

## Eph 3.20-21 Paul's Prayer Concluded, Part 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, previously we saw that Paul resumes his prayer report about the saints, and that prayer report from chapter 3, verses 14 to 21, divided into two sections, and this section would be the latter, which is verses 20 to 21.

Now, as we've seen progressing through Ephesians 1 to 3, not only the content, but also Paul's prayer for the saints, is that the Christian life is not just conduct, it's also contemplation.

So right conduct flows out of right knowledge. The Christian life is both theoretical as well as practical. Ephesians 1 to 3 is that of the contemplation, or that of the right knowledge, or that of the theoretical, or that of orthodoxy, what we ought to believe.

And then Ephesians 4 to 6 is that of the conduct, or that of the practical, or that of orthopraxy, what we are, what we ought to do.

So Ephesians 1 to 3 focuses on the contemplation of right knowledge, and some would try to twist scripture, which says that knowledge puffs up, by twisting it to say, to falsely appear humble by suggesting that any knowledge of God and of God's excellencies and of his works inevitably causes to puff up.

[ 1 : 30 ] So it's falsely used to appear humble for their not knowing of biblical doctrine. However, as Bernard of Clairvaux wrote, there are those who seek knowledge for the sole purpose of knowing, and that is shameful curiosity.

There are those who seek knowledge in order to sell their knowledge, and that is shameful profit.

And there are those who seek knowledge in order to be known, and that is shameful vanity.

But there are those who seek knowledge in order to edify, and that is charity. And there are those who seek knowledge in order to be edified, and that is prudence.

So that is knowledge to edify, knowledge to be edified. That is a knowledge directed to God.

Knowledge for the sake of the end towards which it directs.

The knower, theology should lead to the practice of piety. So right knowledge ought to lead to right conduct.

[ 2 : 35 ] Theology should lead to the practice of piety that is living to God through Christ. And the aim of the contemplation of God is that the rational creature, so that is having thoughts after God, the rational creature, that the rational creature know God and that knowing God glorify God.

So these three chapters, the first three chapters of Ephesians, these three chapters on what we ought to believe, on contemplation of right knowledge, comes to its completion with Paul resuming his prayer report, which his prayer report is concluded with doxology.

So if you'll take your copies of the Word of God, Ephesians chapter 3, we'll read all of Ephesians chapter 3. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to me for you, how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of his power.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose

which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him.

Therefore, I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulation for you, which is your glory, for this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

[ 5 : 50 ] now to him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever.

Amen. Lord, again, we thank you for your word, and we thank you that we have your word to center around this morning. And as we seek to sit under your word, we pray, Lord, that your truth would be proclaimed, and we pray that you would attend the preaching by your Spirit, and that by the power of the effective working of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, that all who hear of your word will be blessed, and that you would draw us all to yourself through each individual's particular needs.

You know each person who's here, you know each need, you know each state of our hearts, you know that which we struggle with, and that which is true. So, Lord, we pray that you would illuminate your word, and speak to those who hear, and that it would be a blessing to all, that you would be glorified, and although it is I who stand here to proclaim your word, I pray, Lord, that it is you who would speak, and that it is you who would be glorified, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. For our text this morning, in Ephesians chapter 3, is verses 20 to 21, so if you keep your copies of the word of God open, we'll be working through that text, and continually coming back to the text.

Now this, these two verses, this text, what it is that these texts are getting at, what it is that it says, is that the contemplation of the gospel fulfillment of God's eternal purpose calls for doxology.

[ 7 : 45 ] So as such, we'll draw from the text three particular points, one being power celebrated, glory ascribed, and prayer concluded.

So as you see in reading through chapter 3, that after contemplating the knowledge of the exceeding greatness of God's power, Paul's doxology celebrates God's power.

So God's doxology celebrates God's power. So God's power celebrated. Paul's petition has been explained in verses 14 to 19.

We just read through it, previous sermon, we looked at it a little bit more in detail, but Paul's petition in his prayer is, if you remember, to be strengthened, to be strengthened specifically in knowledge and understanding and being filled with the fullness of God.

