

Knowing the Power

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[0 : 00] We turn back to Ephesians chapter 3, and I want to bring some thoughts from verses 16 and 17, that portion of Paul's prayer, 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, that you be engorged and grounded in love.

Now Paul is praying here for the church at Ephesus, that they might understand and experience the riches of Christ's glory. He's wanting them to experience and tap into what Christ has purchased for his children here in this world, that they may be strengthened in the inner man, because he's aware of our need of strength as we journey in the pilgrimage on which the Lord has called us to journey in. Because if we have received Christ as our Savior, things are not going to be easy for us in this world. And we need all the grace and the help that we can receive from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And he's provided that help for us. But we need to tap into that help. We need to make contact with the one that's going to endow us with the power of his own Holy Spirit, so that we might journey in this pilgrimage towards the place that Christ has prepared for his people.

And as we journey along life's journey towards that destination, he wants us to experience the riches that Christ has purchased for us, that we may experience that strength that he's able to afford us in the inner man. Now, in order to experience that, I want to first of all draw our attention to our need of submitting to his Holy Spirit.

We cannot experience the riches that we have in Christ, except as the Holy Spirit will apply that to our souls. And in order for the Holy Spirit to apply that to our souls, we must hand over to him all control.

In chapter 4, at verse 30, Paul warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit, if we've received Christ, dwells within us.

[3 : 23] And we're not to grieve him, we're to cooperate with him. In chapter 5, he says, not to be drunk with wine wherein is excess, but to be filled with the Spirit.

Now, we don't need to literally be drunk with alcoholic substances in order to be guilty of being drunk to excess, whereby we grieve the Holy Spirit.

We are called to be sober in all things. We are to bring all things into subjection to Christ. And when we lose control, whether it's through alcohol or any other thing that causes us to lose control and to walk astray from Christ, then we are guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit.

We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit. We must live under his control. And it's only as we live under the control of the Holy Spirit that we begin to experience the fullness that Paul is praying for here, for the church in Ephesus.

But we believe this is the prayer for the church for all times. This is what we need in whatever generation that we live in.

[4 : 59] We need to experience this fullness. We need to be strengthened in the inner man. And in order to do that, we need to submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

And if we thought about that more often than we do, that we have a person of the Godhead indwelling us, we might be more careful in the way that we live our lives.

And we would be more careful that we would not grieve him. This is the gift that Jesus promised to the church when he told them on the eve of his crucifixion, I'm not going to leave you as orphans. I'm going to send my spirit, the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it doesn't see him. But you will know him because he will dwell with you.

And if you're a Christian in here tonight, you've got the Holy Spirit dwelling in your heart. What an awesome thought that is. To think that there's a person of the Godhead indwelling our hearts.

[6 : 22] And we can grieve the spirit when we do things that are not in accordance with God's will. We must give the spirit control to lead us into the truth so that we might practice the truth.

rather than continue to insist that my will will be done rather than his will. Well, that brings us to ask the question, how does the Holy Spirit empower us?

Well, we notice in these verses that Paul prays to the Father to send the Holy Spirit to strengthen the inner man so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.

So not only have we got the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, but we have Christ dwelling within us and we have the Father dwelling within us.

We have the Godhead dwelling within the inner man because this is the only thing that's going to bring about the change that must be brought about in the lives of his children in order that they might enter into the kingdom that is prepared for them from before the foundations of the world.

[7 : 48] nothing less than the power of the Godhead could achieve what's going to be achieved in the lives of every one of his children.

That his image might be restored so that we might bear that glorious image which was marred when man sinned and rebelled against God.

the reason that he saved us was not just to give us assurance that we're not going to hell when we leave this world and that's where a lot of people stop short.

They claim to have accepted Christ as their saviour as an insurance policy and they continue to live their lives the same as they ever lived their lives. Jesus didn't save us just from the consequences of sin.

He saved us so that we might become his witnesses that we might show forth his glory to this world that is going to perish unless they come to receive the same saviour as we have received.

[9 : 00] And he empowers our souls through the power that the Holy Spirit applies to our souls as he takes of the things of Christ and applies them to our lives so that our minds and our affections and our wills are one for him because these are the three main faculties of the soul.

The mind, the affection and the will. Now we all know that we've got these attributes. And this is one of the things that people will always say and this is what Jesus said concerning the Spirit that the world wouldn't receive because they couldn't see him.

And this is the argument that many will use for not believing in God because they cannot see him. Well, can anyone see the thoughts that are in your mind?

