

Ephesians Verse by Verse, 3:16-21

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[0 : 00] And I hope you do, then find Ephesians and chapter number 3. And Lord willing, we'll get through this chapter and maybe move into chapter 4 a little bit this morning.

Ephesians chapter 3, I believe we stopped in verse 16. Ephesians chapter 3, I believe we stopped in verse 14.

There's some segments that we can look at here. And the real point here is to make sure that one line doesn't get carried over into another line and then misunderstand the teaching or the prayer. In verse 16, the first part was that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man. And we commented a little bit last week about how important that is.

And it's a prayer that you can pray for yourself and for others as well. And you can be praying for people to get right with God or you can pray for them to God to heal them or God to get them through.

[1 : 28] Or you can pray for all these particulars of a situation. But probably the best thing is that their inner man is strengthened by his spirit. And on the inside that they can, through Christ, endure or have the grace to get through it, whether God sees fit to heal or to fix or to take away the situation or to make it all better.

At any rate, they can endure it and can come through on top, walking with Jesus Christ. And so that's a pretty important thing and a powerful thing, is that you're strengthened on the inside with his might, with might by his spirit, I should say.

You don't want to just be a strong person. You want to be a strong in the Lord, as he says in chapter 6. Verse 17 then, the second section, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Now this is the, I told you before, this is the place where I think that people get this idea of asking Jesus into their hearts as far as praying the prayer for salvation.

Did you ask Jesus in your heart? Or it's typical with children, they kind of get that idea of asking Jesus to come into their heart. And I don't know that that's really a scriptural thought or concept, but this place here that describes Christ dwelling in your heart.

[2 : 42] And I don't believe, of course, that Paul's saying that you would ask Jesus in your heart and that he would stay there. That's not at all what he's talking about specifically, but rather that he would dwell in your hearts, that Christ would dwell in your hearts by faith.

And to borrow off the previous thought of being strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man, he wants Jesus Christ to be dwelling in your hearts by faith.

He doesn't want you to be walking in the old man. He doesn't want you to be fearing life and fearing or fretting things around you and things that you see. And he wants you to just be trusting Jesus Christ and to live in faith.

Paul said in Galatians chapter 2, Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. And that's a complementary verse to this thought here, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

And so the prayer is that they would be walking by faith, that it would be Jesus Christ in them making their decisions and leading them and guiding them, that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith.

[3 : 44] Take a look at Galatians chapter 3. Because the Galatians had a problem in a doctrinal sense, I suppose, that Paul had to straighten them out on.

They had a problem with allowing Jesus Christ to walk and to, or sorry, to dwell in their hearts by faith and to live a Christian life by faith and trust God and His word.

And so they had this trouble with the law. And so Paul, I won't really, it's too much to cover in the book of Galatians, but here's a few verses at the beginning of the chapter where he reprimands them.

He says, And of course the obvious answer is by the hearing of faith.

And so his follow-up question then in verse 3, Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? And so the Galatians were trying to build again this system of law and the works that God had established for Israel.

[5 : 00] They were hard-pressed to get away from that. And Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith. And the Galatians had trouble getting saved, but then following it up with walking by faith and walking in the Spirit and moving forward, trusting God.

But instead they were reverting back to keeping this checklist of laws and commands. And even some, and we read in the book of Acts, that they're not saved if they're not circumcised and things like that.

So Paul had to cut that off quickly. In Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 17, the prayer was secondly that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Continuing on there, verse 17 in the middle, the third section goes to the end of verse 18.

He says that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height.

[6 : 04] Now I want to point out something we've already passed by earlier in the book. In verse 17, you have this reference of Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith.

And then he follows it up in the same verse that they're rooted and grounded in love. And I pointed out earlier, it was, I don't have it written, do I? Oh, chapter 1, verse 15, where we saw faith and love coupled together.

And I even ran a few references with you. I didn't give you the entirety of the chain of references where faith and love are just connected through this New Testament. Faith and love.

