more and more of Christ’s love, but there is always more to know. We will never have a full comprehension of it. The love Christ had for us surpasses our ability to fully comprehend it, but we can and should accept and give thanks for it.
3. “that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God” - “pleroo” [play **rah** oh] - “to fill up.”
 - a. “All the fulness of God” does not mean we will be filled **with the attributes that belong to Deity only.**

- 1) Only Deity is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Eternal, Sinless.
 - 2) These things are not included in this petition and are beyond the reach of man.
- b. These words mean that we may strive to be a loving, holy, merciful people who seek to be like God. Paul wants these saints to be like God as much as it is humanly possible.
 - c. We will never reach the perfection of God or even come close to His perfection, but we should still strive to be like Him. (Matt. 5:48; Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:16).
 - d. The word “all the fulness of God” and the word “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” in Ephesians 4:13 have the same meaning.

Doxology Of Prayer

3:20-21

- Other doxologies of Paul (Rom. 11:33-36; 16:25-27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18).

EPH 3:20 Now to Him [God the Father] who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

1. “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think”
 - a. Paul is affirming that God can do infinitely or superabundantly more than we can ask or imagine.
 - b. God is not limited by our finite prayers or thinking or plans.
 - c. In our finiteness, as men, we often seek to make God finite. How foolish!
2. We serve a powerful and loving God and humans or angels cannot limit Him in any way.
3. “according to the power that works within us” - Lit. “according to the power the operating in us”

EPH 3:21 to Him [God the Father] be the glory in the church [the called out people] and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

- Lit. “to Him [be] the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.”
1. “to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus”
 - a. The church [the called out] is to bring glory to God “in Christ Jesus.”
 - b. The language “the glory in the church” reveals how important the church is in the estimation and plan of God.
 - 2 “to all generations” - Once again this indicates Paul did not expect the world to end in his generation. See Notes Eph. 2:7.
 3. “forever and ever. Amen.” Lit. “of the age of the ages. Amen.”
 - a. Lit. “unto all the generations of the age of the ages” - Taylor has “forever and ever through endless ages”

b. “Amen” is from “amen” [ah **mayn**] - “so be it.”

c. May men always glorify God in Christ, and may the church in every generation bring glory to the perfect heavenly Father forever and ever.

Note:

1. This is one of several prayers of Paul found in his letters.

2. We learn much by studying these prayers of Paul and the other prayers of the Bible.

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