And you've all got thoughts in your mind. Well, how can you prove to me that you've got thoughts in your mind? You cannot because you cannot show them but you know that they're there.

They're very real to you. And you've got feelings, you've got affections, you love and you hate but you cannot demonstrate these things because they belong to the invisible side of you.

[10 : 25] They are the faculties of your soul and these are the faculties that make you who you are. And every one of you is unique because there is nobody in this world that has the same mind and the same affections and the same willpower as you have.

And that's who you are before God tonight. What you are in your soul and this is the place that Christ wants to indwell.

He wants to make himself atonement of our souls. And he will only feel atonement of our souls if we give him free access to every faculty of our souls.

If we give him access to every room in the house and if we don't keep any doors shut and maintain, well you can work in this part of my life but you're not going to touch this part because I can deal this in my own strength.

Well a person will hardly feel at home in your house if you tell them you've just got to sit here, you're not allowed to go to the bathroom or the kitchen or the living room. All these doors are out of bounds to you.

[11 : 57] You haven't got free access to go into any of these rooms. Well a person after a period of time would feel very uncomfortable living with you in that house.

you've got to give them free access to the things that are necessary for them to access in order for them to feel at home in matters.

And we grieve the Holy Spirit when we keep him from certain areas of our lives and we put him in a corner and try to tame him and try rather than us do what he wants us to do that we dictate to him what he's allowed to do.

That's not how the Holy Spirit works and that's not how we're going to be empowered. And we will not be empowered if that's how we deal with the Holy Spirit that has come to indwell us. we must first of all open the door of our minds. Christ must have free access into our minds. [13:12] This is what Paul was praying for in chapter 1 here in verse 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.

We need our minds to be enlightened. and we could ask ourselves what's dominating our thoughts? What fills our minds?

How does the Spirit enlighten our minds? Well the answer is quite simple. He's the Spirit of Truth. He takes the Word of God and enlightens our minds with the Word of God.

He doesn't operate outside of the truth. He always works in accordance with the truth. And if we allow Christ free access into our minds as the Spirit leads us to enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ, Christ will feel comfortable in entering into our minds.

Christ comes in to clean the house. as he entered into the temple and cleansed it. Because the temple was a house of prayer.

[14:34] We were created to worship God. And he needs to cleanse that house. So we need to allow him to cleanse out the filthy and the vain thoughts that we fill our minds with which are not profitable to us or to anybody else.

We are to bring all thoughts into subjection to give obedience to him. That's what Paul says writing to the Corinthians. So he needs to have access to empty our thoughts from the vain imaginations that we may entertain which to ourselves seem so appealing.

And to ourselves might feel their right because we allow our imagination free access to create for ourselves a God of our own making.

Well we need to get rid of these gods that we create ourselves and we need to allow the spirit of truth to reveal the God who has revealed himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ that we might see his glory and that we might have our minds enlightened with that glory.

because if our minds are enlightened with that glory then he will enter deeper into the inner man into the affections of the soul because our affections are drawn to the things that we love.

[16:19] And Jesus exhorted his disciples to set their hearts on the things that are above the things that do not perish the things that no one can rob us from and wouldn't corrupt or decay.

If we open our minds to the things of God then our affections will be drawn to them. And we will come to love God.

love God for what the spirit is revealing to us concerning God. Because the spirit will reveal to us the God of truth, the God who is living, the real God, not the God of all imagination, not the God of traditions, but the God of the truth because he is the spirit of truth and he reveals to us the living and the true God.

Now we need to have our hearts settled. Jesus on the eve of his crucifixion exhorted his disciples not to allow their hearts to be troubled.

Now the word troubled means to be anxious or to be fearful. We have not received the spirit of fear.

[18:05] We have received the spirit of adoption. We ought to feel at home because if Christ is at home with us, we will be at home with Christ.

And our hearts will not be troubled. Neither will our hearts be afraid because our hearts will be drawn to the revelation that Christ gives to our souls concerning the glory of the Father, the glory to which he is going to bring his children to.

This is the glory that we lost when we sinned against him. We have all sinned and come short of this glory. This is the glory that's to be reinstated.

And as he reveals that glory to us in the face of Jesus Christ, as the spirit takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us through our minds, our affections are drawn to the things of Christ.

And it gives us a vision for the pilgrimage that we're on, for the journey that we're walking in. It gives us to see beyond the horizon of time.

[19:33] It gives us to see our destination. And it gives us that our hearts are drawn to the things that belong to Christ.