And there it pops up again in chapter 3, verse 17. Now back to this third section of his prayer for this church, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, there's the first part, that's a pretty important thing, before any comprehension of verse 18, they've got to be rooted and they've got to be grounded in love.

And now the comprehension that he asked for in verse 18 is that they be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height. Now this is a very confusing verse.

[7 : 09] And it's confusing so, it confuses so many that they tend to just couple it with verse 19.

And that seems to be the easiest thing to do, is to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with the fullness of God.

But there's that semicolon in between. Just like the previous passages ending verse 16, it separates the next thought. And middle of 17 separates the next thought. And so 18 doesn't spill over into 19.

They're two separate thoughts. But the typical teaching from so many is that they be able to comprehend the breadth and the length and the depth and the height of God's love. And that's what he's talking about in verse 19.

And I don't believe that's the teaching. I don't believe that's the prayer. So then what is the teaching? What is the prayer? What is he talking about? And some take this to a pretty extreme thought.

I'm not 100% sold that that's what it is. But when you don't understand something, the best thing to do is just to stay in the Bible and to pray and to seek the word of God to see if the Bible will give you light on it.

[8 : 16] It will explain what are these... It's not three dimensions, is it? It's four. And that's what's tricky. Now, I'll just give you a few verses, and I'm not going to get into some deep teaching here, but look at Proverbs 25.

If we wanted to put a few verses on it to search the scriptures, then here's what we'd come up with. Proverbs 25. There is breadth, length, depth, and height.

In Proverbs 25, notice something you'll come across as you're reading your Bible, and if you're thinking on these things, it'll jump out at you. Verse number three, the heaven for height and the earth for depth.

The heart of kings is unsearchable. Now, of course, there's only two dimensions there mentioned, but it's connecting this thought to up above and down here beneath.

Now, come to Romans chapter eight. And you'll see some more of these words popping up. This alone may not be enough to solidify a doctrine or a position on Paul's prayer, on that passage in Ephesians, but it's enough to make you start thinking and looking a direction.

[9 : 47] Romans chapter eight, and the question begins in verse 35, that who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

And it ends in verse 39 that basically nothing, all of this list shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. So I'll point out the word love here, and notice that in Ephesians, he's talking about these four dimensions, and then he says, and to know the love of Christ.

And I want to point out, he's not, they're not connected, these breadth length to the love, because it comes up in this passage, and it's not at all connected to the love, especially. Look at verse 38, for I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now it's not talking about the love when he says the height of God's love or the depth of God's love at all, of course, but it's strange in a sense that he's talking about death or life, angels, principalities, powers, things that are up there in the heavenlies, things present, that's time, things present, or things to come, future.

Some say that the time is the fourth dimension. Not necessarily trying to teach that, but just what Paul's teaching here, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature.

[11 : 32] So what in the world is he really talking about here? What is the height nor depth? What can we connect that to? Well, in the context, and I'm just pointing this out, just for, at least for speculation for now, is that it's creatures in the heavenlies, the principalities and powers that we know of.

And by the way, the book of Ephesians, as I pointed out to you more than once, no other book in the Bible talks as much about the heavenly places and this purpose for the church, showing it to be connected to the heavenlies.

And so it's no surprise to me that he throws in, in that prayer, some thoughts about these four dimensions. And in other places in the Bible, they seem to have connection to the heavenlies. Now come to Revelation 21. Just putting a few verses together for you to chew on and think on. Revelation 21.

And here's a city, New Jerusalem, and the description of the city. And in verse 16, there's some dimensions given and some measurements.

[12 : 59] In verse 16, the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with a reed, 12,000 furlongs, the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

So three-dimensional, a three-dimensional city here, at the very least, with equal measurements. At least those three measurements are equal. That's interesting, but no mention there of a fourth dimension, and one that we kind of, it may be eluding us, if we're trying to understand it.

What's the one that's missing here? The length, breadth, height, the depth. The word depth is not mentioned there in that. So here's a teaching, and this is a teaching that I, it's one that I was taught, and I've heard several go with, is that the universe is in the shape of a pyramid.