So strengthened, knowledge, understanding, and fullness. Now that we understand and that he has explained or given report of his intercession for the saints, so now what about the power of God?

[ 8 : 55 ] What about the power of God at work to which Paul is interceding for the saints? So starting from our text, it starts off by saying, now to him. So we see here and understand who it is that Paul is praying to, whom he is bringing his petitions before, and that, of course, is the Lord God, the Lord God Almighty.

You see again that this is not about self. It is not about looking within ourselves for our inner strength. It is not looking to ourselves for our strength or our excellencies.

It is looking to God. It is appealing to God. It is interceding on behalf of the saints to God to God's power. that is God whom this prayer is about. Now to him, the Lord God, who is able to do all things.

He is able to do all things because it is the Almighty God, God all-powerful, and God's existence is infinite and eternal. God is infinite, God is eternal, and eternal, then God's power is not limited or restricted to any of the bounds of space or time.

God is infinite, God is eternal, God is almighty, and is not limited by space or time. Now to him who is able to do all things exceedingly, abundantly.

[ 10 : 30 ] Notice, think about when sometimes you're really excited about something and you want to explain just, you can't think of just how great to explain it, so you use an adverb that demonstrates just how excited you are about it, and if you're really excited about it, sometimes

you'll throw on two adverbs just to demonstrate how great or how excellent it is.

See, that's what Paul does here. He doesn't just say who is able to do all things. He then goes on to say abundantly more, but he doesn't just stop at saying abundantly more, he says exceedingly, abundantly more.

This is beyond the limits of our desires and understanding. exceedingly, abundantly more. God is better to us than our prayers are to him.

So now to him who is able to do exceedingly, now to him who is able to do all things exceedingly, abundantly, according to the power that works in us.

So we read through this, this verse, we read through it, if we read through it quickly, we'll just see according to his power. But recalling back in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 19, Paul demonstrated to us, Paul explained to us the exceeding greatness of the almighty power of God.

[ 11 : 51 ] So what power? According to the power of his work in us, which power is that? The exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, Ephesians 1, 19 to 23. Not only that, but we've previously read before that that when the work of redemption is applied to sinners, when their dead sinners are made alive, we read in Ephesians 1, 14, that they are also implanted and sealed by the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit effecting the work of God.

God. So, him who is able, he can do. God is not static.

There are views that God created all things and then essentially wound up the earth like a clock and then sits back and lets it do its course. That is not the God of the Bible.

God is not sitting back, static, uninvolved in all the events of our lives and all of history. God is not static. God can do according to the exceeding greatness of his power in chapter 1, verses 19, through the operation or the effecting of his almighty power, which we then see as it's demonstrated in 1, 19 to 23 in the resurrection of Christ and then as he goes on into chapter 2, he gives another demonstration of the exceeding greatness of God's almighty power and that is making dead sinners alive.

So the effecting of his almighty power and the resurrection of Christ and making dead sinners alive and that is by the Spirit who effects and imparts his power.

[ 13 : 35 ] He's not only able, but God's gracious purpose is effectually accomplished. This is great comfort for us. It's not just that God can do it, it's not that God is able, but that he does graciously, what he graciously purposes is effectually accomplished according to his infinite wisdom.

God affects all his determinate purpose by his almighty power. So let's look back at the text again. It says, God is able.

Have you ever said to somebody, perhaps based on a discussion, have you ever said, you know, I would pray if God was able?

Of course not. I hope not. We would never say that because we know that it's wrong. But have we ever thought it? We probably have never thought it in those exact words, but have we not come to express those supplications because in our minds we perhaps doubt it.

Of course, the doubt wouldn't be on, when we think about it logically, it's not that we would doubt our petition, so what is it that we're doubting? We know that God, by the effecting work of his almighty power, accomplishes his holy will.

[ 14 : 55 ] So, what I'm getting at is even though we might not say in our minds I'm not going to pray because God isn't able, perhaps we don't pray for things because we don't even get there because we think it's not probable or perhaps we think it's not possible, but we know that all things are possible with God and that he does accomplish his perfect holy will.

So, maybe we don't pray for something because, well, it's just not probable, it's not likely that that would occur in the natural way in which the course of events happens. So, as such, we doubt before we even get to the point of praying, so we doubt it before we even say in our minds whether or not God is able.

But, the good news is that God is able. It goes on further, God is able to do what we ask. That means that God is not impotent. It's not that we ask things that God doesn't have the power to do. When we ask things according to the power of God, he's not impotent, but he is almighty or omnipotent, and he is able to do what we ask.

Now, it doesn't stop there, does it? It's not just that God is able to do what we ask. God is able to do all that we ask. There is no quota on our supplications. It's not that you have three requests and then your time's up, you've had your quota, someone else's turn.

[16:25] No, God is able to do all that we ask. Now, it doesn't just stop there. God is able to do more than all we ask. What God does and God's power is not merely limited to our imagination or to our thought process, and that is fantastic, because we who are finite and who are limited in our knowledge and time, we do not understand all that occurs according to God's work of redemption from the beginning to the eschaton, to the last things, and how there are things which may be painful or uncomfortable or uneasy or through the courses of wicked men that are for such a greater good than our imagination could possibly understand.

For example, the crucifixion of the Son of God. So, God is able to do more than all that we ask. It doesn't just stop there.

It says, God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think. God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask.

It's not just what we vocalize that God's able to do more, because we don't always vocalize everything that we think that would be wonderful if God were to do.

Even the very things that we ask, the very things that we think doesn't even come close to what God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all of that.

[17:54] So, moving on in our text, that brings us further to point two. Now, the church as a habitation of God is an inaugurated, unified, new creation temple filled with his glory and ascribes glory to God.

Now, that statement kind of encompasses chapters two and three into one statement. But what we see is that glory is ascribed to God.

Point two, glory ascribed. In our text, you'll see, it says, to him be glory, and identifies two things, to him be glory in the church.

Now, when we first read that, don't want to misunderstand it by thinking that God is in a deficiency of glory, or that God is in a lack of glory, and requires the church to give it to him.

It's not that he needs it to be given to him. Rather, because of God's glory, the church ascribes that due glory to God, who is worthy of glory being ascribed to him.

[19:03] So, glory is ascribed, to him be glory, and the church, and that is in the form of thanksgiving and blessing for all he has done in the church. So, again, it's not that he has a deficit and we give it to him, but it's because of what he has done for us, the church glorifies God, ascribes glory, thanksgiving and blessing for all he has done in the church.

The church being in the assembly of the redeemed, and in the assembly of the redeemed, God appears most glorious, and as such, it is both a light to the world and a theater to angels.

temple Now, the church being the New Testament temple building, if we remember back to when we looked at temple schematics, the New Testament temple building is the dwelling place of God with his people.

This is significant, and we see this theme being a reoccurring theme through scripture about a temple sanctuary and God's tabernacling or God's dwelling with his people.

Now, you remember in the Old Testament when Moses had finished erecting and arranging the temple according to God's terms in Exodus 20, what happened?

[20:27] What was the result? The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And then when Solomon dedicated the temple in 2 Chronicles 7, again, remember what happened?

the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And it goes on to say, the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. When all the children of Israel saw, when all the children of Israel saw the fire came down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever.

So when the tabernacle is erected, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. When the temple was finished, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

The glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. In Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah saw Christ sitting on a throne and Christ's royal glory filled the temple.

temple. Now what was it that Isaiah saw? Christ in the temple and his royal glory filled the temple. Well what is that temple that he saw with Christ's royal glory filling it?

[21:45] Ephesians 2, if you remember, explains that the church composed of saints as living stones built on the sure foundation of Christ is the New Testament temple.

It is a unified new creation built together into a habitation of God through the spirit. And we saw in Paul's prayer report, Paul reports that he prays that the fullness of God may permeate it, being filled with the royal glory of Christ.

As the glory of God filled the tabernacle, the glory of God filled the temple, the glory of God filled the house. So also as here, Paul prays, or reports that he prays, is that the glory of God would fill the New Testament temple, which is, with Christ in the church.

So to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. That is through Christ given to us. Now when the distinction of the two separate things are listed in the verse, being both the church and Christ Jesus, it's not as a dichotomy, but as a unity.

the church, which is the community of the redeemed, is united to Christ as its head. Christ is the only way of access to God, as all have fallen short.

[ 23 : 10 ] It is only through Christ that praise can be acceptable to God. And S. M. Baugh in his commentary on Ephesians wrote that just as God's glory filled the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, so his glory fills Jesus Christ who fills all in all with his own fullness as the covenant mediator of God's new creation.

And then recalling back in Zechariah 2, 10 to 11, she's sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord, and many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day and shall be my people, and I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

So what's seen here in Zechariah is a unified new creation, Jew and Gentile, the dividing wall has been abolished, a unified new creation, believers as living stones composing the temple built on the foundation of Christ and the glory of God filling the temple in Christ.

Back to our text. To him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. That is that his glory might shine forth without end. That is eternal praise, world without end. God's glory, if you remember from the Old Testament, God's glory departed from the temple.

[ 24 : 40 ] but his glory will never depart from his people from now to the consummation of his kingdom of glory and the reality of the heavenly Jerusalem that is the inheritance of the saints.

We're calling back to Ephesians 1.14. In him you also when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory.

The company of the blood-bought redeemed will live forevermore and ever give praise and glory to their God, ascribing to him blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

If you'll turn to the book of Revelation, keep your finger on Ephesians 3. Flipping over to Revelation, we're going to skim through a few texts but starting in Revelation chapter 1.

We have a taste of heavenly glory or the company of the blood-bought redeemed, living forever and ever, giving praise and glory to their God, ascribing to him blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

[ 26 : 03 ] So, starting in Revelation chapter 1, you'll see in verses 5 and 6.

5b, halfway down in verse 5, to him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us kings and priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Flip over to chapter 5, verse 13. chapter 5, verse 13.

And every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, I heard saying, blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever.

Flip over to 7, 12. Amen. Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever.

[ 27 : 21 ] Amen. Flip over to 11, 17. 11, 17. We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is and who was and who is to come because you have taken your great power and reigned.

Flip over to 15, 3. Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are your ways, O King of the saints.

Flip over to 19, 1 and 2. 19, 1 and 2. After these things, I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, Alleluia, salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God for true and righteous are his judgments because he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants shed by her.

And flip over to 19, verses 6 and 7. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory for the marriage of the lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready. So you see here the company of the blood-bought redeemed living forever and ever giving praise and glory to their God, ascribing to him blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

[ 29 : 03 ] This brings us to our third point, being filled with all divine fullness calls for its return to God in prayers of doxology.

So prayer concluded. You'll see next in the text the word amen. What does that mean? Amen.

And through the amen the assembly of saints affirm their agreement. Second Corinthians 120 says that is why it is through him that we utter our amen to God for his glory.

So you see the goal of our worship is to ascribe glory, honor, and praise to God. It is not to entertain, it is not to perform, it is not to glorify man, it is to be centered on God and is to glorify God through God glorifying worship.

And with the amen the first half of the letter is concluded. So Ephesians is broken up to two sections, one to three, what we ought to believe, four to six, what we ought to do.

[ 30 : 13 ] That first section of what we ought to believe, working through not the content of knowledge and having an understanding of it, but also prayer for strengthening and knowledge and understanding and comprehension which culminates into doxology comes to a conclusion with an amen, affirming agreement.

So, what about prayer and corporate prayer? In our text it says, him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Now, if a person was a gainsayer and thought, well, if God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, then why even ask or think to begin with?

If God is going to do it, if God is going to do exceedingly abundantly whatever it is that I ask or think, well, then why even bother to pray? So, to that we would say, well, first of all, the Christian life can be summed up in three words, guilt, grace, gratitude, and we see that in the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians.

Particularly as we begin in chapter two, it says, and you who were dead and your trespasses and sins. And through that we see original sin that we inherit, sin nature. Because of our inherited sin nature, we sin.

[ 31 : 31 ] We don't just commit one sin, we commit a multitude of sins, and our sins are very grievous. We are by nature children of wrath, and because of our sins we are under condemnation and wrath of God.

We are guilty. And next we see grace, Ephesians 2, 8, for it is by grace you have been saved through faith. So although we are, although fallen mankind is dead in sin and deserving of God's condemnation and wrath, God's grace calls dead sinners out of death and condemnation into marvelous light, into his kingdom.

Guilt, grace, and gratitude. So because having an accurate view of man, that we are sinners under the condemnation of God, having an accurate view of God's work of redemption, that by grace we have been saved, therefore what follows is gratitude, that the saints have personal and experiential gratitude for God's grace towards us individually.

So guilt, grace, gratitude. In particular, the third one, gratitude, that which flows out of the Christian having been called out of death and darkness into life and light.

You're familiar with an Orthodox catechism. An Orthodox catechism asks the question that essentially I just asked beforehand. So if God is able to do exceedingly abundantly, above all that we ask or think, then why even pray in the first place?

[ 33 : 09 ] So an Orthodox catechism asks the question, why is prayer necessary for Christians? And what's interesting about an Orthodox catechism, if you recall, it's essentially a credo-baptist version of the Heidelberg catechism.

And both are broken up in a manner of guilt, grace, gratitude. And an Orthodox catechism on the section of gratitude, or of man's thankfulness, it speaks about prayer.

As it speaks about prayer, it asks the question, 134, why is prayer necessary for Christians? So, not to be redundant, but to say it again, if God is able to do exceedingly abundantly all that we ask or

think, why pray?

Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us. And also, because God gives His grace and Holy Spirit to those who, with sincere groanings, ask them continually of Him and give Him thanks for them.

So, the redeemed, having been dead in sin and under condemnation, by God's grace, being made alive, being pardoned of our sins, having Christ's righteousness accredited to our account, being born again, we not only desire to do God's will and obey His commands, which involves prayer, but it is also that we have within us the inner gratitude for what God has done for us, which we could not do.

[ 34 : 42 ] We cannot earn our salvation by our works, it is by grace. Grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone. And through our prayers, it is the pouring out of our soul to God with thanksgiving.

Why else should we pray? an Orthodox catechism in question 147 asks, how should you conclude this prayer in context of the Lord's prayer?

So how should you conclude the Lord's prayer? For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. We ask and crave all these things for you because you are our King and Almighty and are therefore both willing and able to give them to us.

we ask these things that your holy name may alone may receive glory. So we are no longer following after the course of this world and our sinful lusts and passions, but seeking after God's will to be done.

Mind you, there is still remaining corruption which we battle with, but we ought to desire God's name to be glorified and God's will to be accomplished. And we ought to crave that God's will to be done in his name be glorified.

[ 35 : 57 ] And there are times when what God has decreed in eternity, according to his infinite wisdom, which is exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, what he accomplishes is far greater than what we think of.

But yet he puts burdens on us to pray for these things as such. He is all the more glorified when our prayers are answered in his accomplishing his holy will.

Now we do not know all that God accomplishes, but we do know his perceptive will, or his revealed will. So for example, we do not know who he might save in a year from today, but we do know what he has given us in his word, and we are to pray according to that which is in his word.

So, back to our text. Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

Amen. Clearly, Paul did not think that there's no need to pray if God is going to do exceedingly abundantly all that we ask or think, nor should we. So, in conclusion, we have great, first of all, we have great encouragement here, don't we?

[ 37 : 23 ] Encouragement to ask for anything that is in accordance with God's will, according to his perceptive will, according to his word. Not only that, but we see from Ephesians 3 that we have boldness and access with confidence to approach God.

Now, what does that mean, boldness and access with confidence to approach God? This doesn't mean having an increased volume, or it doesn't mean a theatrical boldness, or sometimes you'll see maybe it's a health, wealth, and prosperity preacher, and it seems as though they're praying with boldness because they have this high volume and kind of a self-reverence theatrical voice in which they're praying, and they sprinkle it in with Christian ease where they're saying something you don't really know exactly what it is they're saying, but it sure does sound like it's spiritual.

I don't know what they mean though. That's not the boldness he's speaking of here. What he's speaking of is that we have access to God because we are not self-represented but we are in Christ, and as Christ, by his active and passive obedience, pleading the mediation and merit of Christ, being in Christ, we have access and boldness with confidence.

So, trust in the providence of God. That is the big picture. We have an objective reality in all of our subjective situations, don't we?

And all that we encounter, even though it may or may not seem that our situations are favorable, we can trust in the providence of God because you were dead in sin, God made you alive by that same power that raised Christ from the dead, God has reconciled Jew and Gentile in his kingdom citizenship as a new entity that is a unified new creation.

[ 39 : 17 ] God is accomplishing his work of redemption, purposed in eternity, accomplished in Christ, and applied by the Spirit by effecting the exceedingly great almighty power of an eternal God who begins, carries on, and finishes the grace of God in redeemed vessels of mercy.

In other words, Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 and 3. Further application, singing and worship as prayer.

Now when we are in corporate worship and we sing songs, whether that be psalms, we sang a psalm this morning, did you notice who it's directed to? Or sometimes we sing hymns, do you notice who they're directed to?

Who is it that you're addressing? Singing in worship as prayer? So first of all, after contemplating the knowledge of the exceeding greatness of God, Paul's doxology celebrates God's power.

And when we sing, what do we celebrate? Typically in much of the songs that we sing, whether it be directly of scripture, for example, a psalm, or whether it be a hymn that faithfully summarizes and articulates truths contained in scripture, many times we celebrate God's power.

[ 40 : 38 ] Secondly, the church, as a habitation of God, is an inaugurated, unified, new creation temple filled with his glory and ascribes glory to God.

That's important. Keep that in the back of your mind. We're going to come back to that. This is very significant as the worship and as the prayer offered up to God. Third, being filled with all divine fullness calls for return to God in prayers of doxology.

Considering singing and worship as prayer. Think, for example, some hymns that probably all know, Come Thou Fount. Who's it addressing? Come Thou to God or Come Thou Almighty King.

Who is it addressing? It's addressing God. Be Thou my vision. Who are we addressing? We're addressing God. Holy, holy, holy, holy, our song shall rise to Thee.

Who are we addressing? We're addressing God. Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, it is well with my soul. Again, we're addressing God in our singing. Do we realize that while we're singing?

[ 41 : 47 ] Is that in our minds that we are addressing God while we are singing in worship? I'm sure anybody who has social media or has been on social media, you've probably seen posts where somebody will say something, for example, like, to the black sob who cut me off when I pulled out in front of Walmart.

You think, well, how do they know that the black sob guy is following their social media posts? How do they know even who the black sob guy is?

Maybe they think that one of their friends is friends with a guy with a black sob and maybe they can relay the message onto them. But in reality, they're not actually addressing the guy that is driving the black sob.

They're just airing their grievances or getting something off their chest or else whatever it might be, maybe seeking attention in the way in which they're saying something.

Or maybe they write a post such as, to the President of the United States of America, I disagree with your policies and the following systematic ways. well, they probably don't have the President of the United States of America on their friends list and I'm pretty sure the President of the United States of America probably doesn't actually follow all of their posts.

[ 43 : 03 ] So they don't write it based on who it is that they're addressing. They're not actually in their minds speaking to or addressing the person in which they are on paper.

We don't want to be guilty of the same things and the ways in which we sing, whether it be psalms or hymns as prayer and not actually thinking about who we're addressing.

We shouldn't just be airing our laundry or seeking to feel better, getting something off our chest.

Think about who it is that we are addressing when we sing and worship as prayer.

We are addressing the King. We're not just addressing the King, we're addressing the King of Kings. And he's not just the King of Kings, he is the Almighty. That's who it is we are addressing.

In corporate worship, when we sing songs to him, we are addressing the Lord God Almighty, the King of Kings. Now the contemplation of God's eternal purpose and its fulfillment in the gospel calls forth doxology, praise.

[ 44 : 04 ] And that in the form of, you see in the text, what does it say? To him be the glory, or to God be the glory forevermore. And we see this theme, this doxology, all throughout the New Testament.

When contemplating God's goodness, his excellencies, his wondrous works, it always comes to this praise, this doxology in the form of, to God be the glory forevermore.

Let me read you some examples, I'll go through them quick. But Romans 11, 36. For of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever, amen.

Romans 16, 27. To God alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever, amen. Galatians 1, 5. To whom be the glory forever and ever, amen.

Philippians 4, 20. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever, amen. 1 Timothy 1, 17. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever, amen.

[ 45 : 09 ] 2 Timothy 4, 18. To him be the glory forever and ever, amen. Hebrews 13, 21. To whom be glory forever and ever, amen. 1 Peter 4, 11.

To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever, amen. 2 Peter 3, 18. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity, amen. And Jude 25. To the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forevermore.

Amen. Do you see a theme? I think so. Now, notice what's going on here. We read in Revelation, the blood-bought, redeemed, worshiping God, ascribing glory to God for eternity and his presence.

So, what we see in our text, what do you notice about it? There's a connection. what's going on in our text and what's going on in church is the closest taste of heaven, this side of heaven.

What occurs in church when those who are called out of darkness, who are dead in sin and trespasses and by nature children of wrath, when they are called out of death and darkness into marvelous light are made alive by the grace of God and as such that the redeemed as living stones of the temple assemble assembled together, built on Christ as the foundation of the temple, is the habitation of God filled with the glory of God.

[ 46 : 43 ] This is the closest taste of heaven, this side of heaven, is a foretaste of heaven. Think about that. Think about the implications of that. Think about the person that thinks that, who claims to be a Christian but thinks that church isn't important.

I can just sit in my lazy boy and watch a service on TV all day. It just doesn't cut the mustard. It's not the New Testament temple that is an assembly of thinking in scripture of when you all come together in one place.

So, living stones built on the foundation of Christ assembled together with Christ in their presence, the effective working of the spirit of God as the tabernacling presence of God, a lazy boy and a TV is not a temple.

It's not the New Testament temple. Furthermore, objectively giving glory to God through all subjective circumstances. So, when this letter was circulated and read in the churches in Ephesus, was God's word living and active?

Yes. Did this text apply then? Yes. What about now? Is God's word still living and active? Yes.

Does this text still apply now? Yes. What about every single day between when it was written and distributed till this day?

[ 48 : 02 ] Absolutely. And so, in every day, in all ages, in all the churches of the saints, what do we see? We see glory being given to God regardless of the situations.

So, in a variety of subjective situations, whether that be as we previously talked about, Ignatius being torn apart by lions, to God be the glory, whether it be the Reformation and saints being exiled and killed for preaching salvation by faith alone and not by works, to God be the glory.

Or what about in the day to day when there is no persecution and we're faced with struggling, whether it be temptations of sloth or of desiring to make an idol out of wealth, whatever it might be, to God be the glory.

So, throughout all ages, throughout all subjective circumstances, there has always been something objective, and that is to God be the glory, not just one day, but forever and ever.

Amen. Now, to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever.

[ 49 : 30 ] Amen. Our great God, Lord, you whom are infinite and eternal, we praise you. You, by your almighty power, effectually accomplish your holy will. We thank you that, according to your holy will, you determined to redeem a people as your own possession.

We thank you, Lord, that you have redeemed us, that you have called us out of our state of death and condemnation, that we might know of your salvation, that we might know of forgiveness of sins and of Christ's righteousness, that we might know of the exceeding greatness of your power to us who believe.

We thank you for the riches that we have in Christ, and I pray, Lord, that as such, you would cause us to know the love of Christ, that we would dwell upon it, contemplate it, understand it, and as such, Lord, that we would overflow with thanksgiving to you for all of your goodness and your wondrous works to us.

We pray, Lord, that you would be glorified here today, that through all generations, forever, that you would be glorified in the church.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We'll stand and sing the doxology. Amen. Thank you.