And as we're drawn to the things of Christ, we are empowered. Because when Christ takes over the affections, then we are made willing in a day of his power.

Now that's not something that happens once in the experience of the Christian, this is an ongoing thing. We are continually being made willing by his power working in us.

And that's how the soul operates. Because we will never do anything unless we hear of it. And we will never do anything unless we're drawn to do it. For example, if you hear that there's a sermon going to be preached in Stonyway by a famous evangelist, you've been given the information.

[20 : 51] The information has entered into your mind. Now if you're of a mind because you believe that this person will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and if you love the gospel of Jesus Christ, your affection will be drawn to that, and your affection will determine what you're going to do.

If you're not all that impressed by the information that you've received, your will will tell you, I'm not going to go. But if your will has been impressed, and if your heart has been drawn to it, you will act upon it, and you will do according to the will that has been made willing.

you will do his will. And we can only do that as we allow Christ free access into all the faculties of our soul.

Now the channel by which the Holy Spirit reaches our will is through faith. That's what we read here. 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, that you be rooted and grounded in love.

Now faith comes by the word of God, that's what enlightens the mind. Without the word of God, you're never going to grow in faith. You need to grow in your knowledge of God's word if you want to grow in your faith.

[22 : 36] And if you allow the Holy Spirit to apply the word that you've read to your soul so that your soul may be permeated with the knowledge that floods your soul from the truth, and if your affections are drawn to it, you will be made willing, you will be empowered, you will be made willing in a day of his power.

This is the day of salvation. This is the day that God is operating his power within the lives of his people.

And we know that it was by faith that we first entered into our life, our spiritual life, the life that we received from Christ, but it's through faith that we continue in this life.

We walk by faith, not by sight. And it's as we received the word through our minds, allowing it to affect our affections, and we were made willing that we came to accept Christ.

Christ, what must I do to do the works of God, one asked Jesus. This is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent.

[24 : 05] And this is the continual exercise of the Christian that we might exercise our faith in Jesus, the one who has entered into our life, but the one who's going to bring on that work that he's begun in our lives, because it is not over.

If it was over, none of us would be here, we would be in glory. He has begun the good work, and he guarantees that where he has begun, he will bring on that work.

And this is how he brings on his work. He enables us to walk by faith, and he empowers us as we allow the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives so that he might take of the things of Christ and apply them to us.

And that's what makes Christ feel at home in our souls, because without faith it is impossible to please him. And it's not just any old faith, it's faith in Jesus Christ.

Nothing else will suffice. Nothing else pleases the Father, but faith in his Son. And it's when we have faith in his Son, that the inner man is strengthened.

[25 : 39] And that's what enabled Paul to say, I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me. The fruit and the evidence of this faith will be love, because he says that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith that you might be rooted and grounded in love.

God, now I'm never going to bear the fruit of God's love unless I know God.

And I'm never going to know God unless I exercise faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, through whom he reveals himself to me.

And it's only as we permit the Holy Spirit to lead us into that truth that reveals to us the glory of the Father that we ourselves might turn our worthless lines into worthwhile lines, where we will bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is love.

being rooted and grounded in love. That comes about as a result of our surrendering our hearts to the Holy Spirit to allow him to apply the truth to our lines which brings before us the Lord Jesus Christ who is the truth.

[27 : 33] so that we might have access to the Father because nobody will come to the Father but through him. Now to be rooted in something means that we've taken a deep hold of something.

The roots of my faith are reaching out for the divine nature. That's the only thing that's going to give me satisfaction, that's the only thing that's going to give anybody that's been brought alive in Christ satisfaction.

That I have communion with God, nothing less than that will suffice. My soul is daily hungering and thirsting for communion with God.

That doesn't mean to say that I'm satisfied every day of my life. I'm not. But when I'm satisfied, when my thirst is quenched, it's as a result of me being brought into communion with my Father in heaven.

This is what the roots are reaching down for. This is what the roots are thirsting for. They're thirsting for the divine nature. They're thirsting to draw from the river that flows from God's throne, the river of life.

[29 : 00] because the person who has been brought alive will not be satisfied with anything less than that. They won't be satisfied with their own religious lives.

They're not going to be satisfied with their own devotions. Sometimes these are the things that's going to run. Because they see nothing in it but their own self-righteousness.

Because they're failing to exercise faith, to lay hold of God. And the root is stretching out, the roots of my faith are stretching out to lay hold of the God who loved me.

Because it's only as my faith draws from the resources that belong to God, that I'm going to bear fruit.