The entirety of God's creation, in the shape of a pyramid. And it goes, well, I know in Clarence Larkin's book, Dispensational Truth, I know he, I don't know what the application is, but I know he tries to make some, some connection to the great pyramids in Egypt, and some teaching on that, and studying that out, some charts that he has.

And I can't recall exactly what application, if any, he attempts to make with that. But I was taught that, this is a reference, those four dimensions to the universe, and a pyramid has four dimensions, and I'm not going to really get into all of that, but to picture the universe that way, you've got, well, look at this roof, what a perfect example.

[14 : 37] You've, I can do it. You've got one side, you've got another side, you've got the length, the angle going up, and then from the peak down to the middle, you've got a fourth dimension, which does not match the other three.

And so there is four dimensions to a pyramid. Try not to stare up the rest of the surface, think about it too much. But the thought is that, the lake of fire at the bottom, and God's heaven at the top, it's called Mount Zion.

And Satan wanted to, to exalt himself, he wanted to ascend above the heights of the clouds, above the stars of God, rather.

And it says in that passage, I think, that he wanted to sit on the sides of the north. And that thought of having sides to the north, being heaven, or the tip of God's creation.

So that's a thought. And the thought comes from trying to find four dimensions, seeing in the Bible that these dimensions, these words are used in association with heaven and earth, and the created universe, as well as with principalities and powers, and angels, and things out there.

[15:45] So the thought starts to come together that direction. And I don't know. I mean, that's a possibility. That's a possibility. That's what he's talking about.

I definitely can't go through this and dogmatically declare that that's what Paul's praying for this church, is that they comprehend the universe, or the size of it, or the dimensions of it.

I don't know that that's really what Paul's talking about. However, look at Romans chapter 11. Paul may be talking in a broader sense, and inside of that broader sense is, because of the connection that we've studied, the church and its future, and subduing the heavenlies, all of that could be a part of this.

In Romans 11, look at verse 33, where he says, Oh, the depth, there's one of our words that we were missing, Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his counselor, or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again.

[17:05] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom he glory forever. Amen. Now, this is kind of getting a little deeper, but the study of those words, all things, I've already showed you that, even in Ephesians, I believe, where it connects to, he hath created all things, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.

The all things category, definitely has a connection to the spirit realm, and to what God has created, and to what's out there in the heavenlies. But the word depth of verse 33, in reference to the riches of the wisdom, and knowledge of God, and his judgments that are unsearchable, his ways past finding out.

And coming back, and plugging that thought into the verse, of what Paul is praying for this church, it feels that it makes a little more sense to me, that he's praying that this church would get, this unsearchable truth, and wisdom, and knowledge of God.

And in verse, look at verse, earlier in chapter 3 of Ephesians, in verse 10, to take it out of the immediate context, I'll back up to verse 9.

Ah, I've got to back up more, verse 8, unto me, who am less than least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, what? The unsearchable riches, did we not just read that in Romans, of Christ, and to make all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, and who created all things, all things, by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now, unto the principalities, and powers, and heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to his eternal purpose, and so, again, it's vague to me, but, if I was going to, have to put my hat on something, I feel, maybe the entirety of the universe, is connected to it, but maybe the bigger picture, is, is the wisdom, and knowledge of God, the purpose, the eternal purpose, of God, which was hid from all these others, before, in ages past, but is being now revealed, and Paul's praying, that the church, would have, a comprehension of that, and to understand, the mystery, that he's revealing, even in this chapter, and so, this is tricky stuff, and again,

[19:29] I don't, claim to know it, what exactly, that verse 17, or verse 18 rather, is speaking of directly, but there's the possibilities, that I can receive, if you know more, and have other ideas, on that, please, share, verse 19, and the next section, then we'll move on, the next section, and final of this prayer, is and, that is in addition to, and separate from, not connected to 18, but and, to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled, with all the fullness of God, now this is, appears on the surface, to be an oxymoron, to be a paradox, to know something, that passeth knowledge, you can't know it, Paul's praying, that you'll know something, that you can't know, I don't think, that's what he's saying, we have to, analyze the word, and understand what,

he's saying, when he says, to know the love of Christ, he's not talking about, comprehending anymore, but rather, experiencing, and getting it, to know the love of Christ, which passeth, mental knowledge, it passes the ability, to really, to understand, maybe, look at, first John, chapter three, the word, no, doesn't always refer, to, a mental capacity, the first time, it shows up, in your Bible, is Adam, knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived, and bare a son, definitely, an experience there, it's not, at all, just a mental thought, and so, to know the love of Christ, is to have a relationship with, to experience, the love of Christ, at what it is, and so, well, what is the love of Christ, by the way, well, let's see,

I'll start, in verse 14, first John, three, 14, we know, that we have passed, from death unto life, because we love the brethren, he that loveth not, his brother, abideth in death, whosoever hateth, his brother, is a murderer, and you know, that no murderer, hath eternal life, abiding in him, hereby, perceive we, the love of God, because he, laid down, his life for us, and so, what should we do, we ought to lay down, our lives, for the brethren, well, that would be knowing, the love of God, if you, if you follow through with, and, and experience, the same love, he says in verse 18, my little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth, it's an experience, it's an action, Jesus Christ, in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 2, it says, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor, so if you're going to know, the love of Christ, as verse 19 says, which passeth knowledge, it's putting yourself, in those same shoes, and as he said,

John says, love your brother, the same way that God loved you, so in verse 19, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled, with all the fullness of God, that's a selfless act, if you're going to know, the love of Christ, that's sacrificial, that's selfless, earlier he said, being rooted, and grounded in love, and now he talks about, being filled, with the fullness of God, when you're loving, or experiencing, or knowing that kind of love, later he talks in verse, look at chapter 4, verse 2, at the end of that verse, he says, forbearing one another, in love, there's more humility, and selflessness, and care about somebody else, that sounds like God, in Christ, when you were yet sinners, Christ dying for you, God being long suffering, with you, and patient, and so you're called, to do the same, you're called to, know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled, with all the fullness, of God,

I guess you're going to have, to get an awful lot of you, out of you, in order to be filled, with the fullness of God, look at Philippians, is that what I want, no Colossians, I want Colossians, we could read Philippians 2 there, it would be pretty fitting, but Colossians chapter 1, in Jesus Christ, this word fullness, shows up, verse 19, the Bible says, it pleased, for it pleased the Father, that in him, should all fullness dwell, in Jesus Christ, all fullness, look at verse 9, of the next chapter, Colossians 2 verse 9, for in him, dwelleth all the fullness, of the Godhead bodily, all of God, in the man, Jesus Christ, now in Ephesians, we're told, that we might be filled, with all the fullness of God, come back to, here's a verse,

I'm thinking, in 2 Corinthians 5, and look at this, 2 Corinthians 5, and, oh, let's get another one too, let me find this one, in Peter, 2 Peter chapter 1, so 2 Corinthians 5, and then 2 Peter 1, we'll put some verses together, here on this, praying for you, to be filled, with the fullness of God, I feel like, some of this thought, lends itself, to what we've been, looking at on Wednesday nights, with the balance, and the false balance, and when the, one side of the scale, has, more of you on it, than it should, it's light, it's light on some things, and it needs the fullness, of God, here's some thoughts here, from 2 Corinthians 5, when you're a new creature, verse 17, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things, are become new, now look at the next phrase, in verse 18, and all things, are of God, what is that, all things, that are become new, the new creature, that you are in Christ, and God, is inserting, in that new man, himself, some new things, that weren't there before, the old things, are gone, they're supposed to put off, the works of the flesh, the new things, are of God, they're not of you, they're not of the church, they're of God, that's God, inserting qualities, and here they are, in Peter, look at 2 Peter chapter 1,

[26 : 31] I'll start in verse 2, 2 Peter 1 verse 2, grace, and peace, be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power, hath given unto us, all things, that pertain unto life, and godliness, through the knowledge of him, that hath called us, to glory, and virtue, continue reading, some of these things, are defined, whereby are given unto us, exceeding great, and precious promises, that by these, ye might be partakers, of the divine nature, the new man, the new man, has things, that God placed into him, all things, that pertain unto life,

and godliness, and it comes through, the knowledge of him, and so if you don't know him, or spending time with him, or getting into the thing, that he gave you, so that that reveals himself, to you, you will not have knowledge of him, you won't be filled, with the knowledge of him, and you'll never be able, to act out, and experience, what he's trying to do, through you, and change, that he's trying to make in you, whereby are given unto us, exceeding great, and precious promises, that by these, ye might be partakers, of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption, that is in the world, through lust, and beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, that comes from God, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity, for if these things, be in you, where did they come from, they came from God, they're fruit of the spirit, and if these things, be in you and abound, they make you, that ye be neither barren, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord,

Jesus Christ, and then there's a problem, if somebody lacks these things, but let's get back to Ephesians, and we'll finish up here, in chapter number three, trying to get through this chapter, that ye might be filled, with all the fullness, of God, in verse 19, all right, verse 20, now unto him, that is able to do, exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask, or think, according to the power, that worketh in us, unto him, be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, amen, now you don't see, too many verses, ending with amen, you don't see that too often, but that's, that's, that's Paul, you can't move on, without reiterating, what he just wrote, is money, it's worth reading again, amen, and you know what, he's not just saying, I'm praying for you people, I'm trying, I want to see you do right, I want to see you grow, when he talks about, Jesus Christ, unto him, be glory in the church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end, that's what it's all about, so amen, to that last statement, right there Paul, that's not his prayer,

I don't believe, he's closing his prayer, saying amen, in Jesus name, amen, now I think he's, he's seconding, what he just said, that it's truth, unto him be glory, in the church, by Jesus Christ, that's our job here, together, is to glorify God, now unto him, that is able, we love that phrase, don't we, haven't you heard that, all your life, if you've been around church, unto him that is able, to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask, or think, God is able, and yes, God is able, he is able, he's able to do, exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask, or think, but there's another phrase, that's on that, we can't, that's not a period, he's able to do, above all that we ask, or think, yes he is, because he's God, but wait a minute, what else does he say, what is he saying, according to, the power that worketh in us, according to the power, that worketh in us, back in chapter one, we saw something about that, and let's, we got to close this thing down, so Ephesians chapter one, and verse, he's making mention of them, in his prayers, in verse 16,

I'll come through that passage again, verse 16, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you, in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you, the spirit of wisdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding, being enlightened, that you may know, what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory, of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness, of his power, to usward, who believe, according to the working, of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, and on and on, this is resurrection power, that God wrought in Jesus Christ, and raising him from the dead, and he's likening that, to what he did in the believer, when he, that those that were dead in their sins, have been quickened, made alive in Jesus Christ, that power is him, inside the new man, and he's able to do above all that we, or exceeding abundantly above all, that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory, and so, let me put some of that on you, not saying that, you have power, if you'll obey God, but, it's like healing people, and that kind of nonsense, but, more the thought of, it's on you to walk with Jesus Christ, and on you to give up your sin, and yourself to him, and allow him to fill you, with his fullness, and to walk in love, that he'll dwell in your hearts by faith, as this passage goes through, that you have the word of God in you, that you'll be filled with the fullness of God, when he's got all of you, things will happen in your life, God will use you, he seeks to use you, every day of your life, he will use you, he will do things, that you didn't ever think he would do, I never thought I could do that, I never thought this, of course you didn't, but if you're just surrendered to God, and just lay your life in his hands, say do it, take it, use me, he'll do something with you, and he can, as long as he's getting the glory, and that's what it's about, in verse 21, as it closes, all the way, to eternity, Jesus Christ being glorified, we'll stop right

there, and move into chapter 4, Lord willing, next week, so let's, let's talk, behind the.
[33 : 14] Let's talk. I'm glad we've had a great, gave it a good idea. Thank you.