God, if you starve a tree of water, it won't bear anything, it'll die. And if my faith is rooted and grounded in love, then I ought to bear the fruits of love.

[30 : 16] love. And God is more than willing to give us out of the riches of Christ, that he may give us according to the riches of his glory.

Because there is ample there, we will never exhaust it, it will never run dry. We can continue to draw out of it every day of our lives and will never dry up.

And the more he pours that love into our hearts, the more we will love him. And that's the witness that this world needs to see.

Our love for God. We might try and live the Christian life in our own strength by doing the works of the law, which appears to be similar.

But that's not giving control to the Holy Spirit in your life, over your mind, your affections, or what you decide to do.

[31 : 28] But if we give control to Christ, if we trust in him by exercising faith in him, and as we are rooted and grounded in love, then we will not just love God, but we will love our neighbors.

And that's where the challenge comes in to every one of us who claim to love God. As John says, how can you claim to love God whom you cannot see if you don't love your brothers whom you do see?

have we got a concern for those that are outside of Christ? Are they seeing God's glory in us? Are we bearing witness to the glory of God, or are we a stumbling block to them? Because if we're not in fellowship with God, then the danger is that we will do the works of the law, and that we will become a stumbling block to those that are yet outside of Christ, because all they'll see is self-righteousness.

And that's very unappealing. It's the most unappealing thing that exists on God's earth. This is why Jesus remonstrated with the Pharisees as often as he did, because of the false witness that they were giving concerning God.

[33 : 12] Because they weren't drawing anyone to God, they were putting people farther away from God. So you see the necessity of being rooted and grounded in love.

That's the kind of witness love. That will impress this world. This is what Jesus asked of his disciples before he left this earth on the eve of his crucifixion.

That they would love one another as he had loved them. Now that's not any ordinary kind of love. That's not the love that we have for our wives or our husbands, for our friends or family.

This far surpasses the kind of love that we're familiar with. Because Christ did not love those that were lovable.

He loved those that were at enmity with him. He loved the world. And that's the love that we need to show forth.

[34 : 29] We need to love those that are at enmity with us. Because that's the kind of love where with Christ loved his disciples.

Because before they became his disciples they were at enmity with him. They were his enemies as we were before we came to know him. And it took the love of God to make us willing in a day of his power as he shed that love into our hearts.

and that's the kind of fruit that we need to bear. Jesus gives us a picture of the vine tree in John chapter 15.

The branch cannot bear fruit of itself. We cannot bear fruit of ourselves. it's the fact that the branch is connected to the vine and he says I am the vine.

And what was the vine connected to? Well he was grounded and rooted in the fullness of the Godhead. So he was drawing from the resources of the Godhead in order to empower his disciples so that they might bear fruit.

[35 : 58] And this is the teaching that he gives them. Because this is the fruit that we need to show. Because if we're not showing this fruit then the branches will just be gathered up at the last day and destroyed.

If the Lord has started a work in us that work must be evidenced by the fruit that we bear and a tree can only bring forth fruit after its own kind.

If we are grounded and rooted in God's love then that's the fruit that we will bring forth fruit after its own kind.

we must show the world that we love them. And the only way that we can show the world that we love them because not everybody in the world is lovable is that we are empowered.

And we're empowered by giving the Holy Spirit free access into all the faculties of our soul so that our minds may be enlightened and that our affections may be drawn and so that we will act that we will be made willing to do his will and not our will.

[37 : 21] And when we're walking at one with God then we will bear fruit. And the fruit that we will bear is the fruit of his love.

And when we love somebody we don't have to continually tell them that we love them they'll see that we love them by the things that we do. Because actions will always speak a lot louder than our words.

And that's the kind of actions that every member of the church needs to show. We need to show the world that we actually believe what we profess.

And that we're allowing what we profess to change our lives to the extent that we're prepared to make great sacrifices in order that we might demonstrate to this world that we are concerned for them.

That we are bearing the fruit of God's love who loved this world and was prepared to make the sacrifice of giving his only begotten son so that whosoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life.

[38 : 48] are we going to be instrumental in allowing God to build up his own church? Are we willing to withdraw our own hand so that we will allow his hand to work so that he will empower us rather than think we know it all and we can do it all in our own strength.

We need to give him the glory and the honour that belongs to his name because that's the only worship that's going to be acceptable.

And not only is that the only worship that's going to be acceptable, it's the only worship that's going to be profitable for us and for our fellow human beings.

May God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts. Let us